



Rockland County

Ed Day, Rockland County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner

Arlene R. Miller
Deputy Commissioner

February 8, 2018

Ramapo Planning Board
237 Route 59
Suffern, NY 10901

Tax Data: 49.14-1-52

Re: GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW REVIEW: Section 239 L and M

Map Date: 5/7/2017

Date Review Received: 1/12/2018

Item: *TALMUD TORAH ON COLLEGE (R-1015K)*

Special permit and site plan applications for a two-story school with a basement and a 9,200 SF building footprint on .989 gross acres (.954 net acres) in an R-40 zoning district. Variances have been granted for lot area, lot width, side setback, total site setback, rear setback, maximum development coverage, floor area ratio, minimum onsite parking, and parking in the front yard. The applicant is also seeking a waiver of the buffer requirement.

East side of College Road, approximately 145 feet south of Smolley Drive

Reason for Referral:

College Road (CR 81), Rockland Community College

The County of Rockland Department of Planning has reviewed the above item. Acting under the terms of the above GML powers and those vested by the County of Rockland Charter, I, the Commissioner of Planning, hereby:

****Recommend the following modifications***

1 The site plan submitted with this application lists the newest revision date to be May 7, 2017. In our previous review dated August 2, 2017, which was completed for the Ramapo Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the required variances, the newest revision date was listed as June 18, 2017. Therefore, we are reviewing plans that are older than what were submitted to the ZBA. In addition, the plans differ quite significantly, illustrating changes to the entrances, parking layouts and play areas. How can the variances that were granted by the ZBA Hearing #4252 be applicable to plans that are older and have a completely different design? Before the site plan and special permit can be reviewed and approved, the Ramapo Planning Board must ascertain whether they are in fact reviewing the same layout of the school, parking area, and entrances that the ZBA reviewed and granted. If they are not the same, then the ZBA must rehear the variances for the most up-to-date layout to ensure that the variances granted for the site plan design are congruous.

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2 This department has reiterated the concerns below in eight reviews dating back to May 13, 2015, and considers them to still be valid. The subject site is non-conforming in terms of lot area and lot width. A variance of more than 48 percent is required for minimum lot area now that the 100-year floodplain and designated street line deductions have been calculated. In addition, the site is compromised by a 30-foot wide sewer and drainage easement that runs across the rear of the parcel. The applicant is proposing a school building that is only 4,400 SF less than the maximum 32,000 SF permitted on a conforming 80,000 SF lot. A floor area ratio variance of almost 88 percent is required. The proposed on-site parking is deficient by over 28 percent. The maximum permitted development coverage is exceeded by 210 percent. Several setback variances are also required. This proposal will result in a gross overutilization of the site as evidenced by the number and the magnitude of the variances required. The footprint of the proposed school building must be reduced. The second story must also be eliminated. A more closely conforming proposal shall be submitted that also complies with the special permit standards outlined in Sections 376-120 and 376-1216.

3 Permitting development that does not comply with the applicable bulk standards can set an undesirable land use precedent and result in the overutilization of individual sites. As noted above, the applicant was granted a 210 percent increase over the maximum permitted development coverage and an 87.5 percent increase in the maximum allowable floor area ratio, as well as yard and setback variances. The ability of the existing infrastructure to accommodate oversized educational facilities on non-conforming parcels is a countywide concern and must be evaluated. This evaluation must consider whether local roads will become more congested and the sewer system, stormwater management systems and the public water supply will be overburdened. The Town must consider the cumulative and regional impacts of permitting such development. We continue to recommend that the footprint of the proposed school building be reduced and the second story be eliminated.

4 The comments in the January 19, 2018 letter from the Rockland County Highway Department must be met. All required permits must be obtained prior to any demolition, grading or construction on the site.

5 This department is not in favor of granting parking variances on state or county roads. The applicant is seeking a 28 percent reduction in the parking requirement. Insufficient on-site parking may affect the safe and efficient flow of traffic along College Road. While students may not drive to school, a student body of 250 will require a sizeable staff. Sufficient parking must be available. Under no circumstances is parking permitted along the County road. The adequacy of the proposed parking must be closely monitored. Off-site parking arrangements may be required for special events such as parent-teacher conferences and assemblies. Written agreements must be in place with neighboring property owners for off-site parking arrangements.

6 An updated review must be completed by the County of Rockland Department of Health, and all required permits obtained. In addition, the applicant must comply with the conditions of their April 13, 2017 letter.

7 Water is a scarce resource in Rockland County; thus proper planning and phasing of this project are critical to supplying the current and future residents of the Villages, Towns, and County with an adequate supply of water. If any public water supply improvements are required, engineering plans and specifications for these improvements shall be reviewed and approved by the Rockland County Department of Health prior to construction in order to ensure compliance with Article II (Drinking Water Supplies) of the Rockland County Sanitary Code and Part 5 of the New York State Sanitary Code.

8 For installation of a sanitary sewer system, engineering plans and specifications shall be reviewed and approved by the Rockland County Department of Health prior to construction.

9 An updated review must be completed by the Rockland County Sewer District No. 1, and all required permits obtained. In addition, the applicant must comply with the conditions of their letters dated August 16, 2017 and September 8, 2017.

