

**MINUTES  
CLIFTON PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING OF FEBRUARY 23, 2023**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Planning Board of the City of Clifton, New Jersey, held at the City Hall, Clifton, New Jersey on February 23, 2023. Pursuant to the “Open Public Meeting Act” all notice requirements were satisfied. The time, place, date, and form of notice was announced as well as advising all applicants that formal action may be taken on the matters on the agenda.

Those present: Comrs. Binaso, Korbanics, Lataro, Trella, Welsh, City Manager Villano, Mayor Grabowski, Vice Chair Withers, Chairwoman Kolodziej

Those absent: Commissioner Greco, Councilman Gibson.

Minutes of January reorganization meeting and regular meeting were approved.

**Master Plan Reexamination Report.**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Planning Board adopted the Master Plan Re-Examination Report and directed that same be forwarded to the Governing Body.

**New Hearing**

Morici Real Estate Management, LLC  
833 Clifton Avenue  
Block 35.07, Lot 1  
Preliminary and final site plan approval.

Glenn Peterson, Esq. represents the applicant. The applicant seeks approval for a car wash. The applicant states that the application fully conforms to the conditions required as part of the conditional use requirements of the City Ordinance. There is one minor variance requested for lighting. The applicant’s witnesses were sworn. Mr. Morici testified that he is proposing a fully autonomous car wash. The entire process is automated. The customer does not exit the vehicle. There are no additional services including vacuum cleaners. It is an exterior car wash only. Someone is on alert to manage the equipment. The car travels on a conveyor belt. There is a double set of blowers in the building but behind the exit door. There are no employees with towels hand drying the vehicle. The vehicle leaves after it exits the tunnel. Mr. Morici says that the technology has improved so much that the decibel levels is less than what the decibel level is on the street. There is also a screen at the end of the tunnel which reduces noise. There may be up to one attendant during peak hours to help move traffic along although Mr. Morici believes that they can stack enough vehicles. City Manager questioned the 24 hour use as he has a concern about noise in the neighborhood. Mr. Morici stated that they would stipulate to add a fence as a buffer, (six foot vinyl) behind the hedges. Mr. Morici also stated that they would agree to open at 6 a.m. and close at midnight. Comr. Lataro asked if there were multiple vehicles on the conveyor at one time. Mr. Morici stated that there could be multiple cars on the conveyor belt. Comr.

Welsh asked about traffic issues, especially where the Dunkin Donuts exits onto the street. He also stated that there is a high volume of pedestrian traffic, including school children.

