

Township of Manalapan
120 Freehold Road
Manalapan, NJ 07726

Planning Board Minutes
March 28, 2024 Public Meeting

Chairwoman Kathryn Kwaak called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. The salute to the flag followed.

Mr. Kastell read the TV Disclosure Statement and took the Roll Call of the Board.

In attendance at the meeting: Barry Fisher, Todd Brown, John Castronovo, Barry Jacobson, Kathryn Kwaak, Jack McNaboe, Steve Kastell, Brian Shorr, Nunzio Pollifrone, Pat Givelekian, Richard Hogan (arrived 7:34pm)

Also present: Ronald Cucchiaro, Esq, Planning Board Attorney
Jordan Rizzo, PE Planning Board Engineer
Jennifer Beahm, PP Planning Board Planner
Nancy McGrath, Recording Secretary

Mr. Cucchiaro swore in the professionals - Jordan Rizzo and Jennifer Beahm.

Minutes

A Motion was made by Mr. McNaboe and Seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes of February 22, 2024 as written.

Yes: Brown, Castronovo, Jacobson, Kwaak, McNaboe, Hogan, Kastell, Shorr, Pollifrone
No: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None
Not Eligible: Fisher, Givelekian

Chairwoman Kwaak announced that the application for Shoprite will not be discussed or heard this evening. Mr. Cucchiaro explained the application is not deemed complete so it does not have an agenda date yet. A public notice will go out to property owners within 200 feet and published in the Asbury Park Press once an agenda date is set. Any member of the public can come to the meeting and/or contact the Planning department for status.

Applications

PMS2266EXT - Rising Sun Properties, LLC

148 Freehold Road ~ Block 21 / Lot 4.01

Minor Subdivision – Approved 7/13/23 Memorialized 8/10/23

Extension of Time Request

Mr. Dante Alfieri, the attorney for Rising Sun Properties, LLC, requested an extension of time to June 30, 2024 due to delays in obtaining County Board approval. The applicant received County approval and are now working towards Resolution Compliance.

A Motion was made by Mr. Castronovo and Seconded by Mr. Fisher to approve the Extension of Time to June 30, 2024.

Yes: Fisher, Brown, Castronovo, Jacobson, Kwaak, McNaboe, Hogan, Kastell, Shorr
No: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None
Not Eligible: Pollifrone, Givelekian

PFM2308~Lamb Lane Stables, LLC

Lamb Lane ~ Block 74/Lot 14.02

Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan

Total of 11 buildings (10 stables and 1 Maintenance building)

Mr. Kenneth Pape, the attorney for the applicant, stated the applicant is only seeking Preliminary Site Plan approval at this time rather than Preliminary and Final. Mr. Cucchiaro confirmed the noticing is legally adequate and the Planning Board has jurisdiction.

Mr. Cucchiaro also stated that this site previously received Preliminary Major Subdivision approval for a residential development. Mr. Pape said the applicant will abandon the residential development approval once the current application is finalized, approved, and Resolution Compliance is achieved.

The project is proposing to build stables and paddocks for approximately 500 horses including a maintenance building. The buildings are modern versions of the stables that are on the adjacent property. A swimming pool for the horses will be located next to the maintenance building. There will be a manure collection, storage and removal program on site as well. There will be various types of individuals coming to the site, including track employees and general maintenance employees, horse trainers and owners. The design also includes parking and storage area for the horse trailers.

The credentials of all the professionals testifying on behalf of the applicant were deemed sufficient based on their education and experience presented to the Board.

Mr. Mark Lescavage, Professional Engineer
Mr. John Jahr, PE, Traffic Consultant
Mr. Joseph Davidson, Architect
Ms. Christine Nazzaro-Cofone, Professional Planner

Mr. Lescavage, PE, prepared the plans and provided an explanation of the content and significance of each exhibit as well as described the site plan elements.

Exhibit A1 – Regional Aerial Photo

- Property identified as Block 74 Lot 14.02 along Lamb Lane
- 83.8 acres in the RAG4 zone (Rural Agricultural Zone)
- The neighboring properties consist of farms, such as Gaitway and Skeba, as well as residences along Smithburg Road and Lamb Lane.
- Additionally, there is a wooded area to the east of the property, bordering a residential subdivision

Exhibit A2 - Blown-up version of the Aerial Photo

- The northern property line is Gander Brook, which runs between Gaitway and the Applicant's lot in an eastward direction.
- Additionally, a tributary to Gander Brook that runs through the middle of the property.
- JCPL high-tension wires pass through the property on the western side.

