



AZZOLINA & FEURY ENGINEERING, INC.

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September 20, 2021

Borough of Alpine
Municipal Building
100 Church Street
Alpine, New Jersey 07620

Attn: Mr. Brian Frugis, Zoning Officer/Construction Official

Re: Church of the Lord Parking Expansion/Additions
995 & 1003 Closter Dock Road
Block 47, Lot 2 & Block 48, Lot 1.01
A & F Files No. ALP-1350 & 1351

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

Our office is in receipt of copies of the following documents regarding the proposed improvements to the property identified above:

- Borough of Alpine Zoning Review – Letter of Denial, dated July 19, 2021;
- Borough of Alpine Application for Zoning Review, signed and dated 7-12-21
- Planning Board, Borough of Alpine, Development Application w Addendum, signed and dated 8/24/2021;
- A set of site plans (five sheets) with the first sheet being titled "Site Plan, Proposed Parking Lot & Site Improvements, Alpine Community Church, Lot 1.01, Block 48 and Lot 2, Block 47, Borough of Alpine, Bergen County, New Jersey, Applicant: Alpine M E Church, Closter Dock Road, Alpine, NJ 07620", prepared by Hubschman Engineering, P.A., dated 6-24-2021 (No Revisions).

Based on your request, we have reviewed these documents and our earlier files regarding this property and find as follows:

I. General / Zoning

The property which is the subject of this application is comprised of two parcels at the intersection of Closter Dock Road and Old Dock Road. The westerly parcel is known as 995 Closter Dock Road, Block 47, Lot 2 and is the site of the structure known commonly as the 'Old Stone Church', with ancillary parking thereto. The parcel to the east of Old Dock Road is known as Block

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48, Lot 1.01. Two structures are situated on this lot. They are the community center which is the northerly structure located near the intersection of Old Dock Road and Ridge Road, identified on the submitted Site Plan as 5 Old Dock Road (aka 10 Old Dock Road, and the southerly structure nearest Closter Dock Road, commonly referred to as the parsonage, is known as 1003 Closter Dock Road, also located on Lot 1.01 of Block 48. For simplicity, these structures and their appurtenances will be referred to as 'the church', the 'community center' and 'the parsonage' herein.

The subject of the application submitted is parking. At the lots currently exist, there are 23 paved parking spaces adjacent to the church on Lot 2, and there is a garage which appears to be only wide enough for a single car on Lot 1.01, behind the parsonage. There are no reserved ADA complying parking spaces on either Lot. There are no on-site parking spaces adjacent to the community center.

Section 220-10 of the Borough's Zoning Code specifically addresses and is titled 'Houses of Worship'. We have reviewed one lot at a time and presented our respective findings. First, we looked at the site of 'the church' itself, at 995 Closter Dock Road. This lot is located within the Borough's R-2B Zone. In this zone, a 'house of worship' is specifically permitted as a conditional use. Section 220-10 of the Zoning Regulations lists specific bulk requirements for house of worship in the R-2B Zone, amongst other zones. 220-10 goes further and adds specific requirements for parking that supports a house of worship, and specific buffer strip requirements from surrounding residential properties. The extent of compliance/non-compliance with the Regulations relevant only to houses of worship is tabulated on the 'Site Plan', Sheet 1 of 5. A brief overview of the Zoning Notes on the 'Site Plan' makes it abundantly clear that Section 220-10 was not drafted with 'the church' as the focus of drafting of this section. Aside from Building Coverage, and Building Height, 'the church' does not comply with any other bulk requirement, parking requirement nor buffer strip requirement, or even traffic access requirement. Even though this leads to a conclusion that 'the church' was viewed as a pre-existing non-conformity when Section 220-10 was drafted and approved, we are still bound to consider the current request in light of the applicable zoning standards. While we cannot change bulk issues such as lot size, area, width or depth, we still must consider the rationale behind requirements for a minimum number of on-site parking spaces, and the requirement of buffering. The zoning ordinance requires a 100-foot buffer strip between a house of worship and adjoining residences.

