

**MINUTES
OF THE
CRANBURY TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD
CRANBURY, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

**MINUTES FEBRUARY 3, 2022
APPROVED ON MARCH 3, 2022**

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the Cranbury Township Planning Board was held via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86494062397> Meeting ID: 864 9406 2397 on February 3, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Michael Kaiser, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Adequate notice as well as electronic notice of this meeting were provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and the regulations governing remote public meetings. The notice included the time, date and location of the meeting and clear and concise instructions for accessing the meeting. A copy of the agenda for this meeting was made available to the public for download on the Township's website, and all documents and other materials pertaining to any applications listed on the agenda were posted electronically and made available for download at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting.

All participants in this meeting are required to keep their microphones muted until recognized or directed otherwise. The Board will engage the Zoom "mute" function until the time for public comment is reached.

Members of the public who wish to make a comment are required to use the "Raise Hand" feature in Zoom, or, if participating by telephone, by pressing *9. Once recognized by the chair, the participant will be able to unmute his or her microphone and offer a comment. Interested parties wishing to ask a question or make a comment during a public hearing on an application will be sworn in and asked to provide their name and address before proceeding. The Board Chair or his designee will manage the order of the comments.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

- Ferrante, Michael
- Gallagher, James
- Hamlin, Judson
- Jones, Dominique
- Kaiser, Michael
- Mavoides, Peter
- Spann, Evelyn
- Stewart, Jason
- Wittman, Wayne

PROFESSIONALS IN ATTENDANCE

- Andrew Feranda, Traffic Consultant
- David Hoder, Board Engineer
- Paul Phillips, Township Planner
- Robert Davidow, Esquire, Board Attorney
- Robin Tillou, Planning Board Administrative Officer

MINUTES

Upon a motion made and seconded the minutes of January 6, 2022 were unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION

PB321-19 American Outdoor Advertising LLC, Block 14, Lots 1 & 2, I/LI Zone, 30 Brickyard Road, Amendment to Final Major Site Plan – Relocate Billboard

Mr. Davidow explained this application presented to move the location of the billboard along the NJ Turnpike. That was the third time the applicant was before the Board. The reasoning for the relocation is the holder of the pipeline easement requested for the billboard to not be placed in the easement.

Mr. Gallagher would like to include as indicated at the PB meeting to receive a current survey for PB applications.

MOTIONED TO APPROVE WITH AMENDMENT: Mr. Ferrante

SECONDED: Mr. Gallagher

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Ferrante, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Mavoides, Ms. Spann, Mr. Wittman, Mr. Kaiser

NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION PASSED

APPLICATION

PB353-22 Cooper Electric, Block 4, Lot 1.03, LI Zone, 311 – 315 Half Acre Road, Amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan – Signage

REPRESENTATIVES: Jennifer Mazawey, Esq., Genova Burns LLC
David Cooper, Cooper Electric
Paul Ricci, RicciPlanning, LLC

Mr. Phillips explained the ordinance pertaining to this application. This application was filed prior to the recent zoning amendment from December 2021 where the sign ordinance was amended. There is case law which indicates notwithstanding the time of application rule. This means the applicant would favor from any amendment to the ordinance which is more favorable while the application is pending. In terms of the permitted sign area and the illumination, the new ordinance is more permissive than the old ordinance. They are entitled to the presumption of the new ordinance, but notwithstanding the new ordinance they still need relief especially from the sign area requirements of the ordinance.

Mr. Davidow announced notice was properly given and this Board has jurisdiction over this application.

Ms. Mazawey introduced the application by stating that the previous tenant, Crate and Barrel, had signage at this location approved in April 2003, and now Cooper Electric will be placing signage on the building. The variance relief being proposed is the wall size exceeds the maximum sq. ft. permitted. It exceeds the previous sign ordinance as well as the new sign ordinance. One of the signs proposed is the internally illuminated sign which is permitted in the existing ordinance which is applicable to this application.

Mr. Davidow swore in the professionals.

Mr. Cooper stated the proposed signs will be on the western side of the building along the Turnpike and one in the front of the building. The building is 690,000 sq. ft. of warehouse and this includes 39,000 sq. ft. of office space. This is a 24-hour operation that runs 5 – 6 days a week. The sign will keep us visible for when the trucks come in and out.

