

**BOROUGH OF ALLENTOWN
PLANNING BOARD
JUNE 6, 2022**

Present: Jennifer Elder Brady, Dan Payson, Allison Arnone, George Fallat, Joseph Fidler, Robert Mayer, Lynne Meara, Thomas Monahan, Sr., Vincent Tavernite, Jamie Ford, and Jeffrey McLaughlin

Absent: Thomas Fritts, and Ron Kuzma

Also, Present: Borough Attorney Michele Donato, Esq., Board Planner Andy Thomas Board Secretary April Claudio

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act was provided to this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Borough bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice, and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

Public Comment on items not on the agenda: None

Council update: Town purchased a new police car. Mayor is having a meeting regarding the Upper Freehold event center to combat changes that will affect Allentown. The 2022 budget was approved.

Allentown Event Facility, 24-30 South Main Street

The informal proposal was for a distillery, brewery, event hall and restaurant with shared public parking.

Ms. Donato advised the Mayor is within 200ft of this application and cannot participate. She explained how an informal hearing works. The proposal is a permitted use. The Board can ask questions if they like.

Wil Borkowski, property owner, met with Rick Norman of Garden State Distillery to come up with a business idea. Their proposal would extend over three properties with a sharing parking lot with the town. Two existing buildings would be removed or relocated. The garage shown on the plans is new and would be relocated to a new area. They will submit their proposal to the Historical Commission for review. The other building on the property will be retained and converted to a restaurant which would be separate than the proposed distillery use.

Mr. Norman stated Garden State Distillery (GSD) has been looking for farmland because they try to use NJ grains. Their goal is to grow all of their own grain for whiskey, vodka and beer. Their goal is to also be the largest distillery in NJ and focus on distribution. At night they would offer beer tastings and cocktails and have a separate space for weddings and events.

Ms. Arnone asked about hours of operation. Mr. Norman anticipated they would be open for 2-3 hours on Wednesday and Thursday, open 'til 11 pm Friday and Saturday and Sunday 12-5pm.

Ms. Meara asked if a liquor license is required. Mr. Norman stated they would obtain a craft brewery and distillery license. Ms. Meara asked for the number of anticipated customers. Mr. Norman replied 200-300 people a day.

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Ms. Arnone was concerned about parking for events. Mr. McLaughlin asked about odors and water usage. Mr. Norman stated they use 300-400,000 gallons of recycled water and if there is any odor it would be similar to a bakery smell because of the yeast.

Mr. Mayer asked about the impact to Main Street.

Mr. Borkowski anticipated this would be an anchor site that would bring people to town to shop and eat.

Ms. Arnone would like to see the architect provide street views.

Mr. Fallat asked about the number of employees. Mr. Norman replied 15-20. Mr. Fallat was concerned about the distribution trucks. Mr. Norman stated they use Ford vans for distribution but if they need a larger truck it would only be once a month. The brewery side would use a small box truck and deliveries to the site would be once a week.

Ms. Elder-Brady asked about storage and disposal. Mr. Norman stated they reuse grains with farms and bakeries or for fuel. Grains usually come in 50 pound bags and there would be a dumpster on site.

Mr. Ford asked about outside seating. Mr. Borkowski stated there would be some outdoor seating and the buildings would be lined with garage doors that would open to the inside.

Ms. Arnone was concerned about parking, and entering and existing the property.

Mr. Borkowski stated they will prepare a plan with signage and sidewalk views when they prepare engineering plans.

Mr. Fallat asked about storm water. Mr. Borkowski stated their engineer will address.

Ms. Elder-Brady asked if any variances would be requested. Steven Gouin, attorney, stated the lots would be subdivided so each business has its own lot.

Mike Simpson, architect, explained the proposed design.

Ms. Arnone was concerned about left and right turns onto Main Street and would like to see more detail. She would also like to see how the height of the buildings compares to other buildings in the area.

Mr. Simpson stated the main part of the building is 35 feet, same as the existing press building and is 45 feet to the highest architectural feature.

Mr. Ford asked if the event space would be used for overflow for the distillery and brewery. Mr. Norman replied no. He added that they would use a local liquor store to supply the event space.

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Mr. Borkowski and Mr. Norman along with their professionals will take into consideration the Boards comments.

Being no further comments Mr. McLaughlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Mayer and approved unanimously.