

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

VILLAGE OF GREAT NECK ESTATES

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In the Matter of the Application

of

FIRST PLAYHOUSE of GREAT NECK
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PRESENT: WILLIAM WARNER, MAYOR
 JEFF FARKAS, DEPUTY MAYOR
 HOWARD HERSHENHORN, TRUSTEE
 IRA D. GANZFRIED, TRUSTEE
 LILIA SHEMESH, TRUSTEE

KATHLEEN L. SANTELLI, VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: January 13, 2025

TIME: 8:00 p.m.

PLACE: VILLAGE HALL
 4 Atwater Plaza
 Great Neck, New York 11021

COUNSEL A. THOMAS LEVIN, ESQ.
REPRESENTING 990 Stewart Avenue
VILLAGE OF Garden City, New York 11530
GREAT NECK ESTATES

REPORTED BY: Christa Flash, RPR

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 MAYOR WARNER: Next on the agenda we have a
2 public hearing, Board of Trustees case number 3-2024,
3 First Playhouse, amendment to the incentive zoning
4 permit.

5 Anybody here for the applicant?

6 MR. FILIPAZZI: Good evening. Andrew
7 Filipazzi, Harass, Bloom & Archer, 445 Broad Hollow
8 Road, Melville, New York.

9 I'm joined here by Edna Guilor of Guilor
10 Architects. She has prepared the plans for the
11 proposed restaurant at First Playhouse, 102-112
12 Middle Neck Road, obviously in the Village of Great
13 Neck Estates, Section 2, Block 38, Lot 116.

14 As I'm sure many of you, if not all of you,
15 are well aware, this application has been before the
16 Board on a number of occasions for incentive zoning
17 approvals for the construction of a mixed-use
18 building. The most recent of those approvals was
19 February 13th of 2023 approving a final plan which
20 consisted of a four-story building with 20
21 residential units and three retail units on the
22 ground floor.

23 At the present time applicants completed all
24 construction on the building and obtained a
25 Certificate of Occupancy from the Village on

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 November 21, 2024.

2 Applicant has been approached and entered
3 into a lease agreement with La Pizzeria restaurant to
4 lease ground floor space at the property. La
5 Pizzeria will be about 2,000 square feet, occupying
6 two of the three retail spaces. So there still will
7 be one retail space, which is the one closest to the
8 corner.

9 MAYOR WARNER: What's the size of that
10 space?

11 MR. FILIPAZZI: I believe it's 695 square
12 feet.

13 So in connection with that use and the
14 reconfiguration of the ground floor, applicant is
15 required to obtain an amendment of the incentive
16 zoning permit and is seeking the following relief
17 from this Board tonight: One, to approve a
18 restaurant use; two, to reduce the minimum amount of
19 retail space on the ground floor; and, three,
20 determine the off-street parking required for the
21 restaurant use.

22 So the restaurant use is a relocation of the
23 existing La Pizzeria, which is right next door. The
24 two buildings share a wall. The new space would be a
25 great improvement to La Pizzeria to modernize and

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 update their operation.

2 On the easel we have a rendering of what the
3 interior is going to look like. It's an open kitchen
4 concept serving the same great food, kosher pizza,
5 sushi. I believe there's also a bar that's being
6 included here, and we'll have the same sort of
7 takeout delivery as well as dine-in options that
8 currently exist.

9 The operator is looking to extend its
10 operation hours on -- is it just Sunday through
11 Thursday?

12 MS. GUILOR: Yes.

13 MR. FILIPAZZI: -- to 11:00 p.m. Sunday
14 through Thursday. So that would be 10:00 a.m. to
15 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, Friday 10:00 a.m.
16 to 2:30 p.m., and closed on Saturday. So a little
17 change from the existing, but very much in line.

18 MS. GUILOR: Saturday evening in the
19 summertime also.

20 MR. FILIPAZZI: And Saturday evenings?

21 MS. GUILOR: Yes.

22 MR. FILIPAZZI: As well as Saturday evenings
23 after Shabbat.

24 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: What's the existing?

25 MR. FILIPAZZI: The existing is 10:00 to

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 8:00 Sunday through Thursday.

2 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: They want to compete with
3 Bravo. It seems like they want to compete with the
4 newer establishment in town.

5 MR. FILIPAZZI: That's part of it. La
6 Pizzeria has been operating -- it has been a mainstay
7 of the community for over 30 years, and so this is
8 giving them an opportunity to refresh, modernize,
9 update and continue to serve the community.

10 MAYOR WARNER: When La Pizzeria moves over,
11 they will also need to obtain a new restaurant
12 license, which will include all the details that you
13 just highlighted.

14 MR. FILIPAZZI: Okay. So I just want to
15 make the Board aware of everything, and La Pizzeria
16 is, you know, going to comply with all the Village
17 Codes and requirements, Health Department, everything
18 that they need to operate, and I'm sure the Board and
19 the community is aware of, you know, their reputation
20 in the Village over their years of operation.

