

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
April 13, 2023**

APPROVED 4/27/23

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 **Regular** 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
Mayor Raymond Arroyo
Christopher Montana, Councilmember
William Martin
Ann Costello
Keith Doell (8:12pm)
Yash Risbud
Beth Staples, Alt. #1
Kristy Dougherty, Alt. #2 (8:08pm)

ALSO PRESENT:

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

ABSENT: Dan Olivier, Vice-Chairman (excused absence)
Anthony Zorovich (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 & 3/23/23** meeting were approved on motion made by Ann Costello, seconded by Beth Staples and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Letter from Westwood Ambulance RE: Annual Carnival (July) - A motion to approve was made by Mayor Arroyo, seconded by Yash Risbud and carried.

7. RESOLUTIONS:

1. Adoption of Amendment to Westwood Land Use Plan of the Master Plan - Board Attorney Stevens read the Resolution of Approval into the record. There were no further questions, comments or discussions. A motion for approval was made by Ann Costello, seconded by Beth Staples and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

8. PENDING NEW BUSINESS:

1. PB-2307-96 Sand Road GH Development LLC - 96 Sand Road-Major Subdivision, Site Plan with Bulk Variances (3 lots and road extension) - still incomplete-Carried; Chairman Hodges requested Board Members and Professionals to go to 96 Sand Road to view the site prior to the application coming before the Board for public hearing. There are concerns about the C1 waterway and buffer. Mr. Snieckus submitted a Memo dated 4/12/23 and stated the application was deemed incomplete, based on wetlands possibly affecting the ability to develop the property. It must have a 300' buffer from the C1 waterway. There are still Checklist items and information to be produced by the applicant, together with any buffer area impact. Still looking into C1 waterway, and they will need to get an approval from the NJDEP. Mr. Snieckus stated there are a number of things they need to address, including showing where the buffer area is.

2. PB-2308-10 Carver LLC-10 Carver -New construction for a baseball training facility - Site Plan approval with C variances - Complete; Ready to be scheduled for the 4/27/23 meeting;

3. PB-2311-301 Center Property LLC-287 Center- Site Plan for a 386sf addition - Still incomplete; Carried;

9. VARIANCES, SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR SITE PLANS:

SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Grace Episcopal Church, 9 Harrington Avenue - Site Plan with Bulk Variances for construction of an ADA ramp - Mark D. Madaio, Esq. Represented the applicant in an application for a new ADA compliant handicapped access ramp on a House of Worship. It is a house of worship, an inherently beneficial use, and the facility has been in the town for approx. 115 years. The goal is to assure that the public can gain access for as long as they possibly can. There are emerging and other congregations that will utilize this facility, so there will be older attendants. The notice and publication documents were on file. The architectural plan submitted was dated 7/15/22 and revised to 9/9/22, made by Matthew T. Wolfe, R.A. A survey by Christopher J. Lantelme, PE & LS, dated 12/9/22, revised to 1/31/22 was submitted with the application. Mr. Madaio advised the applicant can be granted under C1 & C2. The ramp comes into the front. yard setbacks. The variances can be granted without detriments. There is no negative criteria, as it is an inherently beneficial use.

Matthew T. Wolfe, R.A. , Licensed NJ Architect, was sworn in, qualified and accepted. His plans were prepared by him, Director of Architecture at LANs Associates, marked A1. Two colored pictures were marked A2 and described by Mr. Wolfe, illustrating the current structure without a ramp. They had analyzed using a lift, but that was not cost-effective and had to be maintained. The ramp would fit in with the building. There are two entrances, and the alternative entrance is where the ramp would go. It is the most efficient layout. The ramp would match the brick and masonry and blend in with the church building. There are very limited opportunities for the location of the ramp. It has brick veneer on outside and concrete structure. The ramp provides for its own drainage; one trench drain is being provided. Normal runoff would property drain from the area for the proposed ramp. Building coverage would not change. Impervious coverage would be increased a few percentage points, 56% to 59%, but would not need a variance. There are no additional variances or waivers and no negative or detrimental impacts. It would in fact improve any drainage issues.

Questions from the Board followed. Mr. Snieckus asked clarifying questions about the location and size of the ramp and its location to Kinderkamack Road. Mr. Wolfe stated they are in alignment with the existing building and not extending it further. He asked if there were lighting, and there would be wall-mounted lighting. The church is planning on doing landscaping, such as shrubbery. Mr. Goldfine commented although it adds some impervious coverage, be mindful of any pounding or ground water collection, and that stormwater options are available. Construction must meet ADA standards. Councilman Montana asked about the entrance doors,

