



BOROUGH OF LEONIA
Leonia Planning Board
MINUTES

December 16, 2020

7:30 PM

REMOTE MEETING VIA GOTOMEETING

The Borough of Leonia Planning Board held a special meeting on December 16, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. via remote video conference in lieu of an in-person meeting due to the Coronavirus pandemic and Governor Murphy’s Executive Orders 107 and 152 that restrict public gatherings.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Judah Zeigler, Councilman Pasquale Fusco, Chairman Michael DeGidio, Vice Chair Vincent Petti, William Russell, Ron Wolf, Timothy Ford, Patrick Botten, Sean Thompson, Ira Gold, Haeseok Ko, Damee Choi

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: N/A

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Board Attorney Arthur Neiss, Zoning Officer Dan Melfi, Planning Board Engineer Robert Costa, Planning Board Traffic Engineer John Corak

Meeting called to order at 7:38 PM

FLAG SALUTE, OPENING MEETING STATEMENT, ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2020 meeting made by: Vice Chair Petti

Seconded: Mr. Russell

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mayor Zeigler:	yes	Councilman Fusco:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes
Mr. Wolf:	yes	Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Botten:	yes
Mr. Russell:	yes	Vice Chair Petti:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION(S):

PB20-08 - Kulite Semiconductor, 1 Willow Tree Road, Block 801, Lot 2, Preliminary & Final Site Plan Approval for Installation of Emergency Generator

Motion to approve Resolution PB20-08: Mayor Zeigler

Seconded: Mr. Wolf

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mayor Zeigler:	yes	Councilman Fusco:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes
Mr. Wolf:	yes	Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Gold:	yes
Mr. Russell:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes	Mr. Ko:	yes

PB20-09 - Kulite Semiconductor, 400 Willow Tree Road, Block 802, Lot 21 Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval for Installation of Lighting and Generator Improvements

Motion to approve Resolution PB20-09: Mayor Zeigler

Seconded: Councilman Fusco

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mayor Zeigler:	yes	Councilman Fusco:	yes	Mr. Gold:	yes
Mr. Wolf:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes	Mr. Ko:	yes
Mr. Russell:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes	Ms. Choi:	yes

Mr. Steinhagen briefly joined the meeting to extend holiday greetings to the Board.

PB20-10 - Kulite Semiconductor, Schor Avenue, Block 503, Lot 26, Use Variance and Preliminary & Final Site Plan Approval for Installation of Parking Facility with Lifts

Chairman DeGidio reminded the Board that Mayor Zeigler and Councilman Fusco were not eligible to participate in this matter. It was also confirmed that Mr. Botten could not participate as well.

Mr. Regan addressed the board and advised that the applicant closely reviewed the operational approach of the lot.

Michael Good, representing Kulite Semiconductor, was recalled to provide testimony. Mr. Good was reminded that he was previously sworn in at the November 24, 2020 meeting and was still under oath. Mr. Good provided details regarding how employees accessed the parking lot based on their salaried or hourly status. Mr. Good advised that after review, it was determined that half of the lot will be assigned to hourly employees and the other half would be assigned to salaried employees. Per Mr. Good, once employees are in the lot, the parking attendants would rotate the cars on the lift to accommodate the evening departure of first shift employees. Mr. Good also confirmed the hours and days for operation of the parking lot.

Discussion was held regarding the possibility of employees arriving earlier than their scheduled start time, potential back-up on Willow Tree Road or the possibility of delays due to the weather. Per Mr. Good, the assignment of spaces should alleviate any potential back-up on Willow Tree Road and should there be delays, Mr. Good believes that there is sufficient room within the lot to manage back-ups. Mr. Good also stated that Kulite plows their own lots and further detailed Kulite's snow removal processes.

Mr. Corak inquired about the identification for employees in order to alleviate confusion over who is an hourly employee versus a salary employee. Mr. Good stated that it would be a good idea to implement a process for easier identification of employees for parking attendants.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Mr. Good.

No members of the public provided questions.

Hearing no questions from the public, the public questioning portion was closed.

Mr. Regan addressed the proposed screening concerns that was discussed in the November meeting. Mr. Regan stated that the fence was selected as an option by the applicant due to the narrow landscaping area around the lot. Mr. Regan stated that Kulite would be amenable to work with Board professionals on landscaping options, if that is preferred.

Ms. Choi inquired as to whether other locations were considered for the addition of the lifts due to the considerable change to the current look of the lot. Discussion was held as to why this lot was selected over other Kulite locations. Mr. Good stated that it was determined that this location would be best to explore this type of expanded parking concept.