Mr. Ricci stated he is a licensed professional planner since 2000. He had earned his master's degree in city and regional planning from Rutgers University in 1997. He is a municipal planning consultant in five communities.

Chair Kaiser accepted Mr. Ricci's qualifications.

Mr. Ricci stated the variance relief being sought is the window sign that is minimal to the building. The variance is for the 302 sq. ft. and 188 sq. ft. signage. Under the old ordinance 12 sq. ft. is permitted. The actual displayable area for these signs is much smaller. 100 sq. ft. is required under the new ordinance. Internally lit is now permitted under the new ordinance. Variances are being proposed under the flexible C criteria or we can demonstrate the positive and negative criteria to show that it is advanced for the purpose of zoning. The benefits outweigh the detriments and results in improving zoning in this project. All variances can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good, mainly the nearby property owners, without a substantial impairment to your master and zoning plan. The property is 57.7 acres with two large warehouses. The warehouse building dimensions are approximately 1,250 ft. x 527 ft. The location is on Half Acre Road. It is the last property in Cranbury. The subject property and the property across the street are the only two properties in Cranbury that have frontage on Half Acre Road and are east of the Turnpike. One side faces the turnpike, and the other side faces Half Acre Road. The sign facing the turnpike would be approximately 617 ft. from the first edge of the Turnpike. The next property that it would be visible from is the Amazon property that is approximately 1,500 ft. away. None of these signs will face residential properties. The sign area is measured around the full rectangle of the signs. These signs are proportion to the building. It is a 48 ft. tall building with 1,249 linear ft. in length. That is approximately 60,000 sq. ft. in area. A 302 sq. ft. sign would occupy 0.5% of the building façade. The 188 sq. ft. sign facing Half Acre Road would occupy 0.74% of the building façade. The calculations if you exclude the background and the rectangle around it and just calculated the lettering itself is 185.82 sq. ft. for the larger sign and the smaller sign would be 115.29 sq. ft. This sign would not create a negative image from the Turnpike. The objectives are to minimize the possible adverse effect of the signs for nearby public and private property, and we have proven that. The signage is consistent with the signage that was existing from the previous tenants on the property. This application meets multiple objectives of the sign ordinance therefore this application advance's purpose of the municipal land use law to encourage municipal action to guide use which will promote the public health, safety morals and the general welfare. Regarding the negative criteria, the variances can be granted without a substantial detriment to the public good without substantial impairment to your Master Plan and zoning plan. The Board approved two signs up to 150 sq. ft. each facing Half Acre Road for the new Amazon facility. These signs would not be distracting to drivers and/or pedestrians and will not negatively impact landscape or any scenic vistas in the Township.

Chair Kaiser asked what will be illuminated.

Mr. Ricci stated the sign facing the Turnpike, the logo and the letters will be illuminated. The sign facing Half Acre Road will not be illuminated.

Mr. Phillips asked if there are signs the same size in the Township.

Mr. Ricci stated that the Township did approve the Amazon signage that is 300 sq. ft. There is no sign in the area to this degree.

Mr. Phillips stated the ordinance controls sign size and specifically mentions the large sign size potentially detracting from overall aesthetics. You are two to three times if you average what is allowed for an individual sign. That ordinance put in a limit for a reason.

Mr. Ricci stated the sign has a dimension of 10 ft. 2.25 in. x 29 ft. 8 inches. There is 20 ft. that is regulated as signage but is actually a white area. There is another 10 ft. of white space that is regulated as part of the sign. That sign would be visible from the Turnpike over 600 ft. away, so it needs larger lettering to serve any purpose. The Amazon facility is over 1,500 ft. away.

Mr. Phillips stated this application is going to be at odds with what the new ordinance is requiring.

Chair Kaiser pointed out that Crate and Barrel is the closest building to this location, not Amazon.

Mr. Mavoides stated we have multiple buildings this size and the size of the building will be put into account. Most people coming to the building will utilize GPS or frequent travelers will know the way, so the finding purpose of the signs is mitigated. The reason for the sign ordinance is to set standards across the town. We should establish what the most acceptable size is and recognize that applications will then be asking to get to this proposed size.

