

**Village of Voorheesville
Planning Commission
Village Hall, 29 Voorheesville Avenue
May 12, 2020**

**Approved
6/2/2020**

This meeting/Public Hearing was held via Zoom video conferencing due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Present: Chairman Georgia Gray, Board members, Kitty Scharl, Kevin Garrity, Chuck Dollard, Dave Prendergast, Mike McTague, Alternate Harvey Huth, CEO Steve Mason, Atty. Rich Reilly, Board member Steve Reilly (7:20 PM)

Absent:

Others: Trustee Jack Stevens, Atlas Copco: Scott Kaffka, Todd Doherty, Jim Ryan, Preston Filkins, Harold Boice, Steve Taylor, Tony Sardella, and Residents: Dr. McCarthy, Terry Ulion, Robert Corrado, Laura Minnick, Dan Carmody, Bryan Strauss, Joerg Siemann

On the agenda: Public Hearing for a Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review request from Atlas Copco (AC) for a proposed addition to their manufacturing plant's test building located at 46 School Road.

Chairman Gray opened the meeting and Public Hearing for the application at 7:04 PM, noting that the public will have their microphone enabled once she opens the floor to public input and requested that comments and questions be directed to the Board and not the applicant.

Scott Kaffka, GM on the Voorheesville Atlas Copco (AC) plant shared a Power Point presentation with the Board – attached.

He noted that AC is moving the manufacturing of larger compressors into the United States and this facility needs a larger space to accommodate these larger units. The proposed addition will be adjacent to the current test building. Regarding noise from testing – the process for these compressors will not add to the noise currently created by the testing of the machinery. No additional noise loops will be added, and due to their size, starting the compressors must start out slow and gradually increase the speed and stopping them requires a gradual reduction in the speed.

He indicated that several sound studies have been conducted and that the overall level (Decibels) does not exceed that of the trains, or a lawn mower. The most recent study – Jan 2020 – took into consideration indoor and outdoor noise levels. He noted that silencers and blankets are used to help suppress the noise and that AC continues to work to improve this issue.

Lauren Sherman – Village engineer noted CT Male was looking for follow-up on the stormwater issue. Jim Ryan noted that the storm drain in question was capped off at the next basin over to which it is connected.

Alternate Board member Huth noted he felt the presentation effectively anticipated and clarified concerns the Board might have had.

Board member Dollard confirmed that the new building will not be a new testing facility, rather, a new assembly facility. Mr. Kaffka indicated that it will be a multipurpose facility with an emphasis on noise control; there will be no testing in the new facility that uses an open-air loop. Board member Dollard indicated he likes the idea of the vacuum testing.

Board member Scharl confirmed that Mr. Kaffka was asserting that the changes that are being made will result in quieter operations. Mr. Kaffka stressed that the vacuum or closed-loop testing will be much quieter, noting the noise level of the current testing will not be affected by the new facility (it is a situation that is being addressed) but the new facility will not add to the current noise.

Board member Garrity noted his question concerned having a noise level to test against in the future. He liked that AC has presented information from which one can measure noise in the future and feels that now the Village has benchmarks to measure against. Chairman Gray agreed that it is much clearer and feels there is now more data to go by and noted that the levels do not appear to be more than the train noise.

Board member Prendergast reconfirmed that the last noise complaint that AC has on record is from 2017. Mr. Kaffka indicated that was correct. Chairman Gray noted that she has spoken with the Mayor about noise complaints and he indicated there had been a few from a resident on Kling Terrace and he (the Mayor) had made a visit to hear for himself. The Building Department does not have any complaints on file.

Board member Reilly asked about the 14001 status – what is required for closure of a complaint and is it kept on record. Mr. Kaffka noted that AC is obligated under ISO 14001 to record all complaints and must disclose and review these in a 3rd party audit. He noted that if complaints are not received by the company, then they cannot be addressed – they have the ability to identify what compressor is running, at what speed and frequency, take samples and then address them the best way possible.

Board member Reilly asked if there is a “paper trail” the Village could follow if future complaints are received. Mr. Kaffka noted that the records can be submitted to the Village.

Board member Mike McTague asked if what was shared is considered the baseline noise report that was requested. Mr. Kaffka indicated that AC has tried to share all the noise samples that have been collected over the last 15-20 years, noting that depending on the type of compressor – there is a different baseline. The January report shows all they have – baselines inside the plant and test facilities. Chairman Gray indicated that the engineers would review that report for the Board. Lauren Sherman responded that they had looked at it and noted that it does not address noise levels at the property line. Mr. Kaffka noted that AC has now acquired equipment that will allow them to test noise levels outside the facility. It will be a continued effort to improve noise abatement but reminded the Board that the application is for an assembly facility – that will not be increasing noise.

Chairman Gray opened the PH for public comment at 7:53.

Bryan Strauss, a resident on Crescent Court commented that he shares a property line with AC (Testing facility side) and that in the 8 years he has lived in his home the noise from AC has not been an issue for him or his family. He indicated that he has done his own noise testing and on an average day the Db level from AC may be 45, with ambient noise in his house, while his neighbor’s lawn mower is about 58 Db. He gathered additional info over the past few weeks from AC, and that averaged out to 54Db. He noted he wanted the Board to know he feels AC is an excellent neighbor.

Laura Minnick, a resident of the Salem Hill neighborhood reiterated Mr. Strauss’s point that AC has always been a good community member, noting that the company was involved and helpful for the (Village’s) recent strategic plan not only for themselves but for the community.

Joerg Seimann, a resident of School Road, noted that he worked at AC for 39 years and commented that AC is outstanding for the community and wondered about moving the cooling tower – would that affect the village water? It was noted that the cooling tower Mr. Seimann referenced is no longer in service.

Terry Ulion, a resident of School Road near the entrance to AC asked if the number of trucks going in and out of the plant would be reduced. Scott Kaffka responded that it is difficult to say – he noted that there may not be any reduction in the large 18-wheelers, and because of the mix of sizes of product they manufacture it is hard to estimate how truck traffic will change – other than a reduction in rigging trucks.

Resident Dan Carmody of Crescent Court, noting AC’s new proposed addition is to build compressors, asked if there would be an increase to the frequency of testing. Mr. Kaffka responded that the new, larger units they would be building with the expansion are more than likely to utilize vacuum testing and other techniques that won’t impact the community as much.

As there were no further comments, at 8:03 PM Chairman Gray closed the public input portion of the meeting, but kept the public hearing open to continue to accept comments

Minutes

After review of the March 10, 2020 minutes, Board member Garrity made the motion that the Board approves of the minutes with corrections having been noted. 2nd by Board member Scharl. All agreed. Motion passed.

At 8:10 PM Board member Garrity made the motion that the meeting be adjourned. 2nd by Board member Prendergast. All agreed.

Submitted Respectfully,

Karen Finnessey
Recording Secretary