Mr. Regan confirmed that this site is the preferred location for Kulite to initiate the car lift concept and if there is a continued demand, Kulite will then look at their other parking lots.

Further discussion was held regarding the back-up on Willow Tree Road, particularly when Leonia High School is in session. Mr. Regan advised that the new proposed operational concept of the first shift employees parking into their own assigned spaces should alleviate potential back-up on Willow Tree Road. Mr. Good also reiterated that there is enough room inside of the lot to drive the cars. Mr. Good advised that the lifts take approximately 15 to 17 seconds to raise the car to full lifted position. Mr. Gold requested that Kulite seriously consider the impact of traffic on Willow Tree Road when the High School is in session considering pre-pandemic traffic activity during peak times for the High School.

James Myers, President of Harding Steel Incorporated, was sworn in and provided testimony regarding the technical specifications and operations of the car lifts. Mr. Myers provided testimony regarding the business history of Harding Steel and stated that the Kulite application is the simplest and most common lift solution for urban areas.

During a review of a PowerPoint and video provided by Harding Steel, Mr. Myers detailed the design, appearance and operational logistics for utilizing the lifts. Mr. Myers testified that each lift stands by itself but is bolted together for stability. Mr. Myers advised that the total height of the lift with two cars on the lift is approximately 12 to 13 feet tall. Mr. Myers reviewed the diagram of the proposed lot and further described the intended operation. Mr. Myers also detailed the location of the two hydraulic pump units and advised that only two lifts can operate at the same time; one lift operated by one pump. Mr. Myers explained that this was the safest and most efficient way to conduct this type of operation. Mr. Myers also testified that there is a shroud that covers the pumps from the weather and also helps to minimize the sound emitted from the pumps.

Mr. Myers advised that the lifts would need to be shoveled by hand, however, the drive aisles can be plowed. Mr. Myers advised that the parking attendant must have a key to operate each lift and that the operator must always be standing in front of the lift in order to operate it. Mr. Myers also provided calculations for the total amount of time that lifts would actually be in operation each day.

Chairman DeGidio requested clarification for the model type being proposed for the lot. Mr. Myers confirmed that the proposed model for this application is 255T.

Discussion was held regarding having one vehicle on a circuit or pump at a time as well as the amount of time it takes to raise cars on each lift. Further discussion was held regarding the logistical differences between self-parking to an assigned spot versus stadium style parking. Mr. Good stated that Kulite would be agreeable to modifying the logistical operations for how to get cars in and out of the lot quickly. Mr. Regan stated that the resolution could be conditioned on the preparation of an operational manual for professional review detailing the operation of the lifts or parking lot. It was noted by Mr. Regan that the operations manual would include staffing requirements for the lot.

The topic of snow clearing was revisited. Mr. Good discussed the present-day process of snow removal for Kulite lots. Mr. Myers confirmed that the lifts have a flat steel surface and stated that anything can be used to remove snow from the lifts. Per Mr. Costa, the proposed parking application for this lot will not satisfy the intended purpose.

The PowerPoint previously reviewed by Mr. Myers was marked at A-1 – Harding Steel 9 Page PDF Exhibit

Discussion was held regarding contingency planning for lift or pump failure. Mr. Myers detailed the typical maintenance for the lifts to include the recommended schedule and the activities that occur during the maintenance. Mr. Neiss referenced page 6 of Exhibit A-1 pertaining to a reservoir tank. Discussion was held regarding the hydraulic oil that is pumped into the lifts from the reservoir, the safety of the hydraulic oil and reservoir tank. Mr. Myers described the process for the hydraulic oil being pumped into a selected lift in order to allow the lift platform to raise. Mr. Myers also elaborated on the piping for the lifts and detailed how the lifts are mounted. Mr. Myers confirmed that constant pressure must be applied to the lift key in order to operate it; if pressure is removed, the lift will stop.

Upon questioning, Mr. Myers discussed the safety features and stated that no one is ever in a car as it is raised. Per Mr. Myers, a key safety feature is having one lift running at a time so that there is no distraction. Mr. Myers stated that they take a train the trainer approach for training others on the daily and safety operation of the lift.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Mr. Myers.

No members of the public provided questions.

Hearing no questions from the public, the public questioning portion was closed.