which swing outward. He asked if there would be a power-door operator, and if there was enough room, and Mr. Wolfe responded there were no plans at present, and there was sufficient room on the landing. Councilman Montana had expressed concern. Mayor Arroyo addressed those concerns. Perhaps the practice is to have a church representative by the door. Mr. Madaio stated it is the practice to have the doors open prior to the service. Unless it is absolutely required by Code, they would not feel the need to add the electric door. Mr. Doell asked for clarification on the planting. It is not on the plan. He suggested it be put on the plan. Mr. Madaio said they are happy to do some landscaping, although not mandatory or necessary and is minimally desirable. There may be some additional plantings along the side of the ramp for shielding. If it is a condition of approval, please put it in the Resolution. Mr. Martin stated they put in an extraordinary effort and went over the requirements. He complimented them on the design and the Board should not make the doors or landscaping a requirement. Some provisions should be made for removal of snow or ice and suggested a heat chase mat. The church is an inherently beneficial use and not everyone in a wheelchair needs the ramp. Ms. Staples agrees with Mr. Martin that they designed the ramp to match the brick and the church. It is a visual improvement. There is more than enough room with the addition of the landing. What they have is great. Ms. Dougherty agreed on the design, and it blends in very well with the front facade. They should check the turning radius for the new ADA compliance requirements. The Mayor had positive comments, stating it is an inherently beneficial use. Chairman Hodges stated they did a great job and asked if one light was sufficient to illuminate both upper and lower sections of the ramp. Mr. Wolfe stated it should be sufficient. The Mayor stated they should consider a heat chase mat, as recommended by Mr. Martin. He is sure the applicant will do any necessary landscaping. Mr. Madaio thanked the Board.

There were no further questions or comments. A motion for approval was made by William Martin seconded by Beth Staples. On roll call vote, William Martin, Ann Costello, Keith Doell, Yash Risbud, Beth Staples, Councilmember Montana, Mayor Arroyo and Jaymee Hodges voted yes.

10. DISCUSSION:

1. Memo from Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, dated 4/11/23
RE: Westwood Land Use Plan Update; Additional Land Use Plan Considerations, CBD Zone-Aerial Considerations - Mr. Snieckus provided a revised Borough map with his updated Land Use Memo and gave an overview since the last meeting, and offered the following:

Pursuant to the Board's request and discussion at the last meeting of the Board on March 23, 2023, the Board was reviewing additional recommendations to be included in the Borough Land Use Plan (LUP), regarding the following areas:

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, and

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

At the last meeting it was concluded, to reach consensus regarding the appropriate recommendation for the portion of the CBD zone bordering Irvington Street, we offered to provide some additional mapping to visualize the area and formulate appropriate recommendations. He prepared the illustration attached to the Memo providing an aerial of this area with the current setback requirements and overlaid with possible buffer requirement to illustrate potential recommended criteria for this area. Mr. Snieckus noted the prior discussion focused on whether this area should be recommended as a new special zone or to modify the land use plan zone description to identify the planned vision for this area. The intent being to maintain this area as transition or buffer in consideration of the proximity to neighboring lower density R-1 residential zone to the north. Mr. Snieckus provided the prior review and recommendations offered for reference and convenience for the Board's continued review as outlined in the previous Memo.

Mr. Snieckus added the following updates:

New Zone Recommendation:

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.

Land Use Plan Recommendation:

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.

This objective is also supported by the statements contained in Goal# 3 of the Master Plan Land Use Plan.

A discussion ensued. Mr. Snieckus indicated he would provide an overview of the findings at the next meeting. At that time, it would give the public an opportunity to offer input.

Ms. Staples asked if there would be any different bulk requirements proposed. Mr. Snieckus stated right now they are just recommending the one, and that criteria would come later. He would summarize same in a memo all at once with the Hazard Vulnerability in a land use amendment.

2. Memo from Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, dated 3/21/23
RE: Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Study - Status Update - Mr. Snieckus provided a follow up on the Hazard Vulnerability Study, and stated the Board should notice for the next public meeting. At that time, they would seek input from the public. The study by Rutgers showed areas in the flood plain. The DEP will require the first-floor elevation be two feet above the flood plain. We already have one foot higher. This is in anticipation of an increase in rainfall events and climate change.

3. Procedural Rules and Bylaws - Mr. Randall emailed the updated document to the Board Members - to be adopted at the next meeting;

4. Vouchers - Mr. Doell asked for an update on whether the vouchers would be coming to the Board for approval, and Mr. Martin commented he was advised they would not be. Councilmember Montana commented understands the Boards want this, but explained there is a process in place, and it is not a function of the Board. That is the reason. Mr. Martin stated it is the Boards that know if the services were rendered or not. The Chairman stated the Board would like to know the financial activity of matters coming before the Board.

5. Other - Councilmember Montana stated the Financial Disclosure Statements are out and due at the end of the month.

The Board acknowledged a young boy scout present in audience, attending for completion of his community science badge. One of the requirements was that he must attend a public meeting.

Chairman Jaymee Hodges stated the soldier killed in the helicopter crash, Sgt. David Solinas, Jr., would be honored with a homecoming this Sunday in Oradell.

The Board acknowledged the passing of former **Chairman Richard Bonsignore** expressing admiration and gratitude for Mr. Bonsignore's many years of devoted service to the Board, extending sympathy and would keep his family in their prayers.

11. ADJOURNMENT - On motions, made seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:40 p.m.

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