21 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: How big is their
22 existing locations? They have two, right?

23 MR. FILIPAZZI: I'm only aware of the one
24 immediately next door.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR FARKAS: They have La Pizzeria

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 and then they have --

2 MS. GUILOR: La Gelato used to be gelato and
3 now it's combined.

4 MR. LEVIN: Can you give your name for the
5 stenographer, please?

6 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: Edna, you have to give
7 your name to the stenographer.

8 MS. GUILOR: Edna Guilor, Guilor Architects,
9 17 Ravine Road, Great Neck, New York.

10 Basically, right, there's two establishments
11 there. Originally we applied for La Pizzeria. I was
12 the original architect there 30 years ago. And then
13 next to it we applied for an ice cream place, La
14 Gelato, which did not happen and did not work very
15 well, and then he combined the two and made it into
16 one. So together they're about the same square
17 footage. I think 300 square feet or so less.

18 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: So 1700 to 2000, give or
19 take.

20 MS. GUILOR: Right.

21 MR. FILIPAZZI: The next item of relief is
22 the reduction in retail. village Code
23 Section 230-13(E)(1)(G) requires that there be retail
24 on the ground floor, and that the minimum be
25 26 percent of the lot area. what we're proposing is

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 not an elimination of commercial business space to
2 add additional residential units but rather to add a
3 restaurant. So we are still going to have a full --
4 the plan is not going to change much from the square
5 footage that was provided for retail, but now we're
6 looking to do a restaurant in two of those retail
7 units. So that will drop the property below the
8 26 percent minimum, but, like I said, it's still a
9 commercial business use and shouldn't have too much
10 of an impact or change what was originally approved
11 by this Board.

12 And I'm sure, as many of you know, it's a
13 difficult retail leasing market. The owners and the
14 applicant were approached with this idea of adding
15 the restaurant and having La Pizzeria upgrade and
16 modernize their space, and also filling empty
17 storefronts is really a win-win for both.

18 And then to go on to parking, despite the
19 change from retail to restaurant requiring additional
20 parking per the terms of the Village Code, the Board
21 had previously approved 30 parking stalls, 28
22 on-site, two off-site in the village municipal lot to
23 be sufficient, and that, by its own terms, doesn't
24 conform with the balance of the Village Code. All of
25 the parking within the incentive zone or the parking

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 for the restaurant use in the incentive zone is as
2 determined by this Board.

3 As La Pizzeria is in operating business at
4 114 Middle Neck Road, they have no off-street
5 parking. Here, taking the two retail spaces, there
6 are going to be six of those 30 spaces that are
7 allocated to La Pizzeria. So there will be an
8 improvement by providing some off-street parking and
9 having that ability to get some of the cars off the
10 street, but overall it's the same operation moving
11 one door over, and the existing conditions today
12 should be no different than the existing conditions
13 should the Board approve this application and allow
14 the restaurant use and ultimately La Pizzeria to take
15 that space.

16 And, of course, La Pizzeria, the delivery
17 drivers, DoorDash, et cetera, all have to conform
18 with Village Code, Village requirements and traffic
19 laws.

20 So that, more or less, concludes my
21 presentation requesting that the Board grant those
22 three items. If you have any questions for me or for
23 Miss Guilor, we'd be happy to answer them.

24 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: Can I ask a question?

25 MAYOR WARNER: Sure.

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: So the biggest request I
2 have of your client is they have a delivery driver in
3 a white Jeep that is constantly, every day,
4 doubled-parked in front of La Pizzeria. I'd like to
5 see --

6 MAYOR WARNER: First of all, that's not in
7 our jurisdiction.

8 MR. LEVIN: That has nothing to do with this
9 application.

10 MAYOR WARNER: That Jeep is not in our
11 jurisdiction.

12 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: Okay. Well, he said it
13 complies with traffic laws, and it's an employee
14 that's not complying.

15 MR. LEVIN: They're not employees.

16 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: It's not?

17 MR. LEVIN: They're not employees. He's
18 talking about the delivery services. They're not
19 employees.

20 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: No. There is an employee
21 of that establishment.

22 MR. LEVIN: Well, they'll have to deal with
23 that.

24 MR. FILIPAZZI: Nevertheless, I'll take the
25 note and I'll make sure that the operator knows that,

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 and now having that garage and having some parking on
2 site, hopefully we can make some arrangement that we
3 can move some of that off and avoid the
4 double-parking on the street, on Middle Neck Road.

5 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: Message received.

6 MAYOR WARNER: Right. You got that in good.
7 Anything else?

8 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: Nothing else.

9 MAYOR WARNER: Anybody have anything?

10 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: well, is this just to look
11 at or are we going to talk about it?

12 MS. GUILOR: It's just to look at.

13 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: I mean, it's beautiful.

14 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: It's a nice look.

