

**BERGENFIELD PLANNING BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
August 15, 2022**

Chairman Robert Rivas called the meeting to order at 8:07 P.M.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT**

In compliances with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates are confirmed at the Annual Meeting. Notice of this meeting was provided to the Record, Star Ledger, and Cablevision, posted on two municipal public notice bulletin boards and published on the borough website.

Any board member having a conflict of interest involving any matter to come before the board this evening is reminded they must recuse himself/herself from participating in any discussion on this matter.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Robert Byrnes, Jr., Councilman Thomas Lodato, Robert Rivas, Romeo Abenoja, Ernesto Acosta, Jason Bergman, and Ben Cabrera

**Absent:** Mayor Amatorio and Miguel Vasquez

**Also Present:** Gloria Oh, Planning Board Attorney, Robert Beringer, Planning Board Engineer, and Hilda Tavitian, Planning Board Clerk

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by Mr. Bergman.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – July 25, 2022**

**Motion By:** Mr. Bergman

**Second By:** Mr. Cabrera

**All ayes. None opposed.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Any resident may comment or question any subject not on the agenda.

No one came forward.

**Motion to Close Verbal Communication**

**Motion By:** Mr. Bergman

**Second By:** Mr. Byrnes, Jr.

**All ayes. None opposed.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Site Plan – No report.
2. Parking Legal – No report.

3. Capital Improvements – Councilman Lodato stated the steel framework is up for the new municipal building.
4. Master Plan – No report
5. Liaison to Board of Adjustment – Mr. Bergman stated one new application was heard and was approved. The rest of the meeting was spent hearing two other applications that are going to take a while. There will be a special meeting on Zoom just for Dunkin Donuts on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Site Plan Application:                   Lidl U.S. Operations, LLC  
  80 New Bridge Rd  
  Add a commercial Tenant and Related Signage

Craig Gianetti, Day Pitney, attorney for applicant stated this is an application for amended preliminary site plan approval for property located at 80 New Bridge Rd. Mr. Gianetti stated they were before the board in 2019. At the time, it was an empty, commercial supermarket, approximately 30, 960 sq. ft. There is approximately 22, 800 sq. ft. that remained vacant and at the time they didn't know who the tenant would be. One of the conditions when approving the Lidl Food Market was that they had to come back before the board when they had a tenant identified for the vacant space. The tenant will be Fitness 15. It is a permitted use in the zone. There will be no changes to the building. There is some additional signage needed. It will be a fitness center, exclusively for using the gym equipment. There will be no classes or juice bar. There will be 1:1 training provided. Mr. Gianetti stated they are seeking approval for two more signs, making it a total of five signs. The setback of the sign is 330 ft., which is far from New Bridge Rd.

Joseph Holzapfel, civil engineer from Bohler Engineering, 30 Independence Blvd, Warren, NJ 07059, presented exhibit A1, an aerial plan sheet dated 8/15/22. The exhibit shows the existing use and the surrounding area. The U.S. Lidl store occupies the eastern portion of the existing retail portion on the site that is about 33,000 sq. ft. The application also includes multiple minor parking lot improvements, lighting, and landscaping. Mr. Holzapfel explained, as the previously approved application, the borough had asked the applicant to come back once a tenant was decided upon. He presented exhibit A2, dated 4/13/22, and previously submitted with the original application. It is the zoning plan. The proposed fitness center is in the western portion of the building. They are also looking for approval for proposed façade signage. He stated per the borough code, they are allowed one sign onsite. The previously approved Lidl application did get approval for three signs, one freestanding and two façade signs. Today's application proposes two additional façade signs. Mr. Holzapfel presented exhibit A3 showing the detail sheet of the wall signage. There will be a signage insert panel on the existing freestanding sign. The borough ordinance requires 4 parking spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. for a total of 224 required parking spaces onsite. There already are 268 parking spaces existing.

Board member Acosta inquired if the parking will be divided or anyone can use the parking. He inquired what the minor changes to the parking will be.

Mr. Holzapfel stated the parking lot is one big parking field. The circulation proposes more compliance. There will be no changes in the number of parking spaces available.

Board member Cabrera inquired if it is going to be Fitness 15 or 19. He remembered seeing 19.

Chairman Rivas inquired if the traffic study done was specific to the area. He inquired if the traffic study is of the traffic on New Bridge Rd and not of the traffic in the parking lot. Mr. Rivas stated he had said in 2019 that the traffic from 5:00-6:00pm on New Bridge Rd is like a parking lot. He had asked then if the supermarket would exacerbate the problem.

Mr. Holzapfel stated it was done for the entire area.

Seung W. Kim, architect, presented exhibit A4 consisting of 2 pages of the architectural floor plan. Currently, the area is a vacant space with only a perimeter wall. Mr. Kim stated they are proposing a fitness center with the majority of the space filled with gym equipment. There will be locker rooms with bathrooms, a reception area, and some small offices. Mr. Kim stated there will be a separate training space in the back. The ground floor is approximately 20,786 sq. ft. and the existing mezzanine is 2,018 sq. ft. The mezzanine used to be a managing office for the old supermarket and is currently empty. They are proposing the control room for the mezzanine. The storefront won't be changing. Mr. Kim stated there is one entry into the building. There will be three zones for the different gym equipment. The private, personal training space will be 1,700 sq. ft. and the ceiling is almost 20 ft. in height. Mr. Kim stated they surveyed the existing condition of the power there. They double checked the total electrical load necessary for the equipment and is ok for what they have.