Mr. David Karlebach, President of David Karlebach, PP, PC, was sworn in to provide expert planning testimony on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Karlebach testified that he reviewed the plans, visited the site and reviewed the zoning ordinance. Mr. Karlebach described the site to include dimensions, shape, present conditions, surrounding areas and neighboring land uses. Mr. Karlebach detailed the proposed plan for additional spaces, kiosk and fencing options. Mr. Karlebach discussed planning justification for the relief being sought. Mr. Karlebach elaborated on his testimony as to why he believes the proposal is not an expansion in the traditional sense. Mr. Karlebach also detailed the positive and negative criteria associated with the application.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Mr. Karlebach.

No members of the public provided questions.

Hearing no questions from the public, the public questioning portion was closed.

Mr. Regan summarized the proposal and addressed the request for an operations manual. Further discussion was held regarding the attendant kiosk and the features or amenities provided inside the kiosk. Several members of the Board advised that they are supportive of landscaping around the lot.

Mr. Corak provided testimony regarding his evaluation of the proposed parking lot operation. Mr. Corak reviewed the operation that has been discussed during the meeting and advised that based on the standard use for evaluation of traffic impact he did not see the installation of the lifts as having a substantial impact based on traffic engineering principals.

Kulite agreed to carry the application and will provide a prepared landscaping plan and will attempt to submit a proposal for an operations manual as well. The Board has advised Kulite to consider types of potential contingency plans for power, motor or other failures.

Mr. Neiss announced to members of the public that the Kulite Semiconductor matter for Schor Avenue was being carried to the January 27, 2021 remote meeting of the Planning Board. Mr. Neiss advised that there will be no further notice published or mailed to property owners within 200 feet. Mr. Regan consented to this extension of time for the Board to act on this application.

PB20-12 –Eddens-Crowley, 219 Overlook Avenue, Block 207, Lot 10

Chairman DeGidio advised that the applicant will re-notice at a later date.

PB20-13 – Suez Treatment Solutions, 600 Willow Tree Road, Block 503, Lot 1 Change of Use/Occupancy for Raphael Stone Design LLC

Mr. Pedro DaCruz, Director for North America for Suez, was sworn in to provide testimony for this application.

Mr. DaCruz provided testimony regarding the relationship and sublease agreement between Suez and the applicant, Raphael Stone.

Mayor Zeigler provided objections to Raphael Stone operating prior to approval from the municipality and having no representation from Raphael Stone present to speak on behalf of the application. Mayor Zeigler advised that the Board

should not hear the application given the absence of the applicant. Mr. DaCruz advised that Suez was not aware that a Certificate of Occupancy was required.

Further discussion was held regarding the ability of the Board to hear the applicant without a representative from Raphael Stone present. It was further determined that since the applicant is an LLC, the applicant will require an attorney and someone from the company that can bring the application before the Board. Mr. Neiss advised that an attorney who practices in land use would be able to determine who the appropriate applicant should be for this application.

Mr. DaCruz provided clarification between the regulated utility side of the company and the manufacturing side of the company. Mayor Zeigler advised that he would be sending a notice to Suez regarding the circumstances surrounding this application.

Chairman DeGidio advised that the applicant should be prepared to speak to the fire violations and answer why the codes were not satisfied previously.

Mr. Neiss advised the public that this application will be heard at the next meeting on January 27, 2021.

DISCUSSION ON BOARD MATTERS – NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

2021 Meeting Dates – A motion to adopt the proposed 2021 meeting dates was made by: Mr. Botten

Seconded: Vice Chair Petti

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mayor Zeigler:	yes	Councilman Fusco:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes
Mr. Wolf:	yes	Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Botten:	yes
Mr. Russell:	yes	Vice Chair Petti:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes

Chairman DeGidio reviewed the memo provided by Mr. Steinhagen regarding disclosure of facts for decision of an application. Chairman DeGidio also advised that he has followed-up with the Borough Clerk, Anne Dodd, regarding the RFPs for professional services for the Board. Chairman DeGidio stated that the proposals should be forthcoming shortly and will be forwarded to the RFP subcommittee for review.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT:

Councilman Fusco advised that he and Mayor Zeigler have been working with the consulting group for economic development with regard to Willow Tree Road and the downtown area. Councilman Fusco advised that they are in the process of developing a preliminary presentation for the Council, followed by a presentation to the Board in the future.

BOARD ATTORNEY REPORT:

Mr. Neiss had nothing new to report.

PLANNING BOARD ENGINEER REPORT:

Mr. Costa had nothing further to report.

ZONING OFFICER REPORT/INTERPERTATIONS:

Mr. Melfi had nothing additional to report.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no public comment.

Chairman DeGidio provided year-end closing remarks to the Board.

With no further business presented, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by: Mayor Zeigler

Seconded: Vice Chair Petti

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Copeland

Planning Board Secretary