

# Elk Township Combined Planning and Zoning Board

## Regular Business Meeting

February 15, 2023

### Minutes

#### **Call to Order:**

Regular Business Meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm.

#### **Roll Call:**

**Present:** Mr. Afflerbach, Mr. Goetsch, Mr. Hughes, Mr. McKeever, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Shoultz, Mr. Wolf (alt 1), Mr. Swanson (alt 2), Madam Chairwoman White,

**Absent:** Mr. Lucas, Mrs. Nicholson,

**Open Public Meeting Act:** was read by the Board Secretary

**Flag Salute:** Madam Chairwoman White led the flag salute.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

January 18, 2023

*Mr. Afflerbach moved to approve the minutes of January 18, 2023,*

*Seconded by Mr. Hughes*

*With all other members in favor, the motion was carried.*

#### **Completeness Hearing:**

1) Adelante Partners, LLC, Use Variance (d3) request to build a Self Storage Facility, Variance is for non-compliance with maximum lot area permitted by 96-76C(7)(a), 125 Buck Rd Glassboro, NJ 08028, Block 72 Lot 4  
Completeness followed by Public Hearing, Application #ZB-22-04

#### **Applicants Professionals present:**

Attorney Ms. Rebecca Laffety of Cooper Levenson Atlantic City, NJ  
Engineer/Planner Mr. Jason Sciuolo of Sciuolo Engineering Services Group Atlantic City, NJ  
Mr. Richard Alverado Applicant Adelante Partners

#### **Planning & Zoning Board Professionals present:**

Stan Bitgood, Bryson & Yates, Board Engineer  
Candace Kanapue, Bach & Associates, Board Planner  
Dale Taylor, Law Office of Dale Taylor, Board Solicitor

Ms. Rebecca Lafferty gave an opening statement of the application on behalf of Adelante Partners who is seeking a D3 Variance for lot size at 125 Buck Rd Block 72 Lot 4 for a Self Storage Facility, which is in a neighborhood commercial overlay zone. This is a Permitted Use but the maximum lot size permitted is 6 acres where 12.1 acres is requested through a Variance.

Mr. Jason Sciuolo Engineer/Planner gave an overview of the project referring to an exhibit of colored rendering of a concept plan of the proposed Self Storage Facility. They are only seeking Variance Approval tonight, not a full Site Plan. Testimony will be focused on the general layout of the facility.

Board Planner, Candace Kanaplue of Bach Associates, referred to her letter dated February 2, 2023 regarding the following requested waivers:

Item # 8 requires copies of applications to and certification of approvals from all outside agencies with jurisdiction over the proposal

***A waiver is recommended.***

Item # 11 requires the source and date of current or recertified property survey within the last 1 year

***A waiver is recommended.***

Item #41 requires the location of existing wells and septic systems and distances between them and on adjacent properties where required by the Board.

***A waiver is recommended.***

Item # 53 requires the applicant to indicate any historic structures located within 200 feet of the property

***A waiver is recommended.***

Item # 67 requires that if on-site sewerage disposal is required, the results and location of all percolation tests and test borings must be provided.

***A waiver is recommended.***

Board's Engineer, Stan Bitgood of Bryson & Yates referred to his review letter dated February 3, 2023 regarding the following requested waivers:

Item # 43 Use and grade elevations for each structure

***A waiver is recommended. Can be deferred until a Site Plan comes before the Planning & Zoning Board***

Item # 73 Wetlands LOI, Permit, or Certification by P.E. or P.L.S (Wetlands LOI has expired)

***A waiver is recommended. Can be deferred until a Site Plan comes before the Planning & Zoning Board***

Mr. Hughes asked if the Notification of Property Owners within 200' had been made. The Planning & Zoning Board Secretary stated that yes, all notifications had been made.

***Mr. Afflerbach moved to grant the waivers and deem the application complete.***

***Seconded by Mr. Hughes***

***Roll Call:***

***Voting in favor: Mr. Afflerbach, Mr. Goetsch, Mr. Hughes, Mr. McKeever, Mr. Richardson,  
Mr. Shoultz, Madam Chairwoman White***

***Voting Against: None***

***Abstain: None***

***Absent: Mr. Lucas, Mrs. Nicholson***

***For: 7***

***Against: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***7-0-0***

Mr. Sciullo continued with his overview of the project stating that there are multiple buildings on site which total about 91,000 square feet of storage space. The largest building is 12,000 square feet and there are 5 of these buildings on site. There is a mix of climate and non-climate controlled buildings on site. The non-climate controlled units have roll up doors and are a smaller size compared to the climate controlled units which have access within the building itself. At the front of the site is the Office Building which is a part of the Climate Controlled building. Passenger Car spaces are adjacent to that office building. Access to the units is restricted by a front gate that is accessible with a code. Cars and smaller trucks are then able to drive to their units and load and unload into their units. Not many people would be at the units at one time, this is a low intensity use. The group that is applying has hundreds if not thousands of these facilities over the U.S. and the layout being used here has been created with input from the franchise operator/national operator of these facilities. The name of the Storage Facility will be Storage Authority which is a national brand which is familiar to people. This is a needed amenity to this area. Stormwater Management has not been designed yet. A fence would secure the entire perimeter of the rear portion and only allow access through the vehicle gate at the front of the facility. Normal hours of operation of a facility like this would be from 6am – 10pm and if access were needed after hours, special permission from the owner would need to be granted on an emergency basis.