About three cars can fit in the building at the same time. Comr. Binaso asked why there are so many parking spaces if there is only one attendant. Mr. Morici stated that it is a requirement of the ordinance. Comr. Binaso questioned landscaping. Mr. Morici stated that there were a number of new four inch caliper trees added. Mr. Binaso asked if he knew what trees were coming down. Mr. Morici stated that his landscape plan represents a substantial improvement from what is there. Mayor Grabowski asked about safeguards. Mr. Morici stated that the door opens to let out the car at the end the tunnel. Is there something to stop the cars from piling up as they exit. Mr. Morici stated that there are a number of sensors that control this. Four cars at the end of the tunnel can stack at the exit. If not, the machine will go into stand by mode until it is safe to exit. Vice Chair asked if there are types of services that take longer. Mr. Morici stated that the vehicle passes by all the stations. Only those stations paid for will activate. The time period stays the same. There are security cameras on the site. The meeting was opened to the public. Isaac Abolto came forward. He owns Paulison Car Wash for about 22 years. He says there are issues with stacking. Another member of the public asked about decibel levels and its effect on the neighboring property. Mr. Morici stated that they will meet the ordinance limitations as it relates to sound. Mr. Morici stated that he has reviewed his plan with the neighbor. Another member of the public asked how long the car will be in the tunnel. Mr. Morici stated that the time is about 80 seconds. Mr. Morici further stated that he can stack many vehicles and he can complete the wash in much less time. The applicant's architect, Mr. Capro, was qualified. He described the building. The roof is a flat sheet encapsulated by some other material. He stated that some type of sound deadening could be added if the sound exceeded permitted levels. Thomas Donohue was qualified as a professional engineer. Mr. Donohue described the site. Access will come through a new driveway on Clifton Avenue. There is a driveway that leads to the carwash building entrance. Exit is onto Cloverdale Road. There are two bypass lanes. Should a patron not want to wait, there is a first by pass lane. 17 cars can stack in the lane. Mr. Donohue went through the conditions of the conditional use and testified that the applicant meets all the conditions. The sign out rom is being removed from the application. There is a retaining wall to support the rear parking spaces. There is an inground filtration system. Calculations for the drainage comply with the 100-year storm requirements. Four free standing light poles are proposed along with 10 building mounted lights. The light is directed downward. 15 shade trees with a four-inch caliper will be installed along with 33 arborvitae shrubs installed around the residential property adjoining. There are additional smaller shrubs proposed and some grass. The dumpster will have a block wall enclosure with wooden gates. Vice Chair discussed the grass pavers, but does not want it to impact the drainage system. The area must support the wheel load of the fire apparatus. There is a retaining wall about 8 or 9 feet. Comr. Welsh asked about the two parking spaces along the building and asked if they are stacked parking. Mr. Intindola explained that they are not stacked. There was a discussion about eliminating parking spaces which are not needed. There was a discussion about showing these spaces as "reserved for future use". Vice Chair asked about the construction of the wall. The applicant will confer with the Board's engineer. City Manager suggested altering the parking scheme along the by pass lane without raising the wall so high. The lighting is LED and will be 2700 Kelvin. Gary Dean was qualified as a traffic engineer. Mr. Dean says car washes are busiest when the street is not busy, such as the middle of the day or Saturday or Sunday mornings. He says that car wash peak time is not at 7:30 in the morning. He says that fleets mostly get washed in the middle of the day. He says normal customers go in on Saturdays and Sundays, generally. Mr. Dean testified as to levels of service. He says the winter when it snows and in early May during pollen season are the busiest times. Mr. Dean stated that there is the ability to stack 17 cars. He says that he does not expect that there will be the need for this amount of stacking except during the busiest times. If the lot is too crowded, people will not enter. Mr. Dean also discussed the two by pass lanes which assist in making the site function very well. Mr. Dean also

talked about the ground covering and that they can withstand a tracker trailer load with deforming. He says they are the structural equivalent of pavement that hopefully will never get used. He says that a car wash use is a good land use. He says that schools and the city hall are not open on weekends so there is no conflict with those uses. He says there will be no detailing on site. Comr Welsh stated that there may be a problem with stacking as the traffic study did not take place at 2:30 p.m. when school gets out, which is when Comr. Welsh states is the heaviest traffic time. Mr. Dean stated that he could do a study at 4:30 but it would be the same for any use put on the site. He says that people who know about this acute problem at that time, that people will avoid it. The applicant's professional planner, Mr. Martin, testified. He reviewed the Ordinances and the Master Plan. He says that the property is a conditional use and meets all of the conditions of the zone. The property is bordered by Conrail, and some commercial uses, a Dunkin Donuts, and some residential areas. The lot is currently vacant. The property is in the BC District Zone. Mr. Martin went through all the zone conditions and stated that the applicant complies. Mr. Martin stated that the zone was crafted based on the knowledge that there are other uses around the use being proposed, which is why the conditions exist. Some residents came forward to state that the plan would enhance the neighborhood, as the proper as been vacant and an eyesore. One resident stated that he does not like that the most use will be on weekends when he would hope to have a quiet weekend. Another resident questioned the stormwater plan and that minimizes the disturbance to the rear would minimize a flood impact and buffer the neighbors. City Manager was hoping for testimony on decibel levels. He also asked about how we could minimize disturbance on the site. The matter was carried to the April meeting of the Board.

**Miscellaneous:**

Informal Review of possible development at 230 Brighton Road  
Jason Tuvel, Esq. represents the applicant, International Delights, which wishes to expand its building. The Board reviewed the proposal and made comments relative thereto. The Board and the applicant understand that this informal review is not binding on the Board. The applicant thanked the Board for its time and comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Ferraro, Esq, Secretary/Counsel