

Memo

To: Board of Adjustment Chairperson McGinley and
Zoning Official Miesche
Verona Board of Adjustment

From: Plan Review Committee of the Verona Environmental Commission

c: Verona Environmental Commission Chair

Date: May 23, 2024

Re: **Case # 2024-10**
30 Pompton Avenue [Block 202, Lot 44]
Verona, New Jersey

Zone: Extended Town Center (ETC)

The Plan Review Committee of the Verona Environmental Commission (VEC) reviewed the application for 30 Pompton Avenue in Verona submitted by John R Dusinberre, Esq., on behalf of EVI Realty, Inc. which we received on April 24, 2024. We understand that the Applicant is seeking to obtain a variance for signage, along with site plan approval for a change of use for an existing building. The comments below are provided for the Board's consideration:

- 1) The VEC PRC understands that the property has a number of preexisting nonconformities including one for total improved lot coverage and another for a non-compliant buffer zone.
 - a) The allowable coverage in the Extended Town Center zone is 40% for buildings and 80% for total Improved lot coverage whereas the existing coverage has been estimated at 24.6% and about 90%, respectively. It was unclear whether this coverage was assessed on the entirety of the site or merely for an undefined portion of the site where the Starbucks is proposed. The site includes the Acura dealership, Rays Pizza (Huntington and Pompton Spa) and the building formerly known as the Chase Bank. Additionally, the preponderance of the site also appears to be paved, containing parking, walkways etc.

In different portions of the site plans and documentation, the entirety of the site is relied upon for examples of conformance with Verona's Zoning Code (i.e.: the Applicant cites compliant setbacks for the Acura building) but in other portions of the application, only the former Chase structure, or the Chase structure and the Rays Pizza are referenced. For example, there was no inclusion of the parking area and number of spots that occupy the portion of the site that runs behind the Claremont Avenue residential uses.
 - b) Due to the lack of stormwater design standards and the excessive coverage on the site, listed as 3.282 acres, the VEC PRC recommends that the Applicant reduce the impervious coverage to accommodate green infrastructure that can aid in stormwater management. An area identified for this installation is the buffer zone adjacent to the residential properties to the west. We note that the existing buffer zone on the west

side of the property is deficient according to the requirements of the Verona Zoning Code's [§150-11](#).

- 2) The Applicant's plans cite the buffer as a 5.1-foot-wide area. Upon a visit to the site, those dimensions appear to be exaggerated. The buffer's existing conditions are in extreme disrepair, containing overgrowth of weeds and invasive ivies and dead arborvitaes. Additionally, the former use, Chase Bank, did not allow parking along this area, whereas, with this application's change of use and contrary to §150.11.1 B, the proposed plans include two-way car access, loading and parking in this area. We therefore recommend:
 - a) Expansion of the buffer area, (permeable, planted area) by reducing the roadway to one-way car access. This would continue to enable flush parking, but would benefit the property by allowing runoff to infiltrate into these newly planted areas. The curbs in this area should be cut to allow for runoff sheet flow into the new permeable area(s).
 - b) The expansion of the buffer area to about 15 feet, in accordance with Verona's Zoning Code could easily incorporate a rain garden that sloped to the south and could take advantage of the stormwater inlet structure proposed on the site plans. Reconstituting and creating a sufficient buffer would likely necessitate a change from a two-way aisle to a one-way aisle on west side of building.
 - c) We also recommend consideration of permeable pavement applications in the parking spots area of the paved lot.
 - d) Furthermore, the Applicant should also provide any planned planting lists and landscape plans in accordance with [Recommended Plant Selection List](#) included in Verona's Zoning Code §150. At this time, there were no documents provided for any planting plans. We recommend that the Applicant provide a landscape plan that identifies the planting and trees that they intend to install.
- 3) In addition to the above comments, please see attached the Low Impact Planning and Construction Checklist. This suggested list was compiled by the VEC based on best available practices.

[JP/STD/WS]

VEC_2024-05-23 Comments 30 Pompton Avenue.docx

Low Impact Checklist: Construction

This suggested list has been compiled by the Verona Environmental Commission based on best available practices. This is not a requirement of the uniform construction code. It is intended to be beneficial to all residents considering renovations and new construction. The purposes of this list are to 1) assist those planning construction projects to do so in a manner that causes the least disruption to the environment; 2) establish a healthy setting for those occupying the new or renovated space; and 3) reduce waste and save resources. Implementing environmentally friendly practices can be economical when considered at pre-construction stages and are often beneficial in the long term.

General Construction

- Recycle and/or salvage non-hazardous construction and demolition debris
- Use renewable building material and products
- Incorporate renewable energy (i.e. geothermal, solar)
- Use local products (i.e. local and sustainable woods)
- Use local construction products and companies
- Conserve energy and reduce electricity use as much as possible

Grounds & Landscaping

- Create a sedimentation control plan to prevent sediment from moving off site.
- Use native plantings (Native plants are adapted to thrive in local conditions)
- Use captured rainwater or recycled grey water for irrigation
- Provide bicycle parking to help reduce overcrowded streets and CO2 emissions.

