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TO: Clifton Planning Board
FROM: Jill A. Hartmann, PP, AICP
RE: SUBDIVISION; PRELIMINARY AND FINAL MAJOR SITE PLAN WITH VARIANCES APPLICATION TO CONSTRUCT A NEW HOTEL, IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING BANQUET FACILITY AND CONSTRUCT A NEW PARKING GARAGE; 1091-1175 VALLEY ROAD; BLOCK 62.04, LOTS 28, 31, 32, 33, 36, AND 37; APPLICANT: MERIDIA REGENCY ON VALLEY, CLIFTON, LLC.
DATE: February 15, 2021

This is a Subdivision; Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan with Variances Application to construct a new hotel with parking garage, make improvements to the existing catering facility and construct an accessory garage for the catering facility. The plan proposes to create two (2) new lots. Each lot will contain one of the proposed projects. The subject site is located in the B-C General Business District of the City. The existing and proposed uses are permitted in the BC District. The Planning Board has jurisdiction to hear this application.

This is a Whispering Woods hearing. It is named after a state Supreme Court decision dating to 1986. A Whispering Woods hearing is convened to hear only those details of a plan which were changed from the original plans because a municipality's governing body and/or planning board have adopted a court-approved settlement to a lawsuit. Under Whispering Woods, the developer must reappear before the Planning Board for a public meeting at which time the approved plans will be discussed, but only insofar as changes brought about by the settlement. The following submitted documents were utilized in the preparation of this planning report:

- Site Plan, consisting of 15 sheets, prepared by Charles D. Olivo, PE of Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated November 16, 2020 with revisions through February 5, 2021.
- Architectural Plan for Hotel and Banquet Facility, consisting of 9 sheets, prepared by Yogesh Mistry, RA of Meridia, dated November 13, 202 with revisions through February 5, 2021.
- Tree Removal Plan, consisting of 3 sheets, prepared by John A. Olivo, NJLA of Bosenberg Landscape Architecture, dated July February 5, 2021.
- Stormwater Management Statement, prepared by Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated February 5, 2021.
- Traffic Impact Study, prepared by John R. Corak, PE and Matthew J. Seckler, PE, PP, PTOE of Stonefield Engineering and Design, LLC, dated November 12, 2020 with revisions through February 5, 2021.

ZONING ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS

1. **Introduction**

The subject site consists of six lots. Block 62.04, Lots 28, 32, 33, 36 and 37 contains the existing two-story banquet facility, asphalt parking lot, outdoor patios and walkways and forested area. Block 62.04, Lot 31 presently contains an existing two story, single family residence.

As per the Consent Order of Remand, the revised application incorporates the following modifications to the application that was previously denied by the Planning Board:

- The relocation of the proposed hotel to the northern side of the property, which will reduce the impact on neighboring residences, reduce the amount of tree disturbance and reduce the number and size of the retaining walls.
- The elimination of all setback and lot width variances.
- Any increase in the off-street parking associated with the restaurant/banquet shall be approximately 40 spaces.

2. Application Summary

The revised application proposes to demolish the existing single family residence, subdivide the site into two lots, construct a new 5 story hotel with basement and a new 2 story parking garage for the exclusive use by the existing banquet facility.

- Lot A Existing banquet facility with associated ancillary patios and walkways and structured parking garage.
- Lot B New 5 story, hotel with garage parking.

The revised application proposed development of the new lots as follows:

- Lot A
 - Lot A is located in the southern portion of the site and has an area of 102,699 square feet. The revised application proposes to retain the existing banquet facility making interior and facade renovations to the banquet facility; to construct a 3 level parking garage and to create a comprehensive outdoor amenity, for the banquet facility on the roof of the parking structure. This outdoor amenity will include a gazebo, outdoor wedding ceremony/event area, cocktail bar lounge seating area and water feature. It is connected to the ground floor of the banquet facility.
 - The revised application/site plan proposes no variances related to bulk and area requirements. It should be noted that the submitted revised site plan indicates a side yard setback from the parking structure to the southern side property line. This setback is related to the underground portion of the parking structure. A variance for this setback is not required as the Clifton Ordinance defines structure as anything more than 18" above grade. Driveways are not included in setback requirements. The submitted site plan zone table must be adjusted to reflect the correct southern side yard setback of 25'.
 - A total of 240 parking spaces are proposed in the structured parking garage. This is consistent with the Consent Order required modifications. The site has been the subject of a number of past applications that resulted in various improvements, including banquet size, both gross floor area and seats. The following parking analysis is based solely on the City's Parking Ordinance §461-59-60 requirements and relates only to this proposed banquet facility application.

