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TO: Borough of Sayreville Planning Board

FROM: Michael P. Fowler, AICP/PP, Board Planner *MPF*

DATE: August 16, 2024

SUBJECT: CP MD Jernee Mill, LLC  
Preliminary and Final Site Plan  
Proposed Cold Storage Warehouse Facility  
Block 58, Lot 2.01 and 9  
Jernee Mill Road  
Sayreville, New Jersey

We have reviewed the above referenced Preliminary and Final Site Plan prepared by Colliers Engineering and Design, dated June 12, 2023, and last revised June 28, 2024, consisting of thirty-seven Site Plan sheets. We have also reviewed the Architectural Plans prepared by RKB Architects, dated April 3, 2024, consisting of four Plan sheets.

Based on our review of the Application and Plans, we have the following comments as provided below:

**A. PROJECT**

1. The subject property is located on Jernee Mill Road in the Eco-Industrial Redevelopment Area (RA-EI). The Application for Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval is for the construction of two Cold Storage Warehouse Buildings, in two phases at a height of seventy-five feet. A total building area of 257,858 SF is proposed for the Phase I building and a total building area of 99,529 SF for the Phase II Building. The plans also depict the site improvements in support of the warehouse buildings, such as employee/visitor parking, trailer parking, truck loading docks, landscaping, lighting, and stormwater facilities.

**B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

1. The property fronts on the west side of Jernee Mill Road (Middlesex County Route 675) opposite the Red Oak Lane intersection with Jernee Mill Road. The subject property is vacant, with some truck parking occurring closer to Jernee Mill Road. It consists of approximately 46.85 acres, and is known as Block 58, Lots 2.01 & 9. The perimeter of the site is mostly wooded, while the

center of the site, which represents the Borough's capped Landfill, shows signs of typical successional growth. In addition, the property is encumbered by a 100 FT wide Sewer right-of-way, which bisects the site, Special Flood Hazard Areas and Freshwater Wetlands and associated buffers. Development is also limited to disturbances permitted as a condition of the Landfill's closure and remediation. The central portion of the property is capped Landfill #3, a remediated Super Fund Site.

The Board Engineer's Memo of August 21, 2024, contains a history of the site's prior approvals, attached copies of the Resolution of approval, Redevelopment Ordinances and, the Redevelopment Plan and Amendments thereto.

With respect to the surroundings, the Subject Property is bound by Jernee Mill Road to the east and South River to the west. Pond Creek is located along the northerly property line and Duck Creek flows along the southern property lines. Most abutting land uses are vacant with the exception of two contractors' yards abutting or approximate to the subject site on Jernee Mill Road.

#### **C. MASTER PLAN**

1. The Borough's 2013 Master Plan designates the Subject Property as a Landfill Redevelopment District, consistent with the Zoning. The intent of the Landfill Redevelopment designation as a concept was to create an Industrial Park like environment in which businesses cooperate with each other and the community to efficiently share resources, i.e., such as information, materials, water, energy, infrastructure and natural resources.

#### **D. ZONING**

1. The Zoning Map depicts the subject site as in the SED Zone in which warehousing is a permitted use. However, the Zoning has been superseded by the property's designation as a Redevelopment Area. As a Redevelopment Area, a Redevelopment Plan was prepared having its own set of development standards, separate from the Zoning Ordinance. The Redevelopment designation for the property in question is an Eco-Industrial Redevelopment Area (RA-EI) as identified in the March 2011 Redevelopment Plan. The Plan was amended March 25, 2024, to include Cold Storage Warehouses as a permitted use.

"The purpose of RA-EI Redevelopment Area is to establish an Industrial zoning district where multiple uses and buildings are permitted on one lot that fosters the development of innovative industrial uses which utilize a high standard of environmental and economic performance. These uses will promote an approach to industrial development that involves connecting within and across industries throughout the central New Jersey region and demonstrate well thought out practices that result in waste energy being used as resources.

Further, it is intended to promote adaptive reuse in the (RA-EI) district that recognizes existing environmental constraints; wetland and floodplain influence; existing environmental cap and NJDEP remediation requirements; a need to improve existing infrastructure (streets, storm drains, sidewalks, etc.). Sustainable site design should address water quality and quantity issues, shared connections and services."

Through the Testimony given by the Applicant's Professionals before the Board, it should be demonstrated how the proposed Plan advances the intent and purposes and the Site Design Objectives of the Eco-Industrial Redevelopment Area.

2. The Bulk Requirements Table for the Eco-Industrial Redevelopment Area are depicted in the General Information section on Sheet 1 of 37 of the Applicant's Site Plan set. The table shows that the proposed improvements are in compliance with the bulk standards.

In addition, the Board Engineer's review letter lists the permitted uses in the (RA-EI) Zone, the Bulk Standards, required and proposed, parking requirements and a category by category listing of the Redevelopment Plan's Site Design Standards and compliance with same.

3. The Board Engineer's Technical Review, attached to the August 21, 2024 Memo identifies several inconsistencies between the site plan and the Redevelopment Area's Site Design Standards and Zoning Code standards to be addressed at the Hearing.

## **E. GENERAL COMMENTS**

### **Site Design and Operation**

1. Section (8. Design Standards) of the Redevelopment Plan lists many design criteria in categories ranging from 8.1, Site Design Objectives to 8.7, Exterior and Interior Design Objectives. As mentioned above, the Applicant should address how the Plan addresses those design standards or satisfies their intent. In areas where the design standards cannot be achieved, waivers should be requested.

As previously mentioned, the Board's Engineer attached a copy to the Redevelopment Plan to the Engineering review package for the Board's reference.

