

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
WORKSESSION MEETING  
March 23, 2023**

**APPROVED 4/13/23**

**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Open Public Meetings Law Statement:

This meeting, which conforms with the Open Public Meetings Law, Chapter 231, Public Laws of 1975, is a **Worksession** Meeting of the Planning Board.

Notices have been filed with our local official newspapers and posted on the municipal bulletin board.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Jaymee Hodges, Chairman  
Dan Olivier, Vice-Chairman  
Mayor Raymond Arroyo  
Christopher Montana, Councilmember  
William Martin  
Ann Costello  
Keith Doell  
Yash Risbud  
Anthony Zorovich  
Beth Staples, Alt. #1

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Thomas Randall, Esq., Board Attorney  
Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, Board Planner  
Brandon Goldfine, Boswell Engineering  
Board Engineer

**ABSENT:** Kristy Dougherty, Alt. #2 (Excused Absence)

**4. OPEN TO PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

A motion to open to public was made by Beth Staples, seconded by Ann Costello, and carried. There were no questions or comments,

and the matter was closed to the public on motion by Yash Risbud, seconded by Ann Costello and carried.

**5. MINUTES:** The Minutes of the **2/23/23** meeting were carried to the next meeting.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**7. RESOLUTIONS:** None

**8. PENDING NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Grace Episcopal Church, 9 Harrington Avenue - Site Plan with Bulk Variances for construction of an ADA ramp - Carried - to be heard on 4/13/23;**

**9. VARIANCES, SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR SITE PLANS:**

SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

**10. DISCUSSION:**

**1. Memo from Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, dated 3/20/23 RE: Westwood Land Use Plan Update; Additional Land Use Plan Considerations, O and CBD Zones -** Mr. Snieckus reviewed his Memo, starting with the Overview. Pursuant to the Board's request, he offered the following review of the proposal to add a recommendation to the Land Use Plan (LUP), establishing new zones for the following areas (see attached map):

1. Portions of the O-Zone applying to properties along the easterly side of Kinderkamack Road between the opposite side of Irvington Street south to the northerly side of Lotus Street;

2. Portions of the CBD Zone applying to properties along the southerly side of portions of Irvington Street between Center Avenue and Kinderkamack.

The Board requested review of these areas for possible new zones that would clearly identify the intent to maintain these areas as transition or buffer zones in consideration of their proximity to neighboring lower density R-1 residential zones.

Review and Recommendations: O-Office Zone Area:

The O-Office Zone is identified in the amended Land Use Plan as follows:

This land use delineation encompasses several areas situated at the perimeter of the Borough's central business district. This classification is designed to encourage conversion of existing

buildings to office use, as well as encourage the assemblage of parcels to enable new office development.

The O-Office Zone located on the perimeter of the CBD-Zone has been envisioned as a transitional zone by the permitted uses and the related bulk criteria of the zone. The zone permits the following permitted and conditional uses:

Permitted uses:

1. Offices.
2. Residential, complying with R-1 requirements.
3. Child-care centers, subject to § 195-129B.
4. Nutritionist, dietician and licensed physical therapist.

Conditional uses:

1. Mixed-use development. In accordance with §195-131F at a minimum of 2.5acres consisting of a mixture of:
  - a. Banks, including drive-through banking facilities.
  - b. Health clubs.
  - c. Offices, including medical offices.

The O-Zone bulk standards for the zone were shown. Further shown was the area of interest in the current O-Zone located along the easterly side of Kinderkamack Road beginning from opposite the intersection of Irvington Street and Kinderkamack Road to the northerly side of Lotus Street. This area includes a total of 26 lots. The following is a summary of the lots in question and their respective uses were outlined.

The area is currently comprised of a mixture of uses from residential to commercial, generally in line with the uses permitted with some pre-existing exceptions such as the multifamily residential uses which do not comply with the R-1 zoned residential requirements. The lot sizes and building massing also generally comply with the O-Zone bulk standards although there are also some exceptions.

To further the intent to maintain these areas as a transitional land use to the R-1 Zone, we offer two planning options. First, the Board could adopt a new zone that reflects the specific purpose as follows:

Office/Residential Transition Zone (O-R Zone). A low impact business, professional office and single residential use zone, wherein a single residential use may be developed and maintained in conformance with the R-1 Zone requirements or mixed as a single

structure with other permitted low intensity commercial uses as prescribed by the zone plan. The intent is to form a transitional land use between the more intensive CBD and CBD/SPE-Zone and the low-density residential uses in the adjacent R-1 Zones. The maximum height, stories and bulk requirements of this zone are established for this specific transitional purpose and to safeguard impacts to the adjacent R-1 zoned neighborhoods of the zone plan.