15 TRUSTEE GANZFRIED: It's a nice look.

16 TRUSTEE SHEMESH: Can the members of the
17 community see it?

18 MAYOR WARNER: Do you want to enter this
19 into the public record?

20 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: Do you want it part of
21 the public record?

22 MR. LEVIN: It has been displayed to you.
23 It's part of the hearing, so yes.

24 MAYOR WARNER: Exhibit A? Exhibit A,
25 Howard. How is that?

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: I like numbers.

2 Letters are for defendants.

3 MAYOR WARNER: Exhibit 1.

4 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: I think it's beautiful.

5 MAYOR WARNER: Okay. Any comments from the
6 public? Questions, comments? No?

7 Any more from the Board?

8 No? With that I make -- yes, ma'am. Name
9 and address.

10 MS. ELIAS: Sarit Elias, 26 Clover Drive.

11 So I'm asking you -- I know it's not in your
12 jurisdiction and I know that Lilia was kind enough to
13 mention it, it really is a problem a lot. It really
14 impacts my life and people that were here before, the
15 traffic. I can't get out of my house because I have
16 to go on Cedar Drive, and I always see cars
17 doubled-parked there. And I asked many times. I
18 asked the police to give tickets to people and, you
19 know, I'm asking you guys to please, you know, really
20 speak to your boss and do your best to not have
21 double-parkers there. I've even seen people from
22 your store go out to the car and give the people the
23 box of pizza, which is not cool because I'm trying to
24 get out of my house and it's blocked. Please.

25 MAYOR WARNER: First of all, our police

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 cannot give tickets there. So I know you've asked,
2 but that would be Nassau County Police. You have to
3 approach them about it.

4 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: Is there a way that we
5 could eliminate the parking in front of that and
6 have, like, you know, a five-minute loading zone or
7 something?

8 MAYOR WARNER: That's not our jurisdiction.
9 It's not our meters. It's not our curb. It's not
10 our sidewalk.

11 MS. DZIORNEY: It's all the Plaza.

12 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: It's all the Plaza.

13 MAYOR WARNER: The Plaza or County.

14 MS. DZIORNEY: Well, the parking is the
15 Plaza, I believe.

16 MAYOR WARNER: Parking is the Plaza.

17 MS. ELIAS: So what's the solution?

18 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: Hopefully the solution
19 is this applicant has heard the message tonight and
20 goes back and speaks to the proprietor.

21 MAYOR WARNER: But Mrs. Elias is right. I
22 feel the same way, first of all.

23 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: I do, too.

24 MAYOR WARNER: And the problem is not just
25 the people that work for La Pizzeria or DoorDash and

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 such, it's individual customers that park their cars
2 and go in. I mean, the solution has to be an
3 enforcement issue. It sounds like a Nassau County
4 problem. It's their road. It's not in our
5 jurisdiction to write parking tickets there.

6 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: Maybe our guys can
7 reach out to the County and see if we can ask them
8 for some help here.

9 SGT. MURTAGH: We can do that.

10 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: That would be very
11 helpful.

12 MAYOR WARNER: The sergeant is here and he's
13 listening. Sergeant Noor was here last time when
14 Mrs. Elias brought it up last time. It really is a
15 problem. I know you know.

16 SGT. MURTAGH: Yeah. It's exaggerated now
17 because of the traffic --

18 MAYOR WARNER: On Bayview.

19 SGT. MURTAGH: -- on Bayview and just the
20 congestion on Middle Neck Road.

21 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: Even before. It's
22 definitely exacerbated now, but even before it was
23 still a problem. They really do take major
24 advantage. It's really wrong.

25 TRUSTEE GANZFRIED: There's also two lanes

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

1 coming into one lane over there, which is a big
2 problem.

3 DEP. MAYOR FARKAS: They don't have that
4 problem in front of Gino's.

5 MAYOR WARNER: One second. Is this public
6 hearing still for the --

7 TRUSTEE HERSHENHORN: Unless anybody else
8 has a comment, you can close it.

9 MAYOR WARNER: Do you want to talk about the
10 situation with the cars?

11 MS. FRANK: I just want to add that it's now
12 the same problem with Bravo.

13 VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR SANTELLI: Can you
14 give your name?

15 MS. FRANK: Emily Frank, 18 Mirrielees Road.
16 It's not your property, but it's the same
17 thing. Now Bravo is doubled-parked. Cutter Mill is
18 a mess now.

19 MAYOR WARNER: Okay. Thank you.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Chatanooga has always been
21 a problem.

22 MS. FRANK: It's worse now.

23 MAYOR WARNER: Make a motion to close the
24 public hearing?

25 Howard makes the motion.

Board of Trustees - 1/13/25

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Ira seconds it.

All in favor?

(Whereupon, all Board members answered in
the affirmative.)

Unanimously carried.

Thank you.

* C E R T I F I C A T I O N *

The foregoing is certified to be a true and
accurate transcript of my original stenographic notes for
the above-mentioned proceedings.



Christa Flash, Official Court Reporter