Storm Water Management

- Avoid runoff to other properties by installing an underground cistern or rain garden. This will keep water on your own property and out of the sewer system.
- Limit impervious surfaces – use an open grid pavement system (at least 50% pervious)
- Promote infiltration that captures and treats storm water runoff from rainfall
- Use a water retention system (i.e. rain barrel) to collect rainwater for non-potable uses

Lighting

- Choose LED lights (the most environmentally-efficient option)
- Purchase renewable electricity, either directly from your power supplier, from an independent clean power generator, or through renewable energy certificates.
- Use skylights or solo tubes for natural daytime lighting. Use sensor controls in commercial or industrial settings and solar lighting outdoors.

Foundation & Basement

- Use environmentally friendly foundation sealants (rather than black tar)
- Prevent sump pump water from flowing into the sewer system

Roofing

- Use light color roofing materials to limit heat absorption created by darker roofs
- Use roofing material with a solar reflectance index (SRI) equal to or greater than 78 for low roofs and 29 for steep-sloped roofs
- Install tile or metal roofs
- Consider installing a vegetated roof

Heating & Cooling

- Use 2 x 6 studs instead of 2 x 4 to increase amount of insulation
- Install programmable thermostats that adjust temperatures throughout the day
- Use occupant sensing and/or remote control thermostat technologies
- Install heat pumps to transfer energy heat and cold Use high-efficiency boilers/furnaces
- Use attic fans to regulate heating and cooling

Windows

- Choose ultraviolet window protection to protect against sun damage
- Install triple pane windows or windows with Argon or Kryton gas between panes

Products

- Choose products with low VOCs (VOCs are found in adhesives, interior paints, cabinets, etc)
- Avoid products that contain hazardous chemicals such as formaldehyde and cyanide
- Choose ENERGY STAR® appliances
- Install dual flush toilets Install low flow shower heads
- Avoid garbage disposals and make provisions for composting

Verona Environmental Commission

Low Impact Checklist: Planning

This suggested list has been compiled by the Verona Environmental Commission based on best available practices. This list is intended to assist individuals involved in planning and building projects in Verona Township towards submitting low impact plans. The goal of a low impact plan is not only to increase cost savings and add value to your project but to make environmentally responsible choices and eliminate project delays in early stages of the planning process.

General Construction & Design

- Provide occupants with connection to outdoor space through increased natural light and views
- Orient buildings facing southwest to maximize potential solar installation
- Use orientation and design to maximize passive solar heat/cooling
- Use proper planning to prevent damage to surrounding properties and public spaces
- Minimize disturbance to soils and vegetation
- Recycle and/or salvage non-hazardous construction and demolition debris
- Use renewable building materials and products
- Use local and sustainable woods
- Incorporate renewable energy and reduce energy use

Grounds & Landscaping

- Create a sedimentation control plan Limit altering steep slope areas
- Encourage landscaping that requires limited moving, trimming, and watering
- Create landscapes that limit the need for lawn chemicals and maintenance
- Position evergreens to the north to shield wind/ Position deciduous trees to the south to cool buildings
- Use native plantings (Native plants are adapted to thrive in local conditions)
- Place parking spaces in shaded areas
- Place bicycle parking racks in secure areas near entrances
- Use paving materials with an SRI value >29. This will reflect, not absorb solar heat.

Storm Water Management

- Limit impervious surfaces – use an open grid pavement system (at least 50% pervious)
- Reduce impervious cover to promote infiltration that captures and treats storm water
- Use a water retention system (i.e. rain barrel) to collect rainwater or recycled gray water for non-potable uses

Foundation & Basement

- Use alternative practices (rather than black tar) for foundation sealants
- Encourage aeration and ventilation
- Draw sunlight into basement areas through access windows

Roofing

- Use light color roofing materials to limit heat absorbed by dark colored roofs
- Use roofing material with a solar reflectance index (SRI) equal to or greater than 78 for low roofs and 29 for steep sloped roofs
- Consider Tile or Metal roofs
- Construct roofs that can support solar installations

Lighting

- Use solar lighting outdoors
- Use skylights or solo tubes for natural daytime lighting
- Use motion sensor lighting where applicable
- Choose energy-efficient light bulbs

Products

- Avoid products that contain hazardous chemicals such as formaldehyde and cyanide
- Use local products (i.e. local and sustainable woods)
- Use local construction equipment and companies when possible

For more information and resources please see:

The Native Plant Society of New Jersey - <http://www.npsnj.org>

The Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions - <http://www.anjec.org>

US Green Building Council NJ Chapter - <http://usgbc.org>

New Jersey Green Building Manual - <http://greenmanual.rutgers.edu>

The New Jersey Department of Transportation Master Plan - <http://njbikepedplan.com>

Rutgers Center for Green Building - <http://greenbuilding.rutgers.edu>

The Verona Environmental Commission - <http://www.veronaec.org>