

Zoning Board OKs West End Garage, bakery connection

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In unanimous votes for variances and waivers, the city's Zoning Board gave preliminary and final site plan approval to connect West End Garage at 484 Perry St. with neighboring Cape May Bakers by means of two breezeways.

At a July 30 meeting, Louis Dwyer, the attorney for applicant Curtis Bashaw, described the desire to connect the buildings as sort of a "marriage application." He noted the Zoning Board granted a use variance for West End Garage for a myriad of commercial uses.

Dwyer said Cape May Bakers was an old building that had various uses in its history.

Bashaw, who is an owner of West End Garage, Congress Hall, the Virginia Hotel and other properties on Cape Island, said West End Garage has been a success that has incubated a number of new businesses. The building houses booths of antique dealers, crafters and specialty food producers.

He said couples visit West End Garage with the wife hoping to spend a lot of time browsing while the husband sits in the front wishing for a cup of coffee. Bashaw said the bakery could supply his hotels as well as operate as a retail outlet.

"By connecting the properties, it could be an amenity for visitors to the entire complex, for people to wait and relax while someone else may be browsing a little bit longer," he said.

The use of Cape May Bakers was presented with two possible plans: entirely as a bakery or entirely as retail. Bashaw said if the bakery use did not work well, he would want to put more retail in the building similar to West End Garage.

Dwyer said he was hopeful the board would mirror a use variance it granted for West End Garage that allowed flexibility of use. Bashaw said it was mainly retail with "bakery functions."

The building will be renovated with some modifications to the façade and landscaping to tie it in with West End Garage, he said.

Zoning Board member Bill Murray said he had concerns with parking.

"There's really no ability in that area to get any parking," Dwyer said. "I think the idea here is to get people to flow from the mall in a pedestrian mode."

He said it was impossible to put parking spaces on the site since the county did not want curb cuts on Perry Street.

Engineer for the applicant Vince Orlando said the building needed C variances for pre-existing, nonconforming



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Cape May Zoning Board approved an application to join the West End Garage with Cape May Bakers via two breezeways. The plan is to provide a space at the bakery for people to relax while others shop at the antiques, crafter and specialty foods booths.

conditions that were not being worsened by connecting the buildings.

The board approved maintaining 16 indoor seats inside the bakery and 16 seats outdoors. Dwyer said the seats were for "convenience," and there was no intention of the bakery operating as a restaurant.

Board Engineer Craig Hurless said the application required waivers for not providing traffic or environmental impact statements. The bakery

is in the R2 district, which is not a permitted in the zone, as well as the proposed new use also requiring a use variance. The project also required a variance for floor area ratio, he said.

The project required variances for rear and side yard setbacks, lot coverage and signage. A 5-foot-tall solid wood fence will be constructed along the rear yard of the building, according to Orlando.

Hurless said the most conservative parking requirement

would be 38 spaces for West End Garage and 18 spaces for Cape May Bakers. By including 16 outdoor seats and 16 indoor seats, a variance was needed for the requirement of 78 parking spaces, he said.

A variance was approved for a loading area that was 13 feet short of requirements. The loading area surface will remain gravel-covered.

During public comment, John Carr, president of Cape May Lumber at 100 Park Blvd., requested parking spaces on

Perry Street in front of West End Garage and Cape May Bakers be turned into a loading zone for truck deliveries. He said the 12-by-55-foot proposed loading zone was too small for larger trucks, which would have to back onto Perry Street that is "populated by everything from horses to skateboards."

Carr said the county was proposing to construct a roundabout in the intersection where Park Boulevard, Myrtle Avenue and West Perry Street meet, referred to by locals as the CVS intersection.

He said property owners in the area of the roundabout have received notification from an appraiser in regard to portions of their property being taken under eminent domain. Carr said the properties adjacent to Cape May Bakers would lose their street parking.

"Traffic coming along in front of Cape May Baking will be forced into the roundabout by taking the street parking from the residences and Cape May Dentistry," he said.

Hurless said he was well aware of the roundabout plans. Carr said he estimated 130 feet of street parking would be lost from the bakery to the corner.

Dwyer said they did not have the right to create a loading zone in front of the properties. Orlando said larger items could be offloaded on the Congress Street side of the building.

Gulf Stream pushed jellyfish closer to shore

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If you're swimming in the ocean, is there an advantage to staying in more shallow water when jellyfish may be present? Bologna said in deeper water, there is a higher probability the jellyfish are alive and swimming well, which means their tentacles are fully extended. Jellyfish swim at the surface and the bottom.

"Sea nettles swim to the bottom and drag their tentacles along the bottom to pick up stuff living on the bottom, which is actually very unusual

for most jellyfish, so most are going to be more up in the water column than they are necessarily toward the bottom," Bologna said.

He said while most jellyfish do not have enough brains to win on "Jeopardy!," some do have good visual acuity, allowing them to navigate around structures and not become entangled.

"They have a very primitive nervous system, so it's not as if they're thinking," Bologna said. "They have the ability to make decisions to swim up, swim down, to swim in multiple

directions potentially chasing their food."

Bologna said there is no evidence meat tenderizer should be applied to jellyfish stings. He recommended white vinegar to treat stings.

"It doesn't stop the sting and it doesn't stop the pain, but what it does is it immobilizes any of the stinging cells that have not yet fired," he said.

After getting stung, a swimmer should get tentacles off their skin.

"Even when they're dead, their stinging cells are dead of like mousetraps that are set,

so if you trigger them, they're going to fire out like little harpoons," Bologna said. "The reason they evolved was to numb, stun and kill their food."

A scientist studying jellyfish in Hawaii has begun production of jellyfish spray and cream called "Sting No More," with a formula developed for U.S. Special Forces Underwater Operations Combat Divers.

Bologna said he is not overly concerned about getting stung while doing his research.

"Actually, this summer I purposely stung myself with a Portuguese man-of-war to figure out how bad it was but I've done that with lots of them," he said.

His two most painful stings were a lion's mane, which stung him across the face while scuba diving, and a 3-inch mushroom jelly that he intentionally rubbed on his arm, something he described as "unbelievably painful."

Bologna said there is controversy as to whether jellyfish are increasing in numbers on a global scale.

"We just don't have enough data to understand long-term trends, so if it's a 25-year cycle, we've only been studying it for five or 10 years. We don't know if it's all ups and downs," Bologna said.

Jellyfish do well in water lacking oxygen. He said warm

water holds less oxygen than cold water, so under climate change and a warming ocean, jellyfish are surviving and doing much better than a lot of other species.

"Coastal oceans and back bays where oxygen is low provides a poor habitat for fish and crabs, but jellyfish are minimally impacted because they don't have a lot of oxygen demand," Bologna said.

Low oxygen conditions can help a jellyfish catch fish much easier since the fish are affected by the lack of oxygen, he said.

Bologna said a lot of evidence shows an increase in jellyfish in different regions of the world.

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