The Parking Ordinance specifically requires 1 space for every 75 square feet of gross floor area plus 1 space for each employee for a restaurant use. Presently, the facility provides 202 parking spaces. The revised application will not increase the size of the banquet facility, but proposes a parking structure that will provide 240 parking spaces. Mitigating circumstances include the fact that the banquet facility includes far more service areas than a typical restaurant and a valet parking system is proposed that will be utilized for events as needed.

Section 460-60(K) provides the requirements for valet or attendant parking as follows:

Where the nature of the building and establishment is of a kind where attendant parking is appropriate and the owner or operator has established that such facility is likely to continue and exist substantially unchanged as it affects attendant parking for a period of 10 years and the owner or operator of the premises has made and will continue to make provision for attendant parking during hours when 50% or more of the spaces are in use, then attendant parking shall be permitted, provided that there shall be submitted at the time of site plan approval a workable plan which includes a sufficient number of stalls of standard size to meet the parking standards contained herein and, in addition, sufficient aisles and turnaround areas to enable attendants to maneuver vehicles in and out of the area containing the necessary number of parking stalls without requiring the attendant to utilize streets, public areas or sidewalks for maneuvering of vehicles and so that the use of the parking area will not be hazardous to the pedestrian utilizing the adjoining walkways.

While valet parking is permitted, variance relief from the required off-street parking is needed.

- Proposed new signage meets the Sign Ordinance requirements.
- Lot B
 - Lot B is located in the northern portion of the site and has an area of 43,560 square feet. The revised application proposes a 5 story hotel with 102 guest rooms and 177 parking spaces. The hotel will have a height of 63.5' where 70' is permitted.
 - The revised application requires not variances from the Clifton Zoning Ordinance.
 - The Parking Ordinance requires 1 space/guest bedroom plus 1 space/employee. As noted above, the revised application proposes 102 guest bedrooms and 28 employees for a total off-street parking requirement of 130 spaces. The proposed parking garage provides 177 parking spaces.
 - Proposed signage meets the Sign Ordinance requirements.

It is certified that all copies of this document are in conformance with the original prepared by Jill A. Hartmann, PP, AICP, License No. 4088


Jill A. Hartmann, PP, AICP

Zone Table

**1091-1175 Valley Road
Block 62.04, Lots 31, 32, 33, 36, 37**

**BC District
Proposed Lot A**

Item	Required	Proposed	Variance
Use	Restaurant	Restaurant	Complies
Lot Size	NA	2.38 Acres (102,699 sf)	Complies
Lot Width	50'	404.7'	Complies
Lot Depth	NA	253.8'	Complies
Front Yard Setback	5'	21.5'	Complies
Side Yard Setback (One)	½ Bldg. Height/ 18'	25'	Complies
Side Yard Setback (Both)	½ Bldg. Height/ 18'	44.6'	Complies
Rear Yard Setback	10'	67.3'	Complies
Building Coverage	60%	26.1%	Complies
Impervious Surface Coverage	NA	67.8%	Complies
Building Height	2 Stories/30'	2 stories/36'	Existing Non-Conforming Condition

Zone Table

**1091-1175 Valley Road
Block 62.04, Lots 31, 32, 33, 36, 37**

**BC District
Proposed Lot B**

Item	Required	Proposed	Variance
Use	Hotel	Hotel	Complies
Lot Size	1 Acre (43,560 sf)	1 Acre (43560 sf)	Complies
Lot Width	200'	490.4'	Complies
Lot Depth	200'	255.7'	Complies
Front Yard Setback	½ Bldg. Height/28.5'	35.4'	Complies
Side Yard Setback (One)	½ Bldg. Height/28.5'	106.4'	Complies
Side Yard Setback (Both)	½ Bldg. Height/28.5'	32.4'	Complies
Rear Yard Setback	½ Bldg. Height/28.5'	67.4'	Complies
Building Coverage	50%	19.7%	Complies
Impervious Surface Coverage	N/A	67.4%	Complies
Building Height	4-6 Stories/70'	5 stories/63.5'	Complies