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10 The NYS Department of State has determined that the Town is not administering or enforcing the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code in accordance with minimum standards set forth in 19 NYCRR part 1203. Given the concerns about the Town's administration and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code raised in the Executive Deputy Secretary of State's letter of July 15, 2016, the proposed school building must be held to the requisite minimum standards and comply with all requirements of this code.

11 An updated review must be completed by the County of Rockland Office of Fire and Emergency Services, the Town Fire Inspector or the Monsey Fire District to ensure that there is sufficient maneuverability on-site for emergency vehicles. An achievable fire truck turning radius must be demonstrated on the site plan.

12 The fire department connections shall be designated on the site plan and kept clear for easy access by the emergency response vehicles.

13 Parking spaces 20 through 23 are proposed just north of the school building and a five-foot wide sidewalk. As a result, drivers maneuvering out of these spaces will have a restricted view of the on-site traffic, particularly space 23. They will be unable to see vehicles and pedestrians on the access road near the school entrance. These parking spaces must be reconfigured so that a driver's line of sight will not be hampered by the school building.

14 The Floodplain Administrator for the Town of Ramapo shall certify that the proposed construction is in compliance with the floodplain regulations of the Village and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

15 Several of the provided measurements on the bulk table have not changed despite the elimination of the single-family residence. The front yard, front setback, development coverage and floor area ratio are all subject to change as a result of removing this structure. The bulk table must be updated to reflect any changes related to this site plan revision.

16 Pervious pavers shall be installed where appropriate on the site to reduce the extent of the variance required for maximum development coverage. This must include parking areas, as well as sidewalks.

17 As noted in our December 6, 2016 GML review of an earlier version of this proposal, the October 26, 2016 project narrative references a revised traffic study and illustrated bus turning movements. This department is not in receipt of a traffic study. The drawings submitted do not include bus turning movements. The traffic study and appropriate maps must be submitted for our review.

18 Areas dedicated for snow removal must be clearly delineated on the site plan so that the plow drivers will know where to place the snow piles. This will help to protect the landscaping from being broken from the weight of the snow and from causing salt intrusion to the plants. In addition, designating specific locations on the site for the snow piles, especially since less than the required number of parking spaces are being provided, will eliminate the loss of parking spaces meant for the staff of the school.

19 The landscaping along the county road should be sufficient to block the headlights of vehicles traversing the site. The extent of the landscaping should be expanded further north to better shield the headlights from the county right-of-way.

20 There shall be no net increase in the peak rate of discharge from the site at all design points.

21 Pursuant to General Municipal Law (GML) Section 239-m and 239-n, if any of the conditions of this GML review are overridden by the board, then the local land use board must file a report with the County Commissioner of Planning of the final action taken. If the final action is contrary to the recommendation of the Commissioner, the local land use board must state the reasons for such action.

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22 In addition, pursuant to Executive Order 01-2017 signed by County Executive Day on May 22, 2017, County departments are prohibited from issuing a County permit, license, or approval until the report is filed with the County Commissioner of Planning. The applicant must provide to any County agency which has jurisdiction of the project: 1) a copy of the Commissioner report approving the proposed action; or 2) a copy of the Commissioner of Planning recommendations to modify or disapprove the proposed action, and a certified copy of the land use board statement overriding the recommendations to modify or disapprove, and the stated reasons for the land use board's override.

23 A stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) was not provided. The SWPPP, if required, shall conform to the current regulations, including the New York State Stormwater Management and Design Manual (January 2015) and local ordinances.

24 Prior to the start of construction or grading, a soil and erosion control plan shall be developed and in place for the entire site that meets the latest edition of the New York State Guidelines for Urban Erosion and Sediment Control.

25 Map Note #10 still lists United Water as the Water Supplier, despite our many reviews indicating that this must be corrected to be Suez. As of November 2015, United Water no longer is the water company. This map note must be changed.



Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner of Planning

cc: Supervisor Michael B. Specht, Ramapo
Rockland County Department of Highways
Rockland Community College
Rockland County Department of Health
Rockland County Sewer District #1
Federal Emergency Management Agency
New York State Department of State
Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services
Monsey Fire District
Rockland County Drainage Agency

Anthony R. Celentano P.L.S.
Keren Yad Veizer

Mona Montal, Chief of Staff

**NYS General Municipal Law Section 239 requires a vote of a 'majority plus one' of your agency to act contrary to the above findings.*

The review undertaken by the Rockland County Planning Department is pursuant to, and follows the mandates of Article 12-B of the New York General Municipal Law. Under Article 12-B the County of Rockland does not render opinions, nor does it make determinations, whether the item reviewed implicates the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. The Rockland County Planning Department defers to the municipality forwarding the item reviewed to render such opinions and make such determinations if appropriate under the circumstances.

In this respect, municipalities are advised that under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, the preemptive force of any provision of the Act may be avoided (1) by changing a policy or practice that may result in a substantial burden on religious exercise, (2) by retaining a policy or practice and exempting the substantially burdened religious exercise, (3) by providing exemptions from a policy or practice for applications that substantially burden religious exercise, or (4) by any other means that eliminates the substantial burden.

Proponents of projects are advised to apply for variances, special permits or exceptions, hardship approval or other relief.

Pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law §239-m(6), the referring body shall file a report of final action it has taken with the Rockland County Department of Planning within thirty (30) days after final action. A referring body which acts contrary to a recommendation of modification or disapproval of a proposed action shall set forth the reasons for the contrary action in such report.