

Cranford Business Park OK'd to Lease Building for Mixed-Use

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — After purchasing the industrial building a year-and-a-half ago, applicant Cranford Business Park, LLC, owner of 570 South Avenue East, was approved 6 to 0 by the planning board last Wednesday to move ahead with its plan to lease the property as a mixed-use building. Vanguard Medical Group, currently residing in Cleveland Plaza, has plans to lease space and move its practice.

The applicant sought a minor site plan approval with the following variances and waivers: less than the minimum required number of parking spaces, less than the minimum required foot candles in the parking area, not providing granite block curbing, and wheels stops not provided.

The application hearing mostly had concerns with supplying sufficient parking. The plan included 385 parking spaces. The applicant asked for a waiver, to what they said was a deficiency of 20 spaces, which is less than 2 percent.

Planning Board Secretary Kevin Illing said since the site had previously been granted a parking waiver, the actual number of spaces being asked for a waiver was 86.

The board upon its approval made a condition to add lighting to the rear parking lot should its use expand beyond the trucking company, which is currently only utilizing the spaces, and to add more handicapped spots to be compliant with federal law.

Since there is no new construction planned for the site, the foot candles, granite block curbing and wheel stops were previously approved by the planning board in an older application, said John

De Massi, an attorney with Schiller and Pittenger, representing the applicant.

The pre-existing parking lot has three parking areas, as explained by Victor Vinegra, principal with the firm Harbor Consultants, who is the applicant's expert in planning and engineering. The front parking lot is for commercial use or doctor's offices and another lot for Strength and Fitness. The rear lot is used for the trucking company located in the rear.

Mr. Vinegra described the property as "an older industrial complex," which "slowly has morphed into a mixed-use facility." He said there are 138 parking spaces by South Avenue, 139 spaces by the fitness center, and 108 spaces spread across the rear.

After monitoring parking, Mr. Vinegra said the maximum number of parking spaces used in July and August was 207 spaces. "My studies have shown this facility is using 35 to 60 percent of what the town says we need," Mr. Vinegra said.

Currently, 10 percent of the

building is unoccupied. The building houses a trucking company, DYFUS, a home goods company, and Strength and Fitness, said Alexander Trezza, manager of Cranford Business Park. He said leases are in place with a minimum of five years. Vanguard Medical Group and a physical therapy company are also planning to lease space, he said.

Dr. Robert Eidus, owner of Vanguard Medical Group, testified on behalf of the applicant. He said he is moving his family physician practice because he "wanted to have a barrier-free entrance" that would provide "better access" to his office. The practice could up its physicians on board from two to three, Dr. Eidus said, considering the new space, at 5,600 square feet, would provide eight exam rooms. Vanguard Medical plans to open its new office in January 2015.

"Parking is already in place and I don't believe overflow will be a problem," said Andis Kalnins, planning board member and Cranford mayor.

CF Introduces Resource Officer

grade. "It addresses the pro-drug mindset. Why is the kid saying yes? We always said, 'Say no.' Why are they saying yes?" Chief Wozniak said.

Project ALERT will be a springboard to the substance abuse programs in place at the high school, Det. Nazzaro said. "By the time they get through 12th grade they have the foundation of knowledge to protect themselves and be responsible adults," Det. Nazzaro said.

Probitas Verus Honos

The school resource officer will also be on the school's crisis committee, Superintendent Carrick said. He will supervise the monthly school safety and security drills, and make recommendations for improvement in school security. He supports the schools' work with "stranger danger" awareness, bicycle pedestrian safety, career day and make general presentations on school and Internet safety and other topics, Superintendent Carrick said. "He is also a liaison for residency and truancy issues," she said.

Zoning Bd. OKs Expansion Of Yoga Studio on Lincoln

BY **DELL SIMEONE**

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — The zoning board, on Monday evening, heard two applications. One was for permission to construct a new two-car garage requiring two variances. The other was to legitimize the expansion of a yoga studio on Lincoln Avenue East, which was done two years ago without seeking board approval.

Alex and Deb Palaccio, of 320 Casino Avenue, in a R-1 zone, sought approval to construct a new two-car garage with variances for less than the minimum distance from any side and rear lot line and to exceed the maximum allowable height for an accessory structure.

Mr. Palaccio told the board that he and his wife had purchased a Southern Revival colonial home, which dates back to 1895. The home has already been restored and improved by them, he said. Mr. Palaccio further stated that they were trying to restore the garage (which dates to the 1920s), move it forward a foot and make it compatible with the architecture of the house. He also said they would like to add a second floor to the garage to use for storage, since the basement of the home was small and damp and could not be used for storage.

"We're looking for relief because the roof would be six inches over what the code allowed," he said. Pictures of the home and the property were distributed to the board.

The board complimented the Palaccio's on the restoration. Board Vice-Chairman Jeffrey Pistol, said, "Looking at the rear lot line, moving the garage would be an improvement. It would improve the neighborhood."

Alleum Yoga L.L.C., 347 Lin-

coln Avenue East in a R-2 zone was approved to legitimize the expansion of a non-conforming use. The yoga studio is in the historic 1737 William Thesher "Old Mill," which is adjacent to the Rahway River.

Laura LoGiudice, attorney for yoga studio owner Gina Pachkowski, explained that the owner just took over a 517-square-foot space in the building which had previously been used by another tenant. Ms. LoGiudice said at the time (two years ago) her client did not realize that zoning board approval was required. She said that half of the space is used as a reception area and the other half for the yoga classes.

Ms. Pachkowski testified that classes run for one hour with a 15-minute transitional period for clients to come and go between classes. Her planner, Peter Steck, testified that parking would not be a problem with 19 spaces in the lot and other parking available on High Street and Centennial Avenue. Most of her clients are from Cranford who either walk or ride bikes, he said. He said that there was one space for every 150 square feet in the building. He also said there is a relaxed standard for a non-conforming structure. Mr. Steck pointed out that the Yoga studio was an enhancement to the neighborhood and in compliance with the township's Master Plan.

About 50 people showed up to support Ms. Pachkowski, her commitment to the neighborhood, the town, and to the philosophy of Yoga. Twelve of her clients testified before the board.

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