Mr. Hughes asked if the hours of 6am – 10pm is 7 days a week and Mr. Sciullo stated yes but if there are any issues with the hours of operation they are willing to discuss this.

Mr. Hughes asked where the business to the South of this property shows on the exhibit, Mr. Sciullo showed this on the exhibit at the bottom edge of the property in question.

Mr. Sciullo stated that the Stormwater Basin will be 50 feet from the property line as required by ordinance.

Mr. Sciullo stated that lights will be mounted onto buildings no pole lights.

Mr. Sciullo stated that this application conforms to most every standard except the Maximum Lot Size thus they are applying for a Variance for this.

Mr. Sciullo states that there is no detailed description as to why that lot size was created. He states that perhaps the governing body created this specific lot size in a commercial corridor to inhibit large facilities like this.

Mr. Sciullo stated that this site is particularly suited to this use. The shape of the lot, the ability to tuck it in behind the homes and buffer it from those homes and to not have activity on the street makes this site one of the only uses to utilize this shaped lot.

Mr. Sciullo stated that the positive criteria are no impact to the surrounding area, not detrimental to the public good and the site can accommodate the potential problems associated with the larger size of the lot.

Mr. Sciullo stated that the negative criteria is the standard is slightly relaxed as opposed to the typical use variance.

Mr. Sciullo stated that it is his professional opinion that this relief can be granted as the benefits of the relief outweigh the substantial detriment and the granting of this variance will not negatively impact the general public, surrounding area, the Master Plan or the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Swanson asked that the negative criteria be repeated, Mr. Sciullo did so.

Mr. Taylor, Board Solicitor, asked if Mr. Sciullo could state what the permitted uses are for that zone that could be used without having to come before the Planning & Zoning Board.

Mr. Taylor asked what Zone this property was in and Ms. Kanaplue stated that it was in the MD Zone with a neighborhood commercial overlay.

Ms. Kanaplue then listed the uses for a MD Zone with a neighborhood commercial overlay.

Mr. Taylor reiterated that this is a permitted use for the Zone but the size is why the variance is needed.

Mrs. White stated the lot size permitted is 6 acres and the application is for 12 acres and the applicant appears to be using all 12 acres for this Storage Facility.

Mr. Scuillo stated that the actual development footprint is much less than 12 acres, probably closer to 8 acres that would be utilized.

Mrs. White asked if there would be any intent to enlarge in the future.

Mr. Scuillo stated no, there would not be any intent to enlarge.

Mrs. White asked if the negative criteria had been met by saying that this Storage Unit would be the best fit as opposed to Office Buildings and such.

Mrs. White stated that the proposal stated that there would not be that many people at one time on site but Rowan University is only 1-2 miles away with housing in the area for the college students and that is why this site is desirable, that there would be times such as the semester ending and one beginning that there would be an overflow of people at the Storage Facility.

Mrs. White stated that the homes directly behind the Storage Facility that may be impacted by this overflow of people at the Storage Facility.

Mrs. White stated that the traffic flow coming in and out of the Storage Facility during times of Rowan University's semesters ending and beginning could be tense around that area.

Mrs. White stated that she does not agree that this application would not impact the neighborhood with regard to the number of people that would be there.

Mrs. White asked if there was any criteria as to what can be stored at this facility.

Mr. Scuillo stated that nothing hazardous, no illegal substances, no vehicles, no chemicals, no gas.

Mrs. White asked if a person who sells vegetables in South Jersey and wants to store them there overnight can do so.

Mr. Scuillo stated that he wasn't sure and asked for clarification from Mr. Alvarado.

Mr. Alvarado stated that this type of rental does not typically happen.

Mrs. White asked how the Storage Facility would know what is being stored in their units.

Mr. Alvarado stated that they would have stipulations in the contract as to what can be stored there.

Mr. Scuillo stated that these leases are relatively long in duration.

Mrs. White stated that with Storage Facilities come unwanted critters and things and that could be an impact to the neighbors also.

Mr. Scuillo stated that they could agree to a condition that no food storage would be permitted.

