

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD
OF THE BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES**

December 14, 2023

Chair Martin Kane read the Open Public Remote Meeting Notice published in The Citizen on February 1, 2023 and the Daily Record on February 3, 2023: Adequate notice of this meeting was posted with the Borough Clerk and on the Bulletin Board on January 30, 2023 and made available to all those requesting individual notice and paying the required fee.

Start: 7:31PM

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Kane, Ryan, Berei, Menard, Coppola, and Kaplan

Absent: Sheikh, Holliday, Stern, Horan, and Russo

Also Present: Attorney, Steve Tombalakian, Engineer, Bill Ryden

REVIEW OF MINUTES: Tom Menard made a motion to adopt the minutes of the October 26th meeting. Jeff Berei provided the second; the minutes were approved by voice vote of all eligible voters.

RESOLUTIONS: 2023 Master Plan Reexamination Report

Nick Coppola made a motion to adopt the resolution of approval for the *Report on the 2023 Reexamination of the Borough of Mountain Lakes' Master Plan and Development Regulations*. A second was provided by Mimi Kaplan. The Board voted 4 – 0 to adopt the resolution with members Menard, Kaplan, Berei, and Coppola voting in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No one wished to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Craig School	Appl. #23-285
10 Tower Hill Road	Blk. 54, Lot:14
Major Site Plan	R-AA Zone
Improved Lot Coverage	

Simone Calli, the attorney for the Craig School, said they were seeking site plan approval and a bulk variance for improved lot coverage to install an ADA ramp and parking space. The current ILC is 25.4%. They are proposing coverage of 20.7% where 20% is allowed. They are here to meet barrier free requirements and complete their 2003 resolution compliance.

Tom Graham, a licensed Engineer in the state of NJ, presented the engineering for the application. The applicant was looking for the check list waivers listed in Mr. Ryden report dated Dec 6th. They included waivers for A26 - Environmental Impact Statement. A27 - Soil Erosion which will be handled with the building permit. A28 – Surface Water Management Plan which was not needed. A29 – Wellhead Protection Compliance - They are in the Tier 1 zone but are

not doing anything on the site that was prohibited. A30 - Landscape Plan has been included. A31 – Wetlands and Transition Area – In February of 2022 they requested a letter of interpretation from the NJ DEP but do not have a response yet. Bill Ryden thought the Board could proceed without any issues. A motion was made by Tom Menard to grant the waivers and Chris Ryan provided the second. The Board approved the granting of the waivers by voice vote of all members present.

Mr. Graham stated 10 Tower Hill Road was the administrative building for the Craig School. The lot is 139.8ft deep where 150ft is required. The front setback on Tower Hill is at 29.9ft and 40ft is needed. They are over the ILC at 20.7% where 20% is allowed. The school did not complete the requirements listed as conditions in their 2003 resolution. They are relocating the ADA parking space to the left of the property. The gravel parking area was supposed to be reduced and has expanded over time. They plan to pave the area and create 7 parking spaces plus one ADA space. There is an existing retaining wall on the site that is in disrepair. They have submitted a permit to the construction department to do the repair. They plan to install a ramp to get you from the ADA space to the front door. They will update the plans to comply with #9 of Mr. Ryden's 12/6/23 letter.

The gravel area for parking has been compacted over time and is acting as an impervious surface. The change will be de minimis when they go from compacted gravel to pavement. They will have less water coming off the property now that the coverage is reduced to 20.7%. Mimi Kaplan was concerned about the runoff from the parking spaces. She thought that area should stay gravel. Tom Menard asked about the wetland delineation and buffer area. Would the applicant consider permeable asphalt. Mr. Graham answered they could do that, but they would still need a paved drive aisle.