Board member Acosta inquired about the ventilation. Mr. Acosta inquired if there will be rooftop units.

Mr. Kim stated they are proposing six, new air conditioning units that is 20-30 tons that will provide the ventilation. Yes, there will be rooftop units and will be exposed.

Board member Cabrera inquired what the maximum occupancy is. He inquired what is required number of bathrooms that needs to be installed.

Mr. Kim stated maximum capacity is 180 persons. The total number will be in compliance with the zoning code.

Chairman Rivas inquired if ventilation and air conditioning are not one in the same. Ventilation and air conditioning, to him, are not the same.

Mr. Kim stated ventilation means that you need to have some fresh air from outside brought in. It could be done naturally or mechanically. He stated ventilation will be done by some means of mechanical unit. 40-50% of the outdoor air will be mixed in and brought into the building. Air exchanges need to be maintained. Mr. Kim stated there are three means of egress. There is an existing dock at the back of the building, one in the front of the building, and one on the side. Mr. Kim stated they will consider putting in some kind of emergency back up, a generator like they have for Lidl.

Board member Byrnes inquired if there is roof access.

Mr. Kim's response was yes, there is a ladder that goes to the roof. Mr. Kim stated the client doesn't want to offer a juice bar. Mr. Kim presented exhibit A6 of the proposed interior including the gym equipment, check-in counter, training area, and the mezzanine. Exhibit A5 shows the signage. The front of the building sign is 326 sq. ft. They will be utilizing the existing freestanding sign and will add a panel on the bottom. The wall sign is a little over the required 200 ft. The size is 40 ft. wide and 5 ft. high which is an

appropriate size. It will be illuminated with 750 LED lumens. There will be more contrast on the building.

Mr. Acosta inquired if the oversized sign will be visible from New Bridge Rd. There already is a sign on New Bridge Rd.

The wall sign is the main sign and is more critical for people to notice.

Chairman Rivas inquired if the letters will be glowing in bright red.

Mr. Kim stated there will be LED lights inside the letters. It's only for night time. It can't be dimmed, but they can ask to have the ability to dim the lights.

Mr. Gianetti stated red is a softer color on the eyes at night.

**Questions from residents within 200 feet and beyond:**

No one came forward.

Ethan Schukoske, traffic engineer/expert, stated they performed a traffic analysis including the Lidl Supermarket. Traffic counts were collected at the intersection March 2022. Lidl was already open and operating. They took existing traffic counts at the site and applied a growth rate for future conditions of no build and future build condition of the proposed gym. Mr. Schukoske stated under the no build conditions, the intersection was calculated to operate at service level D or better at each of the study peak hours. The proposed gym would result in less than 100 new trips to the site during any peak hour. He explained level service D is still considered an acceptable level of service, per ITE and NJDOT standards, and is when congestion might become noticeable. Level service D translates to a 95% queue which is the peak queue within an hour of 7 additional vehicles. It doesn't get worse with the proposed use. The average delay is 35-55 seconds. There was only a one second delay from the no build to the build condition. A parking study was done at the site when Lidl opened during their peak hours of operation. Mr. Schukoske stated they found that they are well below the parking demand on the site.

Board member Byrnes inquired if they factor in the trains passing.

Mr. Schukoske stated yes, they obtain the traffic signal timing which takes into account the reaction of the train.

Mr. Acosta inquired about the gym hours.

Kurt Reser, franchisee, stated he is looking to the area to expand. The gym hours will be Monday-Thursday 5:00am-11:00pm, Friday 5:00am-10:00pm, Saturday and Sunday 7:00am-7:00pm. The model for the gym is more like an express gym, getting people in and out. Mr. Reser stated the employees onsite typically are 1-2 receptionists and 1:1 personal trainers, with up to 10 employees in total at any given time. He stated he's been in the gym business since 1992. He's been all over the east coast, having gyms in Maryland and Philadelphia. Mr. Keser stated his wife is from Bergen County and they wanted to come back to this area. 80%-90% of the equipment does not require any electrical. The only electrical equipment are treadmills and rotating stairs. The other equipment all have alternators. There will be an AED device and a first aid area that will be behind the front desk. The red lights will be on for an hour past the gym hours. The pylon light by New Bridge Rd stays on. Cleaning and maintenance will be during operating hours.

**Questions from residents within 200 feet and beyond:**

Praveen Joseph, 159 Third Street, inquired when will the gym open.

Mr. Reser stated probably by the end of the year. They will be able to pinpoint when it will open within 30 days of when construction starts.

**Motion to Approve Amended Site Plan Application**

**Motion By:** Mr. Bergman

**Second By:** Mr. Cabrera

All ayes. None opposed.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING**

**Motion By:** Mr. Bergman

**Second By:** Mr. Byrnes, Jr.

All ayes. None opposed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Hilda Tavitian, Clerk  
Planning Board