

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

**TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING**

The Meeting of the Cranbury Township Planning Board was held on **June 1, 2023** at 7:00 pm at Town Hall, 23A North Main Street, Meeting Room.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Wayne Wittman, Vice-Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and presided over the meeting.

**STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE**

Under the Sunshine Law adequate notice in accordance with the open public meetings act was provided on January 11, 2023 of this meeting's date, time, place and the agenda was mailed to the Cranbury Press and Trenton Times, posted on the Township Bulletin Board, mailed to those requesting personal notice and filed with the municipal clerk.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

- ☒ El-Badawi, Eman
- ☒ Ferrante, Michael
- ☐ Vacancy
- ☒ Gittings, Bill
- ☒ Jones, Dominique
- ☐ Kaiser, Michael, Chairperson
- ☒ Spann, Evelyn
- ☐ Stewart, Jason
- ☒ Wittman, Wayne, Vice-Chairperson

**PROFESSIONALS IN ATTENDANCE**

- ☒ Andrew Feranda, Traffic Engineer
- ☒ Thomas Decker, Board Engineer
- ☒ Elizabeth Leheny, Township Planner
- ☒ Sharon Dragan, Esquire, Board Attorney
- ☐ Robin Tillou, Planning Board Administrative Officer

**BOARD SECRETARY FOR 6/1/2023 PB MEETING**

Evelyn Spann as Board Secretary;

MOTIONED TO APPROVE EVELYN SPANN AS BOARD SECRETARY FOR 6/1/23: Mr. Gittings

SECONDED: Mr. Wittman

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Ms. El-Badawi, Mr. Ferrante, Mr. Gittings, Ms. Jones and Mr. Wittman

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

**MINUTES**

**May 4, 2023**

Upon a motion from Mr. Ferrante and Mr. Gittings offering a second, the May 4, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved by those eligible to vote.

**APPLICATION**

**PB375-23      Rocket Pharmaceuticals, Inc.  
9 Cedar Brook Drive  
Block 1.03, Lot 1 – RO/LI (Research Office/Light Industrial) Zone  
Amendment to Preliminary and Final Site Plan w/Bulk Variance**

REPRESENTATIVES:      Meryl Gonchar, Sills Cummis & Gross, P.C., Attorney  
Jeff Pawar, Senior Director of Site Operations for Rocket  
   Pharmaceuticals  
David Citro, Main Stay Engineering Group, Engineer  
Nick Graviano, P.P., Graviano & Gillis Architects & Planners  
Martin Wendel, P.E., Genesis Engineers  
Neil Leonard, Electrical Engineer, Genesis Engineers  
Shana Elkind, Environmental Health and Safety Manager, Rocket  
   Pharmaceuticals

**EXHIBITS:**

A-1 – Sheet 6, C3.01 – Civil Site Improvements Plan

A-2 - Sheet 2 of 17, C0.02

Ms. Dragan announced notice is adequate for this application and the Planning Board can take jurisdiction of PB375-23 Rocket Pharmaceuticals, Inc. application.

Ms. Dragan swore in the Board professionals.

Ms. Dragan swore in the witnesses for the applicant, Jeff Pawar and David Citro.

Ms. Gonchar introduced the application by stating the property has multiple frontages on Dey Road, South River Road, Cedar Brook Drive and Conover Drive and is a two (2) story office and research building. The property was originally approved in 2001 when the initial building was approved as part of the office industrial park. There was another site plan approval in 2019 for the installation of equipment and pads. There were modifications to the approval that was granted in 2001 for the elimination of parking spaces. The parking spaces are in compliance with the ordinance. Tonight, they are proposing to eliminate four (4) parking spaces. There will be one (1) bulk variance to encroach on the front yard on Cedar Brook Drive where other equipment has been located previously.