Ms. Spann stated there are comparisons to Amazon in this testimony but understand that Amazon is 960,000 sq. ft. Amazon asked for three times the size they had, and we settled on two. As Mr. Mavoides stated the drivers are not looking for that sign as a beacon and the sign is more for advertising. No Amazon sign is illuminated. That is something that is discouraged in Cranbury. There is a strong point for a larger sign. We must review these on a case-by-case basis. I do not agree with the internal illuminate and the size. We have to make sure we are being fair and consistent moving forward.

EXHIBITS:

A-1 – Jefferey J. Sias, November 18, 2021 Sheet 1 – C-1 Title Sheet - Key Map – General Notes

A-2 - Jefferey J. Sias, November 18, 2021 Sheet 2 – S-1 (1/S-1 – 6/S-1) – Signage, Location and Details

Ms. Mazaway displayed Exhibit A-2 – 3/S-1 – for the Turnpike Sign that is being proposed to be illuminated. Then A-2 4/S-1 for the signage facing Half Acre Road. The signage does not have anything in the background, it is just lettering and a logo. We must put a rectangle around the sign, but as Mr. Ricci pointed out, if you calculate only the components it is 115 sq. ft. The sign

that is proposed to be internally illuminated facing the Turnpike, is actually 185 sq. ft. Due to having to put an imaginary box around the signage it is 308 sq. ft.

Ms. Jones asked the applicant to go into further detail of the illumination for the sign facing the Turnpike.

Ms. Mazawey stated the sign is illuminated with white LED, there is no other color illumination, only white. The plan (exhibit A-2) shows in the evening what the sign will look like for a motorist passing at night.

Ms. Jones asked how bright the illumination would be.

Mr. Cooper stated he can find out the foot candle from the sign manufacturer. Our expectation would be a dull glow and not too noticeable.

Mr. Wittman asked to describe the signage on the doors.

Ms. Mazawey stated the window signs are vinyl clings and referred to exhibit A-2, 6/S-1.

Mr. Ricci stated the window sign has a 2 ft. 3-inch width for a full panel. On the left side it states Cooper Electric A Sonepar Company, and it is less than a ft. On the right side it states Cooper Electric Sonepar Company Corporate Entrance Only.

Mr. Wittman would like more clarity on the foot candle of the illuminated sign.

Mr. Mavoides would like the current precedence and what they are asking for relative to that.

Mr. Ferrante asked if the translucent part of the sign is blue lettering how would it illuminate white. It would not be bright and offensive with blue and would be less distracting and more pleasing to the eye.

Ms. Mazawey will get back to them regarding the letter coloring and the illumination.

Mr. Gallagher asked if a permit is required for the Turnpike.

Ms. Mazawey stated she does not think it does. There are no changes to access or a road opening.

Chair Kaiser announced, due to Board members needing more clarification on the foot candle and requesting other comparisons of similar signage due to not being comfortable with the size, this application will be tabled to March 3, 2022 with no further notice.

Ms. Mazawey mentioned doing comparisons of the signage at the Board's request to Petco and Amazon.

The Board advised of Wayfair and Home Depot as well.

Chair Kaiser opened the meeting to the public. With no public comment the public forum was closed.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Kaiser opened the meeting to the public. With no public comment, the public comment was closed.

RESOLUTION

(Open Public Meetings Act - Executive Session)

WHEREAS: N.J.S. 2:4-12, Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Township of Cranbury, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussion of the hereinafter specified subject matters.

The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

RFP process;

It is anticipated at this time that the above matter will be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

MOTIONED TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION: Ms. Spann SECONDED: Ms. Jones
Unanimously approved by all members present to go into a closed session.

RESUME PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, Mr. Ferrante made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Wittman offered a second. By unanimous vote the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 8:40

pm.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, the undersigned, do at this moment certify;

That I am duly elected and acting secretary of the Cranbury Township Planning Board and that the minutes of the Planning Board, held on February 3, 2022, consisting of eight (8) pages, constitute a true and correct copy of the minutes of the said meeting.

IN WITNESS of which, I have hereunto subscribed my name to said Planning Board this March 4, 2022.

Robin Tillou, Administrative Officer

/rst