A second option would be to maintain the existing zone although to clearly establish in the Land Use Plan a statement clarifying in the land use description as follows:

Office (O)(CO). This land use delineation encompasses several areas situated at the perimeter of the Borough's central business district. This classification is designed to encourage conversion of existing buildings to office use, as well as encourage the assemblage of parcels to enable new office development. The lots forming the boundary of the zone along the easterly side of Kinderkamack Road from the northly extent at the intersection with Irvington Street to the southerly extent at Lotus Street are intended for the development as prescribed in the zone plan, specifically as a transitional area to the lower density residential in the adjacent R-1 Zones. To maintain this transitional land use characteristic, the specified zone standards of bulk criteria and buffer requirements are established to transition from the more intensive CBD and CBD/SPEZone activities and safeguard the lower density residential pattern planned in the adjacent R-1 Zones. The CO portion of this zone is similar although permits residential uses as per the R-2 District requirements and contains specific bulk criteria reflective of existing development. This is also further supported by the statements contained in Goal# 3 of the Master Plan Land Use Plan which states:

Goal 3: To encourage and provide buffer zones to separate incompatible land uses.

Goal #3 Policy Statement: The borough recognizes the need to reinforce the delineation of boundaries separating residential and non-residential sections of the community. Appropriate buffer/screening devices are to be encouraged to separate incompatible land uses in order to minimize adverse impacts on residential properties. This should be accomplished primarily within the framework of appropriate open space buffer strips containing suitable planting elements (including such elements as multiple rows of plant material, planting clusters, etc.), in an effort to protect residential areas and to retain and reaffirm the community's overall landscape amenity.

Review and Recommendations: CBD-Central Business District Zone Area. The CBD-Zone including the specified areas of interest along the northerly border of the zone adjacent to Irvington Street, are described by the following statements in the amended Land Use Plan: This land use classification provides a variety of retail and limited service uses which are directed towards meeting the shopping and related needs of the area's residents. The intent of this land use classification is to encourage retail and service commercial uses which complement both the established context and scale of this central business district and activities which are complimentary to each other...The CBD zoned area of this land use classification is designated for uses similar to the CBD/SPE Zone although permit a greater variety of retail and service uses which complement the established context and scale of this area of the Borough. The development criteria established for the CBD and the CBD/SPE zones reflect the specified context of this land use classification and the defined development pattern and vision for the district. While it is known there are building forms that exceed this regulated pattern of the zoning, it is goal and vision of the Central Business District land use classification that the defined context be maintained except as may be further amended by the Borough governing body from time to time.

The detailed plan is designed to encourage the following:

- The rehabilitation of buildings and sites and the adaptive reuse of older buildings in the area;
- The retention of building forms along Irvington Street frontage of the CBD district forming a step down of development intensity where adjacent to the adjoining R-1 zoning.

As background in the review of the potential adjustments being contemplated in the northerly area of the CBDZone, the following are the permitted and conditional uses:

Permitted uses:

1. All principal permitted uses allowed in the CBD/SPE District.
2. Retail appliance stores; banks; dance studios; retail sale of prepared foods and related products to be consumed off premises; dry-cleaning establishments servicing walk-in customers (not laundromats); financial services; fish stores; business, professional and medical offices; optical products, including retail sale of eyeglasses, eyeglass frames and related products; real estate offices; residential dwelling units (per R-1 District regulations); sit-down restaurants and restaurants with bars (not

to be located within 100 feet of the R-1 Detached Single-Family Residential District); stockbrokers; bond salespersons and sale of financial products; tailors; travel agencies; video stores; wearing apparel shops; and nutritionist, dietician and licensed physical therapist.

3. Child-care centers, subject to § 195-129B

Conditional uses:

1. Underground garage parking facilities, subject to the following conditional requirements:

- a. Maximum number of levels: one floor
- b. Underground garage driveway edge shall be no closer than 50 feet to a street intersection.
- c. Underground garage shall meet all of the setbacks of an aboveground structure in the zone.

The CBD-Zone bulk standards requirements were shown in the table. The area of interest along the northerly border of the current CBD-Zone adjacent to Irvington Street beginning at the lots fronting on Center Avenue and continuing eastward to the lot fronting on the westerly side of Kinderkamack Road. This area includes a total of 20 lots. The summary of the lots in question and their respective uses was shown in a table.