2. A written design concept should be provided as required in the Redevelopment Plan in Section 8.1, Site Design.
3. The Applicant should address the general operating procedures for the developed site. Such as, the hours the business will be operating, the hours the site will be fully staffed, the number of employees on a maximum shift, the type of merchandise stored, delivered, and shipped from the warehouses, the frequency of the truck traffic and the type of trucks most often onsite.
4. As previously noted, the subject site is in a Special Flood Hazard Area and contains freshwater wetlands. As a result of these conditions, the Applicant requires NJDEP approvals regarding the wetlands and wetlands buffers and a Flood Hazard Area Verification and a Flood hazard Area Individual Permit, also from the NJDEP. The status of the permitting, the areas impacted on the site, and the methods by which the Applicant is addressing the environmental restrictions should be identified.

In addition, all site improvements must be consistent with the requirements of the Borough's Flood Damage Prevention and Protection Ordinance, Chapter XXIII

5. The Applicant should address any security measures and whether the site will have back up power.
6. The Applicant should address the Phasing Plan for the project and compliance with the Redevelopment Agreement.
7. The provision and locations of EV charging stations should be addressed by the Applicant.

### **Traffic, Parking and Circulation**

1. The Applicant should explain how vehicular circulation on the site will function without conflicting movements between trucks and automobiles. The routes that trucks and emergency vehicles will follow to safely maneuver about the site should be presented to the Board. This should include vehicle turning templates.
2. The Board Engineer's Technical Review points out that the minimum width of an entrance drive is 30 FT and the Applicant is proposing 26 FT for the center drive, and is requesting a waiver. While site constraints may prevent the Applicant from providing the full required 30 FT width, given the relatively short throat to the entrance drive before it curves, coupled with its sloping grade, it is recommended that the Applicant widen the drive to the extent possible. It is also recommended that the Applicant further soften the radius of the curve to allow greater separation of vehicles encountering each other when entering and exiting the site. The addition of center line striping to better define the drive aisles should also be considered in this location.
3. The Applicant should discuss any impacts the addition of gates that block site access have on access by emergency vehicles.
4. Pedestrian circulation is a required component of the Redevelopment Plan. It is intended to allow the safe movement of people from parking areas to building entrances, and from building to building. To accomplish the pedestrian movements, a network of sidewalks, depressed curbs, and crosswalks are required. Areas of the site as planned appear to lack the required sidewalks and other pedestrian elements. It is recommended that the Applicant work with the Board's professionals to reasonably enhance the site's pedestrian elements as a condition of approval.
5. The Applicant should discuss proposed improvements to Jernee Mill Road to be approved by the County Engineer.
6. The Applicant should address the need for the multiple sidewalk curb ramps adjacent to the automobile parking spaces.
7. The Applicant should discuss whether any green banked parking areas have been considered.

8. It is recommended that wooden guardrails be installed at curves and at the terminus of drives that run perpendicular to the steep slope areas.
9. The need for protective fencing along the retaining walls and surrounding the detention basins should be discussed with the Board. It appears that protective fencing will be provided in some locations.

### **Landscaping and Lighting**

1. The landscape design shall comply with the requirements of the Borough Ordinance at 26-96.7. The Applicant should address compliance with the Ordinance.
2. The Applicant should address any irrigation planned to maintain the proposed landscape plantings.
3. It appears additional foundation plantings are required.
4. Shade Trees should be provided in all landscaped islands within the parking fields.
5. A note should be added to the Plans stating that the tree save area along the site's frontage will be supplemented as needed.
6. It is recommended that landscaped outdoor gathering areas be created for employees of both buildings at the southern end of the truck parking and loading areas or any proposed green area in proximity to the buildings.
7. All freestanding and wall mounted lighting in proximity to the site's perimeter should contain house-side shields. In addition, lighting shall be reduced after operating hours by at least fifty (50%) percent throughout the site. Motion-sensor security lighting or other lighting needed for safety purposes shall be permitted to exceed this threshold.

### **Building**

1. Relative to sustainability and green building, the installation of roof-mounted solar panels and passive solar design is encouraged but not required. The Applicant should address any plans for solar panels or any other green energy improvements both active and passive.
2. Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened with parapet walls or other architectural features to limit visibility at the property line. If the roof will contain refrigeration units and/or HVAC mechanicals, they should be screened as required for aesthetic reasons and to reduce noise emitted.
3. The Applicants Architect should present the proposed building elevations and floor plans to the Board and address consistency with the Redevelopment Plan.

4. A detail of the proposed monument signs and any planned façade signs should be presented to the Board.
5. Given the substantial energy requirements and consumption of the Cold Storage Warehouses, the Architect should discuss the energy efficiency of the refrigeration systems and any efforts to provide green energy resources on site.

**Miscellaneous**

1. As noted in the Board Engineer's review, approval of this project is subject to all applicable outside agency approvals. Approval of the Plans by SERA is also required.
2. The Site Plan should be reviewed and approved by the Borough's Bureau of Fire Prevention and Division of Traffic Safety.
3. The Applicant shall recognize that it is subject to any affordable housing fees and/or other obligations per the Borough's Affordable Housing Ordinance and/or the Redevelopment Plan and Redevelopers Agreement.
4. The Applicant should provide adequate testimony to justify any variance or waiver relief. The testimony should include any hardship created by features of the site, better planning alternatives being proposed and the benefits thereof, advancing purposes of the MLUL, any detrimental impacts on neighboring properties, and impacts on the Borough's Master Plan/Zone Plan/Redevelopment Plan.

We are available to answer any questions regarding this planning report.

Very Truly Yours,

*Michael P. Fowler*

Michael P. Fowler, AICP/PP  
Board Planner