

CHATHAM BOROUGH PLANNING BOARD
July 20, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Susan Favate called this Planning Board meeting of July 20, 2016 to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building. Chrmn. Favate announced that all legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Mayor Bruce Harris	X	
Council Member Victoria Fife	X	
Janice Piccolo		X
Chrmn. Susan Favate	X	
Vice Chrmn. Matthew Wagner	X	
H.H. Montague	X	
John Bitar –		X
Tom – First Alternate Gilman	X	
Joseph Mikulewicz		X
William Heap	X	
Wolfgang Robinson		X
Vincent K. Loughlin, Esq.	X	
Dr. Susan Blickstein	X	

Also present was Vince DeNave, Borough Engineer and Zoning Officer.

Public Comment

No one came forward.

Resolution #PB 2016-19

The minutes of the June 15, 2016 Planning Board meeting were approved as amended.

Returning Applications

Application PB #16-004

Michael Riconne

150 Center Avenue

Minor Subdivision

Block 35, Lot 5

This is continued from the June 15, 2016 meeting.

Samuel DeAngelis, Esq., attorney for the applicant, came forward. Attorney DeAngelis noted that the Board should now have updated architectural plans dated July 8, 2016. These include recent revisions made to the exterior of the two proposed homes.

Attorney DeAngelis called the applicant's architect, Doug Asral, to come forward and review the revisions with the Board. Mr. Asral remained under oath from the previous hearing.

Mr. Asral testified that since the last hearing he has revised architectural plans for each of the two homes. For the proposed home on Lot 5.01, the height of the roof has been reduced to have a clearance of less than 6 feet inside the attic, to the bottom of the ridge. The garage will be set back 32 inches from the dominant face. The house will have a colonial nature with a brick veneer on the first floor level.

Chrmn. Favate asked how far back would the garage be set back from the rest of the façade. Mr. Asral answered 2 feet 8 inches. Chrmn. Favate confirmed with Mr. Asral that the garage has a small canopy, a two-foot projection.

Also referring to the proposed house on Lot 5.01, Dr. Blickstein pointed out that the window above the garage is not aligned with the windows on the other side of the front entrance. Mr. Asral confirmed with Dr. Blickstein that he is referring to a transom window. Dr. Blickstein felt that the lower window sills were not aligned. Mr. Asral said it wasn't his intention to have the sills jog up and down. He confirmed with Dr. Blickstein that the dormer/attic space is only for decoration. No one will occupy that space. Dr. Blickstein commented that the shed dormers look very odd.

Chrmn. Favate asked **whether** the little overhang of the garage roof be shown. Mr. Asral agreed. He pointed out on Sheet A-2, on the other proposed house, the projection of the canopy is shown on the left elevation.

Mr. Gilman felt that the dormers would look more in keeping if they didn't come all the way up to the front. Maybe the wall with the dormer could be recessed. Mr. Asral indicated he would consider that suggestion. However, he pointed out that the closer that dormer gets to the ridge, the shallower the roof pitch would be to deal with the rain.

Dr. Blickstein asked for more testimony regarding the first floor elevation. Is it comparable to what the Board saw at the last hearing? She noted that the Board doesn't have the revised positions of the proposed homes, regarding the elevations. Attorney DeAngelis indicated that topic will be covered later on.

Dr. Blickstein asked for information on the building materials that are being proposed. Mr. Asral mentioned hardy-plank board, fiber cement board siding, a 25-year asphalt shingle, and an Owens brand brick or stone veneer.

Referring to Elevation 2, Chrmn. Favate asked what was the material being used inside of the landing. Mr. Asral answered it would be a brick masonry stair with limestone treads.

Dr. Blickstein asked how much smaller will the proposed house be than the originally proposed house, FAR-wise. Mr. Asral answered it would be the same. He explained that the FAR has been removed from the attic and then inserted as living space on the first floor.

Chrmn. Favate asked if any of the revisions would be affecting the variances being sought. Attorney DeAngelis said Mr. Clarke, the applicant's engineer, will testify on that matter.

The Board discussed the proposed window arrangement with Mr. Asral. Mr. Asral stated that more windows could be added if the Board felt it would be beneficial.

Mayor Harris asked why the dormers had been proposed. Mr. Asral stated that a more modest shed dormer could be instructed instead, to avoid a massive appearance.

Attorney DeAngelis asked Mr. Asral if by his changing the roof line, a reduction of building height would result. Mr. Asral answered yes, by 2 feet.

Mr. Asral moved on to the proposed house for 152 Center Ave. A different building material, scheme, and roof are planned. A hip roof was being proposed with an eyebrow window at the attic. A frieze-board will go around between the second floor and the first floor. The first floor will have clapboard siding. The standing seam metal roof porch will be a major feature of this house. The roof height was reduced from the original plans. A hip roof will be constructed.

