

# Boardwalk Pizzeria Expansion Okayed

By JOE HART

SEA ISLE CITY — JEMI Futures, Inc. president Bob DeNunzio, owner of DeNunzio's Brick Oven Pizza on the Promenade, was permitted to begin expansion of his existing restaurant into adjacent units in the Spinnaker Building.

On Jan. 11, planning board officials approved a zoning variance for parking and granted eight site plan submission waivers, giving the project the go-ahead.

Regarding the parking variance, Vince Morrison, attorney for DeNunzio's, argued that the pizzeria's business comes mainly from beach-goers during the day and boardwalk strollers in the evening during the summer.

According to DeNunzio, the new plan calls for a total of 46 seats in the restaurant. With 19 seats now, he would have to provide seven parking spaces for additional seats.

Due to the parking situation at the Spinnaker complex and the nature of the business clientele, Morrison asked the board to consider a variance.

"Spinnaker only allotted four parking spots for DeNunzio's and they are not even near the restaurant, and with over 80 percent of the restaurant patrons coming from foot traffic there is no real need for customer parking," Morrison argued.

Regarding the waivers, the city requires builders to submit a site plan to the board before beginning work. The waivers granted to DeNunzio's dealt mostly with new construction projects and, according to the board, involved issues that did not apply to this expansion.

"Zoning variances are more stringent than site plan waivers," noted city Engineer Andrew Previti.

"The site plan checklist has areas that deal with grading, ingress/egress and lighting that are clearly not applicable in this case. I advised the board to approve the variance and grant the waivers," he said.

DeNunzio testified to a congestion and trash problem on the Promenade outside of his restaurant.

"When we are very busy, people spill out onto the boardwalk, creating a log jam in front of the restaurant. They also leave their trash behind. My employees try to



Pizzeria is at Spinnaker's ground level.

keep on top of the trash, but it was an ongoing problem throughout the summer," he said.

With an increase of 27 seats in the restaurant, DeNunzio said his planned expansion should alleviate those problems.

"Keeping the customers and their trash in the building can only help the appearance outside," he said.

Tom Henry of the Sea Isle City Taxpayers Association (SICTA) cited a potential loss of local business, poor parking near the boardwalk, and DeNunzio's patience and legal practices, as reasons for the board to accept the plans.

"We've had problems with businesses leaving the city, and this applicant actually wants to expand his business. He's done everything by the book, unlike another local pizzeria, and his plans have been delayed over a year. SICTA urges you to approve his requests," he said.

The board agreed and unanimously approved the plan.

"I am pleased with the board's conclusion and I agree with Mr. Henry," Morrison said of the board's approval. "Along with Vince's Restaurant and the relocation of the Remax office to the old Methodist church at 42nd and Landis, this is the only business expansion in the city for the past six months."

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