Mr. Pawar, Senior Director of Site Operations of Rocket Pharmaceuticals, advised the Board that Rocket Pharmaceuticals is a gene therapy company. They develop and manufacture advanced curative gene therapies for mainly terminal illness and rare disease. Rocket Pharmaceuticals is expanding its manufacturing and laboratory capabilities. The increases are for chilling water requirements. To do that they need exterior chillers on the outside and the inside. They are planning to put an electrical hookup for an emergency portable generator. A modification to one of the curbs is being requested due to tractor trailers having difficulties getting to the dock. There were 39 spaces in the original site plan approval to be removed, but those 39 spaces no longer need to be removed and are currently on site.

Vice-Chair Wittman asked if the generator being proposed is an additional generator from was approved in 2019.

Mr. Pawar stated the 1,000-kw generator that is there now is for life safety in case of a major hurricane for example, but is not sufficient to keep manufacturing and operation. That is why the additional generator is being proposed.

Mr. Decker stated the 39 parking spaces discussed were originally being removed, but now are not, were the row of 22 and 17 spaces. There were another 20 spaces on the 2019 application that are being removed. Were those spaces removed and/or not utilized.

Mr. Citro, Civil Engineer for applicant, gave his qualifications of being a licensed engineer in New Jersey and has been accepted as an expert in the field of engineering before this Board and other Boards in New Jersey and his license is current.

Vice-Chair Wittman accepted Mr. Citro's qualifications.

Mr. Citro advised the Board that the most recent revision to the plan is May 17, 2023.

Mr. Citro exhibited Sheet 6, C3.01 – Civil Site Improvements Plan.

Mr. Citro explained the application by stating the lot is 11.9 acres in size and the property contains one (1) building with a 62,343 sq. ft. footprint and 221 parking spaces in existing conditions. The site drawings on Sheet 1 have a discrepancy for the number of parking spaces and that will be addressed in later testimony. The proposal is for the following: the northeast portion of the property will have the square shape chiller located within the front yard and subject to the bulk variance request for front yard setback. The equipment is 7 ½ ft. in length, 7.7 ft. in width and 6 ½ ft. in height. It will sit on a 9x9 pad. The chiller will be screened with a 6 ft. high masonry wall designed to mimic the color and style of the existing building. The masonry wall will also be screened with additional landscaping to provide screening and buffering to offset the removal of the existing three (3) deciduous trees necessary to install the equipment. The landscaping proposed will be 6' high at planting and roughly 3" in diameter arborvitae in addition to 6' ink berry holly shrubs around the masonry wall. The chiller is in the area screened from the street by existing mature landscaping and berm adjacent to Cedar Brook Drive. There is a photograph from the street view on sheet 17 of 17 in the site plans. There are two (2) generators referenced in the application, the smaller piece is a switch gear and not a generator. The generator's location was decided due to the shortest and most direct route to the facilities it will serve. It was determined the roof could not support the structure when looking for other location options. The masonry wall screening the chiller will be located 77 ft. from the property line and the concrete pad will be located 84 ft. and 8 in. from the property line. The front yard setback required is 100 ft. On the southwest corner of the parking lot the applicant proposes a concrete pad to house electrical switching equipment that will allow for connection of the mobile generator in the event of an extended black out. The second piece of equipment is 6 ft. long, 3 ft. width and 7 ½ ft. high. The equipment will also sit on a concrete pad measuring 14 ft. x 6 ft. The equipment requires direct access and will be protected by bollards on the parking lot side. It will be screened on Dey Road. The installation of the concrete pads requires the removal of four (4) parking spaces. The purpose of this equipment is tied to the needs of the facility as the facility cannot support electrical down time. The third proposal is to the right of the 2<sup>nd</sup> electrical equipment. In 2019 the approval for the chiller has changed to a larger size. The installation of the second chiller requires a pad extension measuring 10 ft. x 10 ft. The existing screening fence will be extended in kind to include the expanded area. The expanded area is in a location of no parking, so no additional parking spaces will be lost for that. A modification to the parking island across from the existing loading dock a few inches to the right of the third proposal roughly south center of the plan view is being proposed. After evaluation the driveway will be expanded to allow for better truck access and extending the curb line back without losing parking spaces. The existing number of parking spaces is 221, which is incorrectly documented on the cover sheet of the application. In the proposed condition it will be 217 spaces. In the southernmost island of parking, and the next aisle of parking there are 22 spaces, 17 spaces and 20 spaces, only those 20 spaces of the south side of the island were removed with the 2019 application in response to Mr. Decker's question. The 17 spaces on the north side of the island and the next row of 22 spaces do not have to be removed.

