

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
October 13, 2022**

APPROVED 11/3/22

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** Public 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
William Martin
Ann Costello
Keith Doell
Anthony Zorovich
Yash Risbud
Beth Staples, Alt. #1
Kristy Dougherty, Alt. #2

ALSO PRESENT:

Thomas Randall, Esq., Board Attorney
By Steven Paul, Esq.
Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, Board Planner
Louis Raimondi, Board Engineer

ABSENT: Dan Olivier, Vice-Chairman (excused absence)
Christopher Montana, Councilmember
(excused absence)

4. OPEN TO PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: A motion to open to the public was made by Yash Risbud, seconded by William Martin and carried. Chris Aleppa, 96 Washington Avenue, Westwood, came forward and suggested the Borough consider allowing food trucks in town, which was taken under advisement. There was no further discussion and no further members of the public that came forward. A motion to close to the public was made by William Martin, seconded by Yash Risbud and carried.

5. MINUTES: The Minutes of the **9/8/22** meeting were approved on motion made by Anthony Zorovich, seconded by Kristy Dougherty, and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

6. CORRESPONDENCE: None

7. RESOLUTIONS:

1. Carver Street LLC, 768 Carver Avenue, Block 2001, Lot 58 - Window, Door and Wall Sign - Board Attorney Paul read the Resolution of Approval into the record. There were no further questions, comments or discussions. A motion for approval of the Resolution was made by William Martin and seconded by Yash Risbud. On roll call vote, William Martin, Anthony Zorovich, Keith Doell, Yash Risbud, Mayor Arroyo, Beth Staples, Kristy Dougherty, and Chairman Hodges voted yes.

8. PENDING NEW BUSINESS: None

9. VARIANCES, SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR SITE PLANS:

SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Sana Cabana, LLC-372 Kinderkamack - Site Plan with C-variances - Paul Klemm, Esq., attorney for applicant came forward and presented the application. He published and served notice. Chris Aleppa, applicant, 96 Washington Avenue, Westwood, was sworn in and set forth the purpose of the project. They purchased an old building at the premises. An eye doctor's office has been present for many years on the second floor. They are seeking to put a lift up to the second floor to make it handicapped accessible. The rear of the building is the ground floor, and the first floor needs the lift. William Martin asked if he is aware that a health care provider must be in a handicapped accessible building, per the ADA, so this is necessary.

Vincent J Cioffi, Licensed NJ Architect, was sworn in and accepted, having appeared before the Board on numerous occasions. Mr. Cioffi described his plan dated 6/15/22 and the details of the proposed, limited lift. The lift will serve the entrance, mid-level and upper levels. It will not serve the lower level with a

bathroom due to limitations. Mr. Cioffi distributed a photo of the building. A ramp will also be necessary from the front of the building to the lift. The ramp increases the impervious coverage. Front yard setback and maximum lot coverage variances are required. The lower level does not have any medical offices.

Board questions and comments followed. Mr. Snieckus had questions about the ramp and lift access. A seepage pit will also be installed. This is a hardship due to compliance issues. Mr. Cioffi noted they want to do this as efficiently as possible. Mr. Snieckus commented this would be a physical features test since they are not having a planner. Mr. Cioffi distributed the Handi Lift Detail Plan dated 8/9/21, which he described. The lift can fit two people. Chairman Hodges had a few questions regarding the lift. Mayor Arroyo commented he was recused. Mr. Martin had questions. Doors would be changed to make them more accessible. The landing has to be 5' by 5'. Mr. Martin asked if he can provide amended numbers, as that is not shown on the plan, so they do not have to come back. The coverage variance will change. Mr. Cioffi stated 27 sf of additional coverage is needed. Mr. Raimondi concurred it is a de minimis change. The front yard setback is slightly adjusted. Ms. Dougherty asked if there was handicapped parking. Mr. Cioffi stated there is a 5' area is marked out as no parking which is next to the parking space that can be used.

There were no further questions of Mr. Cioffi from the Board and none from the public. The attorney summed up and requested an approval of the application in that the application was for de minimis changes and a hardship.