Chrmn. Favate confirmed with Mr. Asral that the living room will have no windows on the side. Mr. Gilman pointed out that most local homes, in rectangular, square shape, have windows on all four corners. He felt that windows installed on both corners of the house wouldn't hurt the value of the home.

Dr. Blickstein asked what materials would be used for the garage doors.

Mr. Asral testified that the doors will either be metal or fiber-glass with a wood impression.

The Board discussed with Mr. Asral the window arrangement on the second floor.

Mayor Harris referred Mr. Asral to Elevation 4. What is producing the projection from the roof on the right side?

Mr. Asral answered that would be the gable going towards the back.

The Board had no more questions for Mr. Asral.

Chrmn. Favate asked if the public had any questions for Mr. Asral.

Clint Arent, 148 Center Ave., noted that his house is next to the house being proposed for Lot 5.01. Mr. Arent pointed out that at the last hearing, a landscape plan had shown the two air conditioning units on the other side of the house next to the chimney. In tonight's drawing the A.C. units are situated behind, and to the right. Mr. Arent pointed out that his units are on that same side. Could the applicant's A.C. units be installed on the other side.

Mr. Asral answered that the A.C. units will be installed by the chimney.

Suzy Young, 157 Center Ave., noted that her home is across the street from the proposed subdivision. Mrs. Young asked if it would be possible to have the dormers put on the second floor? She felt that would make the house blend in more with the neighborhood.

Mr. Asral said that the dormers could be eliminated altogether.

Mrs. Young commented that it was hard for her to picture what the scale of the proposed house would be, by using only the flat picture. A computer-generated photo would give a better feel of depth, etc. of this home. Could there be a way to make this proposed house look like one and a half stories, more in keeping with the neighborhood. Mrs. Young brought up the possibility of cutting back on the proposed living space, to make it fit in better with the neighborhood.

Dr. Blickstein asked Mr. Asral if any consideration had been given to modifications on the roof line. Did the applicant consider any other options in the plans, particularly in reducing the FAR.

Attorney DeAngelis stated that the owner had considered a number of options.

Dr. Blickstein indicated that she would like Mr. Asral to answer her question.

Mr. Asral answered it was a constant back-and-forth exchange on compromising the size and the scope of this proposed project concerning the FAR with the exterior articulation. Possibly a room could be eliminated; however, he and the applicant really didn't want to take that step.

Mr. Gilman noted that if the roof was taken down to the second floor, making it a one and a half story house.

Council Member Fife stated, as a realtor by profession, she has observed a number of houses being demolished because they don't have the modern amenities that buyers want these days.

Mrs. Young pointed out that the existing smaller homes on her section of Center Avenue have no problems in being sold.

Dr. Blickstein suggested, that at some point, the Board should focus on testimony on whether the variances have changed at all.

Attorney DeAngelis called up Andrew Clarke, the applicant's engineer. Mr. Clarke remained under oath from the previous hearing.

Attorney DeAngelis confirmed with Mr. Clarke that the architectural plans have been revised. Attorney DeAngelis also confirmed with Mr. Clarke that the revised plans were filed on the last possible day in order to be heard tonight. Unfortunately, Mr. Clarke did not have time to fully revise the engineering aspect of the plans.

Mr. Clarke testified that the engineering plans remain essentially the same. The grading scheme, all the basic components of what had been presented before, remain the same as to what had been testified to previously.

Mr. Clarke noted that he has distributed information on the revised bulk standards and the revised site data table. He recommended that this information be submitted as an exhibit.

Attorney Loughlin suggested this information be submitted as a board exhibit. It was marked as Exhibit B-1.

Attorney Loughlin asked Mr. Clarke to testify to the Board whether any of the variances previously listed were still in effect.

Mr. Clarke answered yes. Previously the applicant was seeking, for Lot 5.01, variances for lot coverage, front yard, and rear yard. For the proposed Lot 5.02, a building coverage variance was being sought for the front porch. Mr. Clarke noted that he had incorrectly calculated the front yard coverage on Lot 5.02. Now that the correct calculations had been done, a front yard variance is not needed for Lot 5.02. For Lot 5.02, the following variances are still needed: Lot coverage, front yard setback, rear yard setback, and building coverage. The variances have changed somewhat.

Mr. Clarke explained the changes that had to be made to the front yard variance. The height for the two proposed dwellings have come down about two feet. The 30 ft. front yard setback would be correct for the height of these homes.

Attorney Loughlin confirmed with Mr. Clarke that seven variances are now being sought. He also confirmed with Mr. Clarke that the additional variance is for the maximum building coverage for proposed Lot 5.02.

Referring to Lot 5.02, Mr. Clarke noted that the front setback measures 25 feet to the porch; however, the main body of the proposed house is at 31 feet across the entire mass of the house. The proposed garage will now be jogged back to 31.6 feet. The extension to the rear of the house will now be 39.2 feet.