Exhibit A3 - Site Plan overlay on the Aerial Photo

- Proposed development include 10 stables with a total capacity of 590 horses.
- Buildings are designed to be 76 feet wide. The smaller buildings measure 228 feet long, while the larger building measures 360 feet long.
- The maintenance building is situated in the northwest corner of the property and will primarily serve as a storage area and employee parking.
- There are plans for the creation of 12 future paddocks for the horses which will be located outside the treed area in the middle of the site.
- The proposed access point to the property is an entrance drive located on Lamb

Exhibit A4 – Stream Corridor (representing Manalapan Stream Corridor requirements for the property.)

Due to the presence of wetlands in the vicinity, the area is subject to flood hazard zones, riparian areas, and steep slopes. The Board Professionals made recommendations to minimize activity within these zones but there will be some encroachments.

- The first 225 feet of the entrance road is going through the stream buffer but because the entire frontage is within that stream buffer there is no feasible alternative.
- Another encroachment occurs at the northern end of the property, to the east of the track for Gaitway Farm. This is an existing connection to the lot, the applicant intends to reinforce this preexisting condition, despite it being within the stream buffer.
- Another encroachment is where there is planting for the filter strips for the stormwater management. As planting in this area technically constitutes a disturbance, a waiver is required.

Grading

- The intent is to preserve as much of the tree mass as possible and minimize disruption to the property through limited cut and fill operations.
- The transition from actively farmed areas to fallow paddock areas will be done to maintain the integrity of the farmed areas.
- Due to a severe drop-off near Lamb Lane, paving of the initial 225 feet of the roadway is necessary for access. The remaining roadway will consist of a natural reinforced dirt path around the stables.
- Some fill will be required to establish pads for the stables but efforts will be made to keep grading to a minimum.
- Board Engineer, Mr. Rizzo, mentioned grading on the northern side of the stables and asked if the plan is to use retaining walls to stay out of the stream buffer. Mr. Lescavage stated there could be a minor encroachment if they could not grade into the plan.

Drainage / Stormwater

- The existing drainage patterns on the property will be maintained, particularly focusing on Gander Brook and its tributary, which are major features on the site. Efforts will be made to minimize the volume of storm water directed toward these features.
- The drainage system consists of filtration strips which are areas where the runoff from the proposed reinforced road will pass through. These strips facilitate treatment of storm water through vegetation uptake before reaching the stream. This approach will be implemented across the entire property. There are also some underground infiltration systems to manage roof runoff throughout the property.
- Mr. Pape asked Mr. Lescavage to confirm that the storm water system is designed to be privately owned and maintained and creates no financial burden to Manalapan. Mr. Lescavage said yes, and that the owner of the farm will be the maintenance entity. Mr. Pape continued to say that this is a modern storm water system and is subject to NJDEP regulations. Mr. Lescavage's firm will draft the operations and maintenance manual and submit to Manalapan Township for approval and recorded as part of the property deed. By doing so, establishes in perpetuity the responsibilities of the property owner.
- Stormwater management system will adhere to major commercial development standards and comply with water quality standards.

Circulation

- Meetings were held with the Fire Bureau to discuss the plan, resulting in changes to both the entrance road and property signage for fire lanes. Currently, the applicant has a compliant plan regarding fire access requirements. Mr. Pape confirmed the Fire Bureau reported they were satisfied with the plan and reaffirmed their commitment to working with them to ensure all details are followed.
- All the travel roadways are designed to accommodate the various types of vehicles including Fire trucks, trucks, and horse trailers.

Entrance Drive

- A field meeting took place at Lamb Lane with the Township Engineer and DPW to address the entrance driveway. It was determined the entrance drive location will remain unchanged since it is the best spot in terms of site distance along Lamb Lane.
- The applicant is committing to stabilization measures along the road to prevent recurring erosion issues. Additionally, a detailed topographic plan will be submitted for final site plan approval.
- Retaining walls will be constructed to facilitate the driveway through the initial 200 feet. While this will result in a slight increase in the height of the retaining walls, it will ultimately create a safer entrance by reducing the slope and be safer for the horses and the trailers.

Parking

- The property will feature four designated parking areas. These include center aisle parking along the stables and at the end of the stables. Additionally, there is parking along the loop road and to the north of the largest stable, which has capacity for up to 16 trailers (longer spaces). Finally, there is a parking field adjacent to the maintenance area. In total, there are 100 parking spaces plus 3 designated EV spaces. The 16 trailer spaces are not included with the 100 parking spaces.
- Given that this is a farm setting without traditional curbing and roads, parking will be marked using reflective posts and will be reviewed with the Board Engineer as well.
- The reinforced driveway paths measure 30 feet wide, which is wide enough for other vehicles to pass even if people park alongside the road. This alleviates any concern the fire officials had with fire truck access when there is parking along the road.
- ADA-compliant paved parking will be adjacent to the maintenance building.
- Applicant will consider handicapped accessible parking and accessible route to at least one of the stables for final approval.
- Waiver would be needed for parking stall since the applicant is proposing 9'X18'. Trailer space size will need to be addressed as to whether or not they have enough room for 10-foot wide vs 9-foot wide.