The area is currently comprised of a mixture of uses from residential to commercial, generally consistent with the uses permitted. The lot sizes and building massing also generally comply with the CBD-Zone bulk standards although there are also some exceptions.

To further the intent to maintain these areas as an additional transitional land use to the R-1 Zone to the north of this area, we offer two options. First, the Board could adopt a new zone that reflects the specific purpose similar to the transitional O-Zone as follows:

Central Business/Residential Transition Zone (CBD-R Zone). A business, professional office and single residential use zone, wherein a single residential use may be developed and maintained in conformance with the R-1 Zone requirements or mixed as a single structure with other permitted moderate intensity commercial uses as prescribed by the zone plan. The intent is to form a transitional land use between the more intensive CBD-Zone and the low-density residential uses in the adjacent R-1 Zones. The maximum

height, stories and bulk requirements of this zone are established for this specific transitional purpose and to safeguard impacts to the adjacent R-1 zoned neighborhoods of the zone plan.

A second option, similar to the O-Zone above, would be to maintain the existing zone although to further clarify in the Land Use Plan the statement relative to this area of the district. This could take two forms depending upon the Board's preference. A clarification statement could apply to lots fronting along Irvington Street specifically as provided below or it could be expanded to note all of the lots noted above as a broader area.

The following is offered for discussion (bold would be the additional text):

The detailed plan is designed to encourage the following:

- The rehabilitation of buildings and sites and the adaptive reuse of older buildings in the area;
- The retention of building forms along the Irvington Street frontage of the CBD district forming a step down of development intensity where adjacent to the adjoining R-1 zoning to the north. The lots forming the northern boundary of the zone along the easterly side of Irvington Street from Block 807, Lot 14 east to Block 807, Lot 7 at the southwesterly side of Kinderkamack Road are intended for the development as prescribed in the zone plan, specifically as a transitional area to the lower density residential in the adjacent R-1 Zone to the north. To maintain this transitional land use characteristic, the specified zone standards of bulk criteria and buffer requirements are established to transition from the more intensive CBD and CBD/SPE-Zone activities and safeguard the lower density residential pattern planned in the adjacent R-1 Zones.

As identified above in the O-Zone area, this objective is also supported by the statements contained in Goal# 3 of the Master Plan Land Use Plan.

#### Maximum Building Length Criteria.

Should a new zone be recommended, we offer the zone include a maximum building length criterion to limit the mass of a new infill building to promote the intent and limit the scale of a structure in this zone. It is recommended that a maximum total building length of 80 feet in any direction; if multiple buildings are permitted on a lot, then an offset of minimally 30 feet should be required.

Board discussion followed. Beth Staples commented she favors first option. It was noted that 62 Bergen Ave the only two family. Mr. Snieckus advised the Board would have to have a public hearing for a zone change. Also, they should maybe allow residential upstairs and office downstairs. William Martin commented perhaps we need to have the buffer on Irvington and create criteria for a landscape buffer. Discussions ensued on this and how to make the area benefit with change. Mr. Snieckus to come back with expanded map and diagrams. Mayor Arroyo commented the County is revising its Master Plan and questioned if it has an effect on local areas. Mr. Snieckus commented when reviewing applications local criteria is reviewed and overrules the County. Language was offered by Mr. Snieckus. He would bring an update at next meeting for the O and CBD Zones.

**2. Memo from Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, dated 3/21/23 RE: Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Study - Status Update -** Mr. Snieckus gave an overview of the 2023 Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Study of the Master Plan and explained that this would formally be taken up after the O and CBD Zones. The Study Overview consisted of Background Data Compilation; Build-Out Analysis; Analysis of Potential Threats (NJDEP to assist by providing best available science on potential threats). Mr. Snieckus noted he met with Armand Marini, Darren Blankenbush and Ed Senkevich and went through all of the data and impacts. The Board discussed elevation changes, regulatory flood areas and DEP regulations. More properties would fall into the flood area category. Mr. Martin commented this could greatly affect property values. It was discussed that Rutgers had done research that found properties should be 3' above elevations. Westwood currently has a 1' map. This could affect 50-100 homes. Mr. Snieckus asked Mr. Goldfine if Boswell could prepare and send something to the Board regarding the potential impact. The Mayor noted the DEP can still issue waivers. Lastly, Mr. Snieckus reviewed the Hazard Vulnerability Review and Plan Target Schedule and timeline.

There were no further comments or discussions. These items would be carried to the next meetings.

**11. ADJOURNMENT** - On motions, made seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,  
MARY R. VERDUCCI, Paralegal  
Planning Board Secretary**