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Regarding parking, the applicable requirements are one parking space per three seats in the largest assembly area (house of worship), one parking space per five seats in the largest assembly area within a community center, plus one space per employee as per Section 220-17C(5). The proposal submitted would add the following parking spaces, which must be assumed to be shared amongst the three facilities on Lots 1.01 and Lot 2: Lot 2 ('the church') – 18 spaces, Lot 1.01 (the 'community house') – 14 spaces, and Lot 1.01 ('the parsonage') – 10 spaces. When added to the existing 23 parking spaces to remain after converting one space to a van accessible aisle and deleting one space which is within the public right-of-way of Old Dock Road, a total of 41 spaces are proposed for Lot 2 ('the church'), as well as 14 spaces at 'the community center' and 10 more at 'the parsonage', for a combined total of 65 spaces. Since the number of seats in 'the church' had not been determined at the time of the application, the total required spaces for 'the church' was not presented on the site plan, nor could the actual number of required spaces be determined. This issue must be discussed in the applicant's presentation to the Planning Board. Without this information, this matter can be presented to the Board, but cannot be brought to a vote. The additional parking at 'the church' is designated on the 'Site Plan' as "Proposed Gravel Parking Lot" which would increase the Impervious Cover to 41.55%.

Regarding the proposed improvements for the 'community center', a paved parking lot containing 14 spaces including one ADA van-accessible space are proposed. Access would be from Old Dock Road, approximately 85 feet north of the slate walkway leading to the front entrance to 'the community center'. The parking lot would be separated from the 'community center' by approximately 10-feet. A new sidewalk and stairs leading into the side of the 'community center' is depicted on the 'Site Plan' to provide direct pedestrian access from the proposed parking lot. It is not clear, however, what route would have to be utilized by handicapped individuals. This must be addressed in testimony.

Regarding the proposed improvements for 'the parsonage', the 'Site Plan' depicts the construction of ten (10) parking spaces at 90 degrees to the existing driveway, between the entrance thereto at Closter Dock Road and the existing garage at the north end of the driveway. A new 'gravel walk' is proposed between these ten spaces and the existing sidewalk.

Regarding buffer strip requirements, no buffer strips per se are proposed. However, the "Lighting/Landscaping Plan & Notes" depicts a row of Green Giant Arborvitae along the sides of the proposed parking area. Two Red Maple trees are proposed on either side of the parking lot proposed for the 'community center'.

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II. Soil Moving

No Application for Soil Moving Permit was submitted with the application package. From the 'Site Plan' and the sheets contained in the set of engineering drawings, it is apparent that minor grading will be required to construct any or all of the proposed parking areas, if approved by the Planning Board. The applicant is cautioned however, that if the volume of soil to be moved exceeds 1,000 cubic yards, the applicant will have to return to the Board to present their soil moving application and to request positive recommendation to the Mayor and Council for approval of their Soil Moving Permit.

If this application is approved by the Planning Board and the area to be disturbed exceeds 5,000 square feet, applicant is required to obtain the approval of the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan by the Bergen County Soil Conservation District. If the total area to be disturbed does not exceed 5,000 square feet, the Borough will nonetheless require that a silt fence be installed around the areas to be disturbed, that a topsoil stockpile area be designated, and that the applicant's contractor keep the public rights-of-way clear and clean should any soil be tracked onto those roadways.

III. Septic Systems

A new septic system has been installed on the west side of 'the church'. Previously, there were no restroom facilities within 'the church' itself even though there are and continue to be restrooms in 'the community center'. Restrooms in 'the church' are currently under construction.

IV. Proposed Pavement and Drainage

In the same order as the comments in the **General/Zoning** section of this letter, we will address the manner in which parking lot surfaces and drainage for the three proposed facilities have been addressed on the plans. First, the parking lot for 'the church' is proposed as a 'gravel surface. Aside from percolation of stormwater into the subsurface, through the gravel surface, no runoff collection or recharge is proposed. The simple fact that has apparently led to the selection of a gravel surface is that there is no suitable location that remains outside of the proposed expanded parking area for runoff collection and recharge. The area between the proposed parking area and Closter Dock Road, which visually appears to be useable for this purpose, is used in almost its

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entirety for two purposes. The patio/garden area nearest the parking area is reported to be a memorial garden wherein cremains have been interred. The remainder of the area is the site of the recently installed septic system. Any discharge or recharge of stormwater near the septic system could compromise that capacity and useful life thereof. Applicant's engineer should review this issue in testimony.

Regarding the proposed paved parking lot at the 'community center', a 'rain garden' has been proposed near the easterly end of the proposed pavement. Rain gardens are approved by the Best Management Practices of the NJDEP for relatively small discharges that can be channeled into a graded garden area where the runoff water will serve to irrigate selected plantings therein. Although the natural runoff in the area of the proposed parking lot and the runoff garden is toward the large wetland area to the east of Lot 1.01, recent storm events raise questions regarding the viability of rain gardens. Applicant's engineer shall be prepared to discuss this issue.

Regarding the proposed parking area at 'the parsonage', a gravel surface is proposed for the new parking spaces. It would appear that percolation into the subsurface and overland flow following the existing drainage course to the wetlands to the east of the site are the reasons for this choice of surface material.

V. Tree Removal

No trees are proposed for removal in the areas of the proposed parking or immediately adjacent thereto. However, a tree protection detail is provided on the Site Plan, and is acceptable. If this application is approved by the Planning Board, Tree Protection is required within twenty five feet of the limits of proposed disturbance. Tree Protection shall be installed, inspected and approved by our office prior to the commencement any excavation, grading or clearing operations. Protection will be maintained through the duration of the project, to be removed only at the time of final landscaping, sodding or seeding.

VI. Conclusions / Recommendations

Based upon my review of the documents submitted, I recommend that this matter be presented to the Planning Board at the first available meeting. Although the applicant has not submitted a Soil Moving Permit Application, and there are certain items pertaining to the actual number of parking spaces needed and the manner of proposed construction of these areas, the

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fundamental issue is still that parking areas aside from those proposed for detached single or two-family dwellings, as stated in the Letter of Denial, require development review by the Planning Board. The number of spaces, the buffer requirements, excessive Impervious Coverage, and stormwater management warrant further explanations to the Board. While I believe that I understand the driving thought process behind 'gravel' parking areas, I have certain issues associated therewith, stormwater management being one, but winter maintenance being another primary concern. Snow plowing of unpaved areas is no easy task, and can lead to icing conditions or gouging of the surface if not done carefully. I offer for consideration my suggestion that porous asphalt pavement be considered. With a sub-base designed to accept the anticipated volume of water that a specified storm would generate, and adequate protection against negative impacts to nearby septic systems or sensitive receptors, porous hot-mix asphalt pavement can work, can work well, and is far more easily maintained than a gravel surface..

Board rules favorably upon this matter, I would recommend that the conditions of approval include:

1. Compliance with the recommendations and requirements put forth in this review letter. Any revised plans, documents, and/or calculations required herein shall be submitted for review and accepted prior to the issuance of any build permits.
2. A copy of the plan certification from the Bergen County Soil Conservation District, if required, must be provided prior to the start of any site grading, excavating or soil disturbance.
3. All required fees, bonds and escrow shall be provided to the Borough prior to the issuance of any building permits.
4. The Borough and our office shall be notified minimally 48 hours in advance of the scheduled commencement of on-site activities.
5. Upon completion of construction and prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Completion, an as-built survey of all site features including the new construction

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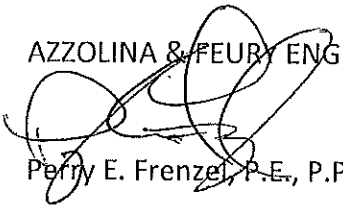
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as well as the locations of existing buildings, parking areas, sidewalks, the septic system, etc. must be prepared, submitted to the Borough and found acceptable. The as-built survey shall include a certification by the design engineer that the improvements have been constructed as per the approved Site Plans and that the post-construction stormwater runoff conditions will not cause any increase in runoff onto or negative impacts upon adjoining properties.

If you should have any questions regarding any aspect of this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

AZZOLINA & FEURY ENGINEERING, LLC



Perry E. Frenzel, P.E., P.P.

cc: Kyung H. Lee, Elder – Alpine M E Church
Matthew G. Capizzi, Esq.
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Marilyn Hayward, Alpine Planning Board
Alpine Environmental Commission