Mr. Afflerbach stated that Mr. Scuillo gave his ideas as to why Elk Township's Ordinance states that the size of the lot is limited to 6 acres and he is asking our Professionals their thoughts on this.

Ms. Kanaplue stated that she was not part of the size limitations and she is not sure as to why the Township came up with this size lot.

Mr. Afflerbach asked her professional opinion as to why the Township Committee wants this to be 6 acres as opposed to 12 acres, thus limiting what can be done with this property.

Ms. Kanaplue stated that she doesn't know that the Township Committee was looking at the average of the size of properties in the area but she doesn't think that they wanted a huge warehouse in the commercial district. She feels that the Township Committee did not want big, expansive warehouse looking things on the road in Elk Township.

Mr. Bitgood also stated that he was not involved in the discussion of size limitations and he agrees with Ms. Kanaplue as to the Township Committee not wanting large warehouses.

Mr. Afflerbach stated that the Applicant could decrease from an 8 acre size to a 6 acre size and the lot would then be deemed appropriate for the use and size.

Mrs. White asked why could they just utilize the 6 acres that the ordinance calls for.

Mr. Scuillo stated that the lot is 6 acres not the development, they would need relief anyway. The footprint of the buildings and roadways is 6 acres or less but the Stormwater Management and footprint of the overall development exceeds 6 acres.

Mr. Afflerbach asked if this property would have to be subdivided in order for it to fall within the standard and be developed.

Mr. Bitgood stated that yes, for this use, a Storage Facility but for a residential use or other commercial uses, this property meets the criteria of the Zone.

Mr. Scuillo stated that they looked first at subdividing this lot, but the road frontage and the wetland buffer to the side makes it so they cannot have a conforming lot. His team felt that this was the highest and best use of this property to make it a Storage Facility.

Mrs. White asked Mr. Scuillo to repeat why they couldn't or shouldn't subdivide this property.

Mr. Scuillo repeated those reasons.

Mrs. White asked if this facility would have residential manager.

Mr. Scuillo stated that this facility would not have a residential manager even though the use permits it. The Manager will be in the office during business hours.

Mr. Goetsch asked about what security measures they would be taking.

Mr. Scuillo stated that a 6' fence would surround the entire facility other than that front building, lighting on the roadways as well as cameras positioned all through the site that could be linked up to the Police Department if they have that capability but will be monitored by a third party security firm

Mrs. White asked if a person who wanted to access their storage unit, is there a time limit as to how long they can stay.

Mr. Scullo stated that there is no time limit for a person accessing their storage unit. If there was anything suspicious such as repairing something or working out of the unit, the management would get involved

Mr. Hughes asked if this applicant would have to scale back to 6 acres maximum would the applicant have to scale back the quantity of rental units.

Mr. Scullo stated that could happen conceivably and as the ordinance does permit multiple story buildings, they would most likely make that up in second story storage units.

Mr. Hughes asked about Building # 6 that has no depth to it, what is it and why is it that size compared to the other buildings.

Mr. Scullo stated that the maximum building size is 12,000 square feet which the other building are and the smaller building is what is left over.

Mr. Hughes asked if the access to the gate will be card access.

Mr. Scullo stated that it would be key fob or key pad.

Mr. Hughes asked if a person would be locked out if trying to gain entry before 6am or after 10pm.

Mr. Scullo stated that yes no entry via keypad or key fob in the off hours unless you called the owner explaining why you need access.

Mr. Hughes asked about the people who are inside the compound after hours, how would they get out.

Mr. Scullo stated that the outbound movement is controlled by a sensor and doesn't have a limitation on getting out.

Mr. Hughes stated that theoretically someone could be in there 24/7/365.

Mr. Scullo stated that it is possible if someone wanted to hide.

Mr. Hughes asked if there is a 24' lane coming off the street to the gate.

Mr. Scullo stated that there is a 24' wide drive aisle at the road opening, 30' wide at the gate and 100' feet in depth to the parking spaces.

Mr. Hughes asked who makes up the rules as to what doesn't take place in this facility.

Mr. Alvarado stated that would be him and the contract would stipulate as to what items can and cannot be stored at this facility. 3 employees, 1 full time and 2 part time would be working there to manage the property from 8am – 5pm and then after that gate access.

Mr. Taylor asked if the management would have access to these units of their own right and if the management were suspicious of something in the unit, they could access the unit themselves without waiting for the owner to be present.

Mr. Alvarado stated that yes they do have that access and would access any units that presented to be suspicious.

Mr. Hughes asked if there was to be a KNOX BOX at the front gate for emergency personnel to access the facility.

Mr. Alvarado stated that yes there was to be a KNOX BOX present.

Mr. Scuillo asked to clarify that Elk Township's Zoning Ordinance Conditional Use Standard for this application permits a one story (18') building. If the amount of units were reduced as previously stated could happen, there would not be enough units to make this facility desirable.