A motion for approval was made by William Martin, with acknowledgement of the de minimis changes, hardship and necessity for ADA compliance, and seconded by Ann Costello. There were no further questions, comments or discussions. On roll call vote, William Martin, Anthony Zorovich, Ann Costello, Keith Doell, Yash Risbud, Beth Staples, Kristy Dougherty, and Jaymee Hodges voted yes. Mayor Arroyo was recused.

2. Blauvelt, 46 & 58 Garden Street - Minor Subdivision -

The applicant, Cheryl Blauvelt, 46 Garden Place, Westwood, was sworn in and presented the application for a minor subdivision to move the lot line. She needs more open space and is acquiring the additional property. Ed Snieckus submitted a memo and noted there was no plan for wetlands and a waiver was requested. He did not see a problem as long as the applicant was aware. He reviewed his memo and overview. Mr. Snieckus and Mr. Raimondi agreed it is a minor subdivision, and no lot changes in size and shape. A motion

for approval of the waiver was made by William Martin and seconded by Yash Risbud. On roll call vote, William Martin, Anthony Zorovich, Ann Costello, Keith Doell, Yash Risbud, Mayor Arroyo, Beth Staples, Kristy Dougherty, and Jaymee Hodges voted yes. Photos were distributed by the applicant and marked Exhibit 1. There were no further questions or comments. There were no interested parties.

A motion for approval of the waiver was made by William Martin and seconded by Yash Risbud. On roll call vote, William Martin, Anthony Zorovich, Ann Costello, Keith Doell, Yash Risbud, Mayor Arroyo, Beth Staples, Kristy Dougherty, and Jaymee Hodges voted yes.

10. DISCUSSION:

1. Parking requirements - CBD/SPE & CBD Zones - Memo of Ed Snieckus dated 9/13/22 containing a summary of discussions regarding the Westwood Land Use Plan as to parking requirements. The Board had discussed an amendment to the plan at the 9/8/22 meeting. Mr. Snieckus listed the items raised in a summary to the Board, which he reviewed, with Board commentary and discussion following. Mr. Snieckus would then submit a recommendation to the Mayor and Council at the Board's direction. Chairman Hodges suggesting also keeping the Zoning Board apprised of these discussions. Mr. Snieckus will prepare a draft amendment for the Planning Board's review and approval.

Summary of Items Raised During Land Use Discussion 9/8/22

1. General concern was raised as to the cumulative impact of parking variance relief in the CBD/ SPE, CBD, O and CO zones on the supply of on street and municipal parking lot supply. Questions raised asked Is there a way to track the extent of relief that granted per project as a database that can be tracked and considered for future potential applications providing a historic knowledge of this parking resource. Further, is it possible to identify the location of the variances in the database to provide a geographic context to the demand for parking.

2. Recent updates to the public parking management including the yellow employee hang tags has improved parking utilization by encouraging employee parking away from the main roadways.

3. A subindustry of parking rental is increasing in the Borough which when obligating spaces may tend to further exacerbate parking deficits.

4. The changes expected at the parking authority to a utility is seen as providing greater accessibility to parking utilization data available through the application service currently utilized. This data may be useful to Boards during the review of parking variances calling for greater utilization of the public parking supply. The app software can provide the geodata regarding which lots are experiencing the highest usage compared to others. Further the Master Plan should be revised to identify the need to balance parking supply and demand

5. Rideshare services were seen as a source of parking but not a significant solution in the short term. The district context is one of a suburban mostly vehicular centric, with rideshare services contributing to some uses but not for all uses.

6. It was recognized that the Borough's CBD benefits from a regional east and west circulation on Westwood Avenue and also connectivity to the north and south via Broadway and Kinderkamack Road. The operation of the east to west circulation is highly impacted by the railroad grade crossing at the intersection with Broadway. The Broadway intersection contributes a significant amount of volume traveling northbound and southbound on to Westwood and Washington Avenue. This is evidenced by the traffic volume that has increased since Bergen County made the recent signalization