Mr. Ferrante mentioned on page 6 of 14 of Mr. Decker's review letter shows it accurately on the row of 17 and 22 that are hashed out in the 2019 application.

Mr. Citro continued by advising that the location of the equipment encroaching on the front yard was determined due to it being the most direct access to the facility.

Mr. Feranda went over his review letter dated May 30, 2023.

Mr. Citro stated the applicant is willing to comply with the EV spaces. Will mark the plan to advise the four (4) spaces that are being removed. Striping be provided around the proposed equipment to provide circulation around the equipment.

Mr. Decker went over his review letter dated May 26, 2023.

Mr. Citro agreed to replacing the grates. No other trees would be removed other than the four (4). No fire suppression requirements and will add keys to Knox box. No new sanitary flows.

Ms. Gonchar confirmed the building is not a five (5) story building, that was a typo, it is a two (2) story building.

Ms. Leheny asked if the 97,000 square footage of the building includes basement space.

Ms. Gonchar replied basement space was approved for 20,000 sq. ft. The sq. ft. number should be closer to 104,000.

Ms. Leheny advised if basement space is usable for something other than storage then it qualifies as a story in the building.

Mr. Gittings asked what the weight of the chiller is and what the connection is from the chiller to the building.

Mr. Citco stated the chiller operating weight is 2,259 lbs. and the connections are all below grade piping, ductwork and electric lines.

Mr. Gittings mentioned 2,200 lbs. is typical of rooftop equipment.

Mr. Gittings stated the detail shows CMU, but it would not match the building which is brick.

Mr. Citco stated they would adjust that detail.

Mr. Gittings stated that if you take away the curb as proposed there is a lighting fixture then exposed and the trucks may hit the lighting fixture.

Mr. Feranda stated a turning analysis would help that.

Mr. Citro exhibited Sheet 2 of 17, C0.02.

Mr. Citro advised the Board of the circulation of the trucks from the exhibit. They will come to Cedar Brook Drive, turn into the facility and come down to the loading dock next to the chiller on the south side and back up into the loading dock. When done, the trucks leave out of another exit. The large trucks come 3 times a week, and typically FedEx comes daily for cold storage.

Mr. Citro advised the temporary generator hookup will be south of the chillers.

Mr. Gittings feels the temporary generator could be put in a parking space.

Ms. Spann stated there was another project in the Cedar Brook development that made the circulation confusing, and she does not want a repeat.

Mr. Citro stated pavement stripping is something that they can do.

Mr. Gittings does not feel that will resolve the light fixture and turning issues.

Mr. Citro stated they will address both issues.

Mr. Gittings asked why the switch gears cannot be inside of an expanded chiller enclosure even if it is larger rather than eliminating four (4) spots.

Mr. Gittings asked what the height is of the new chiller.

Mr. Citro responded 8'4".

Mr. Gittings recommended completely screening with landscaping from any road that it would be visible from.

Ms. Spann asked what other mechanical equipment is in the vicinity of the existing generator besides the hot box.

Mr. Citro stated there is a switchgear and a transformer. They are screened with landscaping, and it was discussed at the 2019 approval that type of equipment is not appropriate to be screened with walls or fences.

Mr. Wittman stated after the 2019 approval, it was realized that screening with walls or fences is more appropriate with safety devices. A certified electrical engineer should design the

interconnections in and out of the building with the generators. If the application was to come in now for that generator there would be screening around it.

Ms. Jones asked about screening possibly halting the operation of the equipment.

Mr. Citro stated there are air intakes that are required for the generator and that was discussed for the application in 2019 and the electrical engineers did testify to that. The equipment's operation was more conducive to having landscape screening rather than a structured screening.

Ms. Jones asked if there are any safety concerns to be aware of for the northern chiller. Can there be some sort of gate.

