

Planners OK mixed-use building

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Planning Board voted 5-2 to grant preliminary and final site plan approval for construction of a building at 409 Elmira St., the former site of Depot Market and Prawn restaurant.

At issue was that vehicles will have to back out onto Elmira Street from the property, which will be a mix of retail and residential.

During the meeting Nov. 7, attorney Tony Monzo, representing 409 Elmira Street LLC, said the design received preliminary approval from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

The original plans called for five parking spaces at the front of the building. Plans for a concrete driveway were amended to use brick pavers along with removing the center parking spot to create more green space, Monzo said.

The existing building will be demolished and replaced with the construction of a retail space on the ground floor and an apartment on the second and third floors. He said the property backs up to Osborne Court, which is used by NJ Transit buses and cannot be used for access to the property.

The project has two offsite parking spaces in the Welcome Center lot provided by the city when Elmira Street was widened and frontage taken away from the property.

Planning Board solicitor Richard King said it was difficult to grant a parking vari-

ance for a commercial use when the board did not know what type of business would inhabit the retail space.

He said a business such as an ice cream parlor would generate a lot of traffic with customers backing in and out of the parking spaces.

King noted the applicant sacrificed one parking space to satisfy the HPC.

Planning Board engineer Craig Hurlless said the applicant exhausted methods to eliminate back-out parking. The project required a variance for the number of parking spaces. While eight are required by city code, the project provides five onsite and two offsite spaces.

The city requires a 6-foot parking setback which must comply with the building setbacks. Hurlless said the project required a variance since it has no setback for parking along Elmira Street.

A variance was required for an extended curb cut to allow the backout parking, Hurlless said.

During public comment, Elmira Street resident Heidi Cummings said the current building has been used as a takeout sandwich shop, a dress shop and a barbecue restaurant and she never noticed any type of traffic issues. She said a walkway from Elmira Street to Osborne Court created as part of the project would be a positive aspect.

Elmira Street resident Kyle Anderson said he did not believe backout parking would be an issue. He said the four-way stop at Broad and Elmira streets produces a gap in traffic.

Monzo said the proposed project reduces lot coverage and increases green space.

Board members Dennis Crowley and Marilyn Reed voted against the project. Reed said she took exception to testimony of Elmira Street

not carrying a volume of traffic due to a bicycle shop on the block.

Deputy City Manager Lou Belasco said he voted in favor of the project and a parking variance since it is located adjacent to a city parking lot.

TIDES: Nov. 16-23, 2022

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
16	1:26	1:26	6:48	8:02
17	2:25	2:24	7:52	8:49
18	3:19	3:19	8:54	9:33
19	4:06	4:09	9:49	10:14
20	4:50	4:57	10:41	10:54
21	5:32	5:42	11:30	11:35
22	6:13	6:28		12:19
23	6:56	7:15	12:17	1:07

MOON PHASES
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City bans invasive species, initiates method for fines

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an ordinance Nov. 1 prohibiting the planting of invasive plants and trees.

The list of prohibited species: Japanese stilt grass, mulberry weed, tree of heaven, porcelain berry, oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, Russian olive, thorny olive, Chinese privet, Japanese honeysuckle, English ivy, bamboo and Japanese blood grass.

Failure to control the spread of such vegetation is considered a violation of the ordinance.

"No person, contractor or property owner shall plant any species of tree or plant that appears on the city's list of invasive and nuisance species," the ordinance states.

A code enforcement officer may issue a violation notice when an invasive plant is found on a property, giving notification the tree or plant must be removed or abated in a specific time period at the owner's expense. According to the ordinance, violations of the invasive species ban are subject to fines levied by

the city.

The ordinance also applies to property owned by the city. Inspections of properties for invasive plants will be conducted only after a neighboring property owner files a complain.

Every day that a violation continues to exist will constitute a separate violation.

Meier wants Promenade signs stating e-bike rules

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Pedestrians can be startled when an electric bike quickly approaches behind them on the city's Promenade.

At a Nov. 1 meeting, Councilman Shaine Meier suggested signs be posted on the city's Promenade prohibiting the riding of electric bicycles (e-bikes). He said e-bikes are being ridden on the Promenade year-round.

Meier said walkers are surprised when e-bikes ride up behind them on the Promenade and asked signs prohibiting e-bikes remain on the Promenade all year.

Meier said e-bikes are fairly heavy and could present a major safety issue to pedestrians.

City Manager Mike Voll said signs on the Promenade need to be amended. City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said a city regulation states no person may ride or park an electric or power assisted bicycle or electric or power assisted scooter on the Promenade at any time.

"It doesn't require a code amendment, but the signs could be amended, or a new sign put up with in season and off-season rules," he said.

Meier said he was willing to work on the issue with Voll and the Department of Public Works.

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