Chairman Kane opened the hearing to the public. Suzanne Platt, of 210 Laurel Hill Road, was concerned about the outstanding LOI from the DEP. She said there were endangered species located in that area. What if the DEP says you need a 150ft buffer? Mr. Graham responded you may be able to be used averaging. Nothing will be constructed until they get DEP approval. She questioned the site distance when exiting the driveway. They plan to remove one driveway exit since there is only one parking space on Tower Hill. This is a van accessible space. They have designed it so you can pull forward out of the driveway into the street. The site distances from the driveway exit were not studied. Justin Jackson, of 201 Laurel Hill Rd, asked will the design change affect the number of vehicles that can park. The lot is limited to 7 spaces and will not allow for more parking. Mr. Jackson questioned where the rest of the cars would park. Jenny Otta questioned the proposed 20.7% coverage. The 2003 resolution stated coverage would be less than 20%. Mr. Graham said they have reduced the coverage as much as they can and still provide the access aisle needed for the handicap space. Amanda Cali, of 203 Laurel Hill Rd, asked if the proposed driveway and parking lot would be pitched to control the runoff. Mr. Graham answered the lot currently drains east to west into the wetlands. Since they are reducing coverage, you will have a better runoff recharge. Permeable pavement in the parking spaces will capture some of the water and the balance of the water will sheet off the parking area. How do you know if it's working. W. Ryden said if they install it and there is a problem, they will have to fix it. Will you be stripping the parking lot? Yes, they will be. M. Kane asked if there would be curbing. No, there will not. How else can you prevent the parking area from expanding. There

will be trees on the wetland side of the lot and the east side of the lot slopes up. Once the parking area is delineated it should be self-policed. W. Ryden said this is no different than any other parking lot. This plan has no opportunity to park illegally. A. Cali asked if there could there be a plan to replace the tree if they died. M. Kane questioned the choice of trees noted in the landscape plan. T. Graham said they will change the trees if necessary. S. Platt said the 2003 Board wanted to maintain the residential character of the site. How is a formal parking lot doing that? T. Graham noted the parking area is for a house used as an administrative building. Parking lots in Mt. Lakes need to be paved per your ordinances. The building will still look residential. Abram Kirschenbaum, 170 Laurel Hill Rd, asked how wide are the spaces? They are 9' x 18'. Will the paved surface need salting? T. Graham answered if they do the snow removal properly, they should not need salt. Barb Girz, of 62 Tower Hill, was concerned the use of salt would affect the trees.

Paul Tiajolloff, a licensed architect in the state of NJ, explained the ramp. They centered the 6' x 8'ft landing with a 4'4" wide ramp 18ft long. Two additional steps are provided for those who could walk in. They are using Trex material for the railing and deck. They will use concrete on the entrance to the ramp. Nick Coppola asked about any lighting changes. They are using the existing building lights.

Mr. Kane opened the meeting to the public. S. Platt confirmed there would be no additional lighting. The public portion of the hearing was closed.

Simone Calli repeated they were reducing coverage on the site. They've requested site plan approval and a variance for ILC. The applicant hoped the Board would grant their request.

M. Kane asked Mr. Ryden if permeable paver would work. Mr. Ryden thought permeable would work for the spaces, but the driveway would need to be pavement. This was acceptable to the applicant. T. Menard asked if they could make the handicap parking space permeable? Yes, they could but not the driveway. Could they pitch the runoff to the catch basins rather than the wetlands. No, the catch basin runoff goes to the wetlands too. Could you install curbs to stop people from parking on the grass. T. Graham did not think curbing was appropriate. Mr. Menard asked if they would consider a rain garden. Not in that area. You need a flat area and theirs is sloped. They could put it in front of the building where they are taking out the driveway. T. Menard requested a condition of approval be added to require the roof runoff go into the rain garden.

The Chair asked for public comment. S. Platt, of 210 Laurel Hill Road, said the neighbors were unhappy with the paving of the parking lot. The school has historically not been good neighbors. The board should not vote until the DEP has made their determination. Justin Jackson was concerned about the chemicals used to maintain the parking lot and the traffic created during events. He also thought the approval should wait for DEP LOI.

M. Kane said the DEP review will be a condition of approval. W. Ryden added they can't do anything until they get it. S. Calli said the applicant would be willing to leave the parking area gravel except for the ADA parking. That needed to be paved. M. Kaplan asked if they could create a natural boundary around the gravel. W. Ryden suggested they pave the lower driving aisle 18' wide and make the parking area gravel. They would make a rain garden in the front yard on Tower Hill Rd. The roof runoff will go into the rain garden. The ADA parking space and driveway would be paved.

A motion was made by Tom Menard to approve the application with the conditions listed above and a second was provided by Nick Coppola. The Board voted 6 – 0 to approve the application with members Kane, Menard, Kaplan, Berei, Coppola and Ryan voting in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ordinance Committee – The Ordinance Committee met on November 30th and had a very productive meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No members of the public wished to make a public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Other Matters – There were no other matters to discuss.

Martin Kane made a motion to close the meeting at 9:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Shaw, Secretary