Landscaping/Environmental

The landscaping package proposed is significant but will require some waivers from the township ordinance.

- There will be extensive landscaping along the northwestern area behind the maintenance building to buffer the residential zone. Following the recommendation of the township arborist, deciduous trees will be planted for a more natural look.
- Waivers are sought for landscaping in the parking area and stable foundation plantings. However, there will be foundation plantings on the maintenance building.
- Landscaping proposed in the northwest end will act as a buffer any sight towards the parking areas.
- The Environmental Commission recommended the applicant provide a conservation easement, which the applicant is willing to do. However, they would want language in the easement to allow access and maintain the filter strips within the treed areas.

Lighting

Applicant's team will work with the board professionals to ensure that the lighting plan meets all ordinance requirements.

- The site plan includes proposed lighting around the buildings for security purposes, as well as along the roadway, particularly at the turns.

- All pole lights will face east away from the residential areas, have site shields to prevent glare, and will be 15 feet high or less.
- Lights will be turned down in the later hours but not completely turned off since the farm is a 24x7 operation.

Waste Management/ Manure

- Manure from each stable will be collected and transported to a centralized area located at the northwest end of the property.
- The storage area will utilize technoblock structures, and will be disposed of by a hauler on a bi-weekly basis or as needed.
- The Board suggested that the applicant consider covering the manure storage area (fly tight coverage).
- The design is structured so if there is a precipitation event, there will be no runoff of waste into the soil.
- Applicant will revisit the waste management process prior to submitting for final approval.

Signage

The applicant proposes a single sign about 10 feet from the right-of-way on Lamb Lane. The sign measures 2' X 5', with 6-inch letters and with a height of 5 feet. Given that signs are not permitted within the zone, a variance is required for the sign.

Curbs / Sidewalks

The applicant would require a waiver to be relieved from the sidewalk requirement. While the applicant is willing to comply, it may not be feasible along Lamb Lane. Mr. Rizzo noted several challenges, including many trees along the frontage, utility poles requiring relocation, and the current drainage pattern, which flows from south to north across Lamb Lane. There is a small berm along the entire frontage potentially adding to the drainage issues today. He believes that installing curbs in this area would likely worsen the situation. Instead, he suggests creating cut-throughs in the berm to allow water to flow across Lamb Lane and into the wetlands and stream. Ultimately it is up to the Board to decide if they want payment in lieu of OR sidewalks and curbs.

Outside Agencies

- Approved LOI for the property
- Have not gone to DEP for any general permits
- Will submit to Freehold Soil if project gets preliminary approval
- Monmouth County – not filed yet
- Township Health Department – submitted but looks like a review of the septic field is needed as well as soil testing.

Other discussion points from the Board:

- Mr. Rizzo, asked how this site will function with the neighboring lot since there is an interconnection between the two lots. Mr. Pape said this project is a stand-alone project. If sites are used together in the future, the applicant will need to consider easements.
- Trash, recycling, loading and unloading will be located near the maintenance building and will provide a masonry enclosure based on the board planner's recommendation.
- The locker room reflected on the floor plans for stable "A" will not be connected to the septic system. There will be portable toilets but no shower facilities.
- Feed storage area will be located east of the maintenance building
- No entrance gate is proposed at this time
- 24x7 operation, employees will be on site, sleeping quarters in the maintenance building for up to 3 people.
- Fencing in the paddock areas
- "No Idling" signs will be posted
- No requirement for fire suppression in the building.

- The veterinarians will take away any medical waste they use when working on the horses.
- No posted speed limit signs since the roads are private on site
- No fuel storage proposed at this time
- No fire pump or booster pump

Traffic

Mr. Jahr gave an overview of his traffic studies.

- The peak hours for the Lamb Lane intersection are as follows:
 - AM peak: 7:30 to 8:30
 - PM peak: 5:15 to 6:15
 - Saturday peak: 1pm – 2pm

Mr. Jahr did a video data collection study of the existing Gaitway farm drive from 1/25/24 through 2/3/24.