Dr. Blickstein pointed out a discrepancy in the latest building coverage variance. Mr. Clarke agreed that the building coverage had come down some; however not enough to meet the permitted amount.

Mr. Clarke testified that the overall engineering and grading that is being proposed is nearly identical (to the previous plans).

The Board had no further questions for Mr. Clarke.

Chrmn. Favate asked if the public had any questions for Mr. Clarke.

Suzy Young, 157 Center Ave., asked Mr. Clarke to clarify whether or not a variance was needed for the front yard.

Mr. Clarke clarified that the main body of the house, on Lot 5.02, is now conforming for the front yard setback, except for the front porch. Therefore, the front yard variance is still needed because the porch has to meet the same setback requirements. The main body of the house is at 29 feet, where 30 feet is required. It's more conforming than where it previously stood. Mr. Clarke testified that variance relief is still needed, but he felt a better scenario is being proposed than the original plans.

Ted Lynch 159 Center Ave., asked if there was an over-head view of where the proposed homes would be located in relationship to the existing homes.

Mr. Clarke answered that an exhibit had been submitted earlier showing an aerial photo of the neighborhood. Also a tabulation was done on the front yard setbacks which had been catalogued on the existing homes on either side of the subject property. The average front yard setback is about 25.8 feet.

At Mr. Lynch's request, Mr. Clarke reviewed how far down the neighborhood the front yard measurements were taken.

Mr. Lynch asked whether the applicant will be presenting a streetscape at tonight's hearing.

Mr. Clarke explained the difficulty of generating a photographic streetscape.

Tricia O'Brien, 149 Center Ave., noted that her home was across the street from the proposed subdivision. Ms. O'Brien was concerned about the size of the proposed homes. She felt cramped conditions would result if these proposed homes were constructed.

Mr. Clarke believed that the proposed homes would be fairly modest in size. Both houses will be under 30 feet in height.

There were no more questions for Mr. Clarke.

Attorney DeAngelis tried to explain a streetscape of the neighborhood that had been requested by Mayor Harris. This streetscape has been drawn by an artist. It is not drawn to scale.

Attorney Loughlin advised the Board that if the drawing is not accurate and drawn to scale, the Board should not accept it. For legal reasons, the Board should not even discuss this drawing.

Chrmn. Favate felt that the Board would like to see a realistic photo streetscape. Vice Chair Wagner, as an architect himself, explained how a photographic streetscape could effectively be created.

Chrmn. Favate confirmed with Attorney DeAngelis that he had no further witnesses to present tonight.

Referring to Lot 5.02, Dr. Blickstein brought up that it was off by 80 sq. ft. The applicant could meet the building coverage if this 80 sq. ft. could be eliminated on the footprint. Chrmn. Favate

and Dr. Blickstein felt that the 80 sq. ft. could be found at the rear or the side of the house. They didn't want the proposed front porch to be eliminated.

Mr. Asral summed up his presentation. He believed fenestration had been addressed. Testimony had also been given on how the front of the houses engage the sides.

Dr. Blickstein asked, for the plans, if the building materials could be carried around the sides of the homes' elevations. Mr. Asral answered that could be done. He will also identify all the building materials on the plans used for each house.

Mayor Harris brought up the matter of the proposed dormers for the Lot 5.01. He felt that the shuttles made this house look much bigger. He suggested the applicant think about eliminating the shutters.

Dr. Blickstein pointed out that the Board needs to have copies of the revised plans. There should be a copy available for the public to review before the next hearing.

Attorney DeAngelis agreed to follow these recommendations.

Chrmn. Favate asked Attorney DeAngelis to urge his client to consider reducing the size of the homes.

Attorney Loughlin confirmed with Attorney DeAngelis that Application PB #16-004 will continue to the August 17, 2016 Planning Board meeting.

Suzy Young, 157 Center Ave., asked if three bedrooms, instead of four, be proposed for each of the proposed homes. She felt most of the homes on that section of Center Ave. had three bedrooms. And fuller closet space could then be provided.

Chrmn. Favate pointed out that the Board can't dictate the number of bedrooms; however, the Board has given the applicant some parameters.

Discussion on the new G.I.S.-based map

Chrmn. Favate asked Board members if they had received a copy of the Borough Ordinance regarding the zoning map being referred to the Planning Board. Board members indicated they had received it.

Mayor Harris explained that there is a new G.I.S.-based tax map. Layers of other municipal-related maps can be put on this tax map. Board members pointed out that the hatching on the map needs to be corrected. The hatching had been erroneously rotated.

Mayor Harris made a motion stating that the Planning Board has found this G.I.S.-based map is consistent with the appropriate sections of the Master Plan. The hatching on the map will be corrected. Mr. Montague seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Board members present voted "aye".

The Board decided to cancel their meeting scheduled for August 3, 2016.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held August 17, 2016, 7:30 p.m., Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building.

Mr. Montague reported on the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting held on June 22, 2016.

At 9:12 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Holler
Recording Secretary