

Village of The Branch Planning Board Meeting
February 16th, 2021
Track #32

The Planning Board meeting of the Village of The Branch was held at Village Hall, 40 Route 111 Smithtown, NY at 7:30 p.m. on February 16th, 2021.

The following persons were present:

Libby Smith- Chairman
Valerie Lindeman- Member
David Wetzel – Member
Michael Kelly – Member
Glenn Haberfield – Member

Christine Cozine- Village Clerk
Dan Falasco – Village Engineer

Chairman Libby Smith called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm

Mike Kelly made a **motion** to accept the October 21, 2020 Planning Board minutes with a minor change, change Dave Wetzel from motion to close meeting to Mike Kelly as Dave was not present at last meeting, and Glenn Haberfield seconded the **motion**. All in favor and approved unanimously.

Valerie Lindeman made a **motion** to open the public meeting. Mike Kelly seconded the **motion**. All in favor, passed unanimously.

Mr. Vincent Trimarco – representing applicant G7J Commercial Buildings LLC – wanted to go over the BZA application that was handed in by Architect which explains what is needed and wanted. This building has a lot of unusable space. Office use is 4800sqft, 1700 sqft is common area. The second floor has gross area of 3100sqft roughly. Office space would be used for an accounting firm.

Peter Elkin – 21 Washington Blvd, Architect

The previous use for the building used to be a library and a lawyer's office. Trying to create more usable space and modernize it. Adding an elevator and parking spots in the front. Want to put in landscape garden on second floor in front of the building, will have a railing around garden and a cornice at the top replacing with EIFF stucco façade, but looks like stone. There will be no more peaked roof, will raise the walls and have a cornice on it. Will have a gym and shower as well as a kitchen in the basement.

At this time Chairman Smith interjected that stucco is not representative of the 1850's and that roof top gardens or decking on roofs is not allowed. There is also no parking in front of buildings In Historic District. Engineer Falasco made a point that front yard regulation is 80 feet not 20 feet as shown in his plans. Mr. Falasco said side yard 15 feet is required and Mr. Elkin was disagreeing with him. Chairman Smith mentioned also there is no storage parking in Historic District.

At this time, Mr. Trimarco mentioned he understood what Engineer Falasco was saying, they would need to get a variance for a nonconforming use with respect to the vertical walls. He is not arguing that point, the BZA and the Building Inspector will decide that. Mr. Elkin was talking about design and he doesn't think he is deviating from 1850's style, if the Planning Board does not like it, he can change it. Mr. Elkin mentioned the grass in front would be for energy conservation.

Mr. Falasco asked if their plan went to the Board of Health Department yet. He feels that they are way over density for the building.

James Castaldo – owner of building – spoke at this time. Spent over \$1 million dollars for the building, he applies to the BZA first, but was told needs to come to the PB first. Chairman Smith informed him that the original owner built the building before the Historic District existed, so the building was grandfathered in for parking. In the basement was a research library with 800 sqft and in the covenant and restrictions stated could not use the attic for any other purpose than storage. The size of the building is the problem with the parking. 5,890 1st floor, 3104 2nd floor, 4,890 basement for total of 13,834 sqft. The covenant can only be used for library purposes. Mr. Trimarco said he doesn't see any difference in basement being used as a kitchen for the tenants

Chairman Smith said the BZA has not given a variance for parking in many, many years. She suggested they come back with changes to their plans. Mr. Falasco suggested taking plans to BOH.

Glenn Haberfield – can appreciate Mr. Cataldo's frustration with the process. Can't really say what happens inside the building. There should be 93 parking spaces.

Mr. Cataldo asked if he even has a chance of getting anything approved?

Valerie Lindeman made a **motion** to adjourn the public meeting. Glenn Haberfield seconded the **motion**, all in favor and approved unanimously.

Glenn Haberfield commented the front of the building does not reflect the 1850's Historic at all.

It was mentioned that Mr. Trimarco had already gone to Village Attorney Ring looking for parking and there is none to be had.

Glenn Haberfield made a **motion** to close the meeting at 8:49 pm. Valerie Lindeman seconded the **motion**, all in favor and approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by
Christine Cozine – Village Clerk