Ms. Laffety asked Mr. Scuillo to state that the neighbors of Glassboro were on the 200' list and made aware of this application. A 50' buffer is planned for along all of the residential sides.

### **Technical Review by Professionals:**

Ms. Kanaplue stated that most of her question were addressed, Bulk Standards are compliant except the lot size, thus the Use Variance being applied for. She questioned that the facility would be open from 6am – 10pm but staffed only from 8am – 5pm thus leaving it unsupervised from 6am – 8am and 5pm – 10pm.

Mr. Scuillo stated that is how typical operations are run at other facilities but the applicant is willing to change the office hours to something the Board agrees to.

Ms. Kanaplue stated that at the time of Site Plan Approval, buffers/gaps would be discussed.

Mr. Bitgood stated that the applicant has addressed all of the comments on his letter except for the 80' depth of the buildings being accessible from the driveway side and is there an internal walkway in that building.

Mr. Scuillo showed exhibit of the office building connected to the internal storage space which is climate controlled and accessed through one door.

Mr. Bitgood asked if the onsite supervision would be 7 days a week.

Mr. Alvarado stated that they are willing to work with the Board on the days and hours of supervision and operation.

Mr. Taylor stated that this is something that can be worked out on the Site Plan Approval.

Mr. Swanson asked what the sizes of the storage units would be.

Mr. Alvarado stated that there are various sizes of units, 5 x 5, 10' x 10', 10' x 20' etc. configured to maximize the space available. Dollys and handcarts would be available to the customer.

Mrs. White asked if there would maintenance, removal of trash that is left behind, example boxes.

Mr. Alvarado stated that the staff would take care of that as well as sweeping out units.

Mr. Bitgood asked if there were to be Auctions of units at this facility.

Mr. Scuillo stated that the applicant does not believe there will be many of these based on the need for this area and the way the franchise operates. If the management sees that there is someone that hasn't been there in a quite a while, they will reach out to them, the facility does not want the contents that is left.

Mr. Bitgood stated that his concern if there were to be an auction advertised to the public that it not happen on a Sunday.

Mr. Taylor stated that they could restrict the date and time.

Ms. Kanaplue stated that there is an ordinance that states that there is no business activity except for the rental of storage space shall be conducted by either the owner, resident manager or tenant of the storage space.

Mr. Hughes asked what provisions are made for the local Police Department to patrol the Storage Facility.

Mr. Alvarado stated that other facilities have given local Police and Fire Departments special access 24 hours a day and sometimes they even rent the units, they are given their own special codes.

Mr. Richardson asked if the doors to the buildings are locked or unlocked or do you use a code or fob to enter.

Mr. Alvarado stated that a code or fob would be necessary to enter the building.

Mr. Swanson asked if the pictures that were in the packets were indicative of what the buildings would look like.

Ms. Lafferty stated that there should be pictures in the packets of the facility. There are no interior pictures of the units.

Mr. Hughes asked about trash removal and a specific site for dumpsters and would that be on the Site Plan.

Mr. Alvarado stated that the facility uses a few specific units for that purpose so the dumpsters are not outside and keeps the facility look neat and orderly. The dumpsters can be rolled out and back in to the unit.

***Mr. Hughes moved to open to the public, seconded by Mr. Afflerbach***

***With all members in favor, the motion was carried.***

***With no comment from the public, Mr. Shoultz moved to close the public portion, seconded by Mr. McKeever.***

***With all members in favor, the motion was carried.***

***Mr. Afflerbach moved to approve the Adelante Partners, LLC, Use Variance (d3) request to build a Self-Storage Facility seconded by Mr. Richardson***

***Roll Call:***

***Voting in favor: Mr. Afflerbach, Mr. Goetsch, Mr. Hughes, Mr. McKeever, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Shoultz,***

***Voting Against: Mrs. White***

***Abstain: None***

***Absent: Mr. Lucas, Mrs. Nicholson***

***For: 6          Against: 1          Abstain: 0          6-1-0***



*Mr. Hughes moved to enter into our General Public Portion, seconded by Mr. Shoultz.  
With all members in favor, the motion was carried.  
With no comment from the public Mr. Shoultz moved to close the General Public Portion,  
Seconded by Mr. McKeever.  
With all members in favor, the motion was carried.*

Correspondence: *Training Information from NJPO and Storm Water Training Information given out*

***Adjournment:***

*Mr. Afflerbach moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Shoultz  
With all members in favor, the motion was carried.*

Adjournment time: *8:30 pm*

These minutes are a brief summary of the proceedings that took place during the Elk Township Planning & Zoning Board meeting held February 15, 2023 and should not be taken as verbatim testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Weitzel, Board Secretary