- Peak traffic volumes at Gaitway
 - AM were 47 trips
 - PM peak hour 29 trips
 - Saturday peak hours traffic volume would be 85
 - Traffic is minimal in the overnight hours.
 - Most of the vehicles recorded were passenger vehicles (SUV, Pickup). Trailers did not constitute the majority of the vehicles present in the study.

His professional opinion is that Lamb Lane can easily handle the traffic volumes. The proposed location for the driveway is the most suitable location on Lamb Lane because it has sufficient sight distance for anyone entering or exiting or using Lamb Lane.

Other discussion points from the Board in regards to the traffic testimony:

- The applicant should explore alternative access options via a County road instead of access from Lamb Lane.
- Sunday traffic volumes were not studied per the traffic consultant
- The applicant will consider the request by the Board Planner to hose down the dirt roads regularly to minimize dust. There is a water truck for the track so there is a possibility but will revisit for final.
- Board expressed concern about the safety of the roadway carrying horse trailers with the turns/bends on Lamb Lane.
- There might be special events at this location in the future but as a standalone project, special events are not anticipated.
- Mr. Lescavage confirmed that the entrance drive can accommodate trucks pulling trailers entering and exiting simultaneously.

Architectural plans Exhibit A5

Mr. Davidson, Architect, described the stables and the maintenance building preliminary plans.

- Stables - Basic barn style, board and batten light gray, metal roof, wood shutters, windows and doors. Each stall has dutch doors and some cupolas for ventilation.
- Maintenance Building design is similar to stables - light gray, egress doors on both sides of the building. Interior is multi-purpose and will be where the bunks are for the few employees overnight.
- Height of maintenance building and stables are 20 feet.
- Will work with the Board Professionals prior to final submission to refine the design.

Variations / Waivers

Christine Nazzaro-Cofone described the waiver and variance relief the applicant is seeking. She stated that overall the application is consistent with the zoning ordinance, zone plan, and the master plan.

- Variance for the (5'x2') 10 square foot sign which identifies Lamb Lane Farm
Variance falls under the C2 (criteria g, h) variance relief and sees no substantial detriment to the zone plan or the public good.
- Waivers that are required are for the crossings to get to the property and to get to the adjacent property at some point
- Waiver for the sidewalks – If it is not granted, the applicant will install curbing or sidewalk where the Board thinks is appropriate.
- Parking Stalls size – some stalls will be 9'x18' but other stalls may be larger.

The Board raised concerns over the parking stall size of 9'x18' and the size for of the stalls for trailer parking.

Chairwoman Kwaak initiated the public comment period for input on the Lamb Lane Stables Application. The following individuals were sworn in as each addressed the Board:

Peter Haber – 97 Lamb Lane, Manalapan, NJ
Robert Duffy – 107 Lamb Lane, Manalapan, NJ
Stacy Butewicz - 312 Aspen Drive, Plainsboro NJ – Equestrian Real Estate
Ken Fischer – Chesapeake VA – owner of Gaitway Farms

Talking points from the Public:

- Traffic on Lamb Lane
- Trailer traffic going in and out of the farm
- Width of Lamb Lane (not being wide enough for trailers)
- Safety of Lamb Lane with additional farm traffic
- Safety of the residents who walk, bike, etc.
- Garbage dumping
- Smell of the manure / quantity of manure
- Quality of life issue
- Explore alternatives to access point
- Commercial Farm vs. “just a farm” operation
- Mr. Fischer extended an invitation to the entire Board to visit Gaitway Farms, offering them the opportunity to gain insight as to what Lamb Lane Stables might look like if approved.

Mr. Pape concluded with remarks emphasizing that their intention is not to replicate Gaitway, but rather to develop a modern 2024 version. He acknowledged that there are still details that need to be finalized, which is why they are only seeking preliminary site plan approval at this time.

Mr. Cucchiaro explained the nature of a preliminary approval as defined by the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) states that a plan for preliminary approval does not need to be fully engineered and does have to depict all details because it is “preliminary.” The detail presented at tonight’s meeting satisfies the requirement for a preliminary approval.

<Transcripts provided by the applicant’s attorney under separate attachment>

After public comments, the Board voted to grant Preliminary Site Plan approval with ancillary variance and design waiver relief subject to the conditions placed on the record.

A Motion was made by Mr. Kastell and Seconded by Mr. Fisher to approve Preliminary Major Site Plan.

Yes: Fisher, Brown, Castronovo, Jacobson, Kwaak, McNaboe, Hogan, Kastell, Shorr

No:

Absent:

Abstain:

Not Eligible: Pollifrone, Givelekian

Correspondence - None

Non Agenda Items – None

Adjournment – Chair Kwaak

Submitted:

Nancy McGrath