Mr. Citro stated the gaps in the wall on the plan are only for maintenance access. They can address the gate.

A 5-minute break was taken.

Mr. Gittings explained what the Board is looking for is to avoid the equipment to be spread out and to gather and screen it together. The unit that requires a variance, to have a better solution i.e., putting it together with the other equipment and screening it altogether. Testimony should be given that location is the only location that equipment can be placed.

Mr. Pawar stated the reasoning for the equipment needed is because of the cures for rare diseases and there are timelines for delivering to clinical markets for patients waiting for these drugs. They are willing to make any modifications or changes the Board recommends.

Mr. Gittings advised reworking the island to make the loading dock work with curbs and make it clear with striping what the traffic is supposed to be would make the application more favorable.

After an inquiry from the Board, Mr. Citro stated the noise from the equipment will be 60 db at 30 ft. and the ordinance requires 65 db at the property line. They are 85 ft. from the property line so they are in compliance with the noise ordinance.

Martin Wendel, P.E., Mainstay Engineering Group, was sworn in by Ms. Dragan. Mr. Wendel stated he is a licensed engineer in New Jersey and specializes in the design of pharmaceutical facilities and has 35 years of experience.

Vice-Chair Wittman accepted Mr. Wendel's qualifications.

Mr. Wendel stated the proposed chiller is a closed-circuit refrigeration unit. It is enclosed in a pipe system within the unit. It generates chill water that gets pumped into the building. There are no emissions coming out of the chiller. There is no type of pollutant. It has a refrigerant

called R410A. It is nonflammable and in an enclosed system with no emissions coming out. It will give off some heat.

Mr. Decker asked if having both chillers running at the same time would accumulate noise.

Mr. Wendel replied he is not qualified to answer that due to not being an acoustic specialist. It depends on the conditions of the chiller and the noise generating capacity. They will have that investigated.

Mr. Decker asked for a sound measurement from the current chiller.

Mr. Wendel stated the chiller on the roof was reviewed by the structural engineer and they were advised not to put the chiller on the roof.

Neil Leonard, Electrical Engineer, Genesis Engineers, was sworn in by Ms. Dragan.

Mr. Leonard advised the Board he is a licensed electrical engineer in New Jersey and has been practicing for 23 years.

Vice-Chair Wittman accepted Mr. Leonard's qualifications.

Vice-Chair Wittman asked what the maximum kw put through the generator can be.

Mr. Leonard replied it is a 3,000-amp switch, translating that to a portable generator can go up to a 2,000 kw set.

Vice-Chair Wittman asked if there were different regulations for stationery and temporary generators.

Ms. Leheny stated ground mounted generators would get tested once a month.

Mr. Leonard advised the condition of this generator would be to run when it is there.

Vice-Chair Wittman asked if this generator would be tested to make sure it runs correctly.

Mr. Leonard replied it is all a manual operation and there is a connection box which is a switch connection and there is a distribution section which is breaker control to isolate the normal service from the generator. There is no automatic testing due to being manual.

Vice-Chair Wittman asked if the transfer box would be tested at the factory to make sure it works properly.



Mr. Leonard advised up to 2 mw is tested, and it is based on the amperage.

Mr. Gittings asked the distance required from a generator for screening.

Mr. Leonard replied it is based on air flow.

Vice-Chair Wittman announced Rocket Pharmaceuticals, LLC. application has been tabled to the rescheduled meeting of July 13, 2023.

The applicant's professionals have agreed to work with the Board's professionals for the conditions set forth by the Board.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Vice-Chair Wittman opened the meeting to the public.

There being no other public comment, Vice-Chair Wittman closed the public forum.

### **ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

There being no further business, Ms. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Gittings offered a second. By unanimous vote, the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 9:40 pm.

### **CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY**

I, the undersigned, do at this moment certify;

That I am duly elected and secretary of the Cranbury Township Planning Board and that the minutes of the Planning Board, held on June 1, 2023, consisting of nine (9) 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 July 14, 2023.

*Robin Tillou*

Robin Tillou, Administrative Officer

/rst