

Bill Orr's summary of the 189 The Plaza 2nd Hearing

The Plaza review answers some questions & leaves many issues still unresolved as the architect and residents engage

The Board of Adjustment met Thursday night for its continuing review of the proposed **189 the Plaza** – a 15-story apartment building, 147 residential units, 177 parking spaces, and approximately 5,900 sq. ft. of commercial space. After two hearings we have heard only from architect Natasi. Residents were able to question him. In many cases what they were asking was not in his area of expertise, and his answers did not always specifically address their issues. He was also challenged over several of his remarks at the last meeting, such as referring to the Plaza area as Teaneck's main downtown.

After questioning, residents were able to determine that there was no dedicated space for a playground for 4 to 10 year olds, there were no specific amenities for the medically challenged, the underground basement which is supposed to be flood-resistant, could indeed suffer damage if the garage door was left open, and developer Jonathan Vogel was not seeking LEED certification which encourages energy and resource-efficient buildings. Residents remained concerned that although the plan met the required number of parking spaces there were still not enough spaces to meet the needs of residents, their visitors, commercial tenants and others. Dr. Henry Pruitt explained it is a "very congested area."

When the the architect was asked why he did not follow the Master Plan he did not address the plan itself. Instead he indicated that the developer and he were creating a new mixed facility with full-service amenities and walkability that answered the needs of the community. When pointedly asked what community members had been contacted, he could not respond. Another individual questioned its walkability pointing out for example there was no supermarket in the immediate area.

The architect indicated that the target market included senior citizens wanting to move out of their homes, but Micki Shilan thought the proposal did not sufficiently meet their needs. There was considerable discussion regarding the [Klaus automated car-stacking system](#) for 44 cars which could be too confusing for them, and which might occasionally break down causing problems. Another individual pointed out that some senior citizens were moving away from Teaneck not because of a lack of apartments but to get away from high taxes.

There were questions about traffic and congestion. One person asked whether a jitney service along a local route would be available for the commuters who face a lengthy ride to NYC. This and other similar questions are likely to be addressed at the next hearing when the developer's traffic expert is expected to testify. There is a revised traffic impact study dated 7/22/19 available for viewing in the Building Department, Municipal Building.

In an [eight-page letter of August 14](#) the board's engineer addressed some 86 issues of concern. In many cases he simply said the developer "SHALL" do this or that without having much specificity or revised documentation to support the changes. Then on the very day of the meeting he sent the board another report which provided some 63 comments. 23 of them were deemed "technical minor" ones, which Mr. Rosen read out loud to the public and deemed by the board to be acceptable without further specificity. The remaining comments were not made public. It appears the developer accepted the 23 "minor" issues but not necessarily all the remaining unknown ones, as Dr. Powers pointed out. The developer's lawyer Jason Tuvell later said he was not planning to have the engineer testify as the developer would comply with those requests. Nonetheless, such would result in the public not being able to question the developer's engineer about the original and recently changed specifications.

The date and location of the next hearing will be announced at the board's meeting on December 5 and will likely take place in January, 2020. Presiding over the meeting was Harvey Rosen, Vice Chair of the Board, because Chair Jan Meyer has recused himself.

For further information see [this document](#) which indicates, for each category which requires a variance, what the developer proposes vs. what the regulations permit; [The Plaza Planner review](#); [Construction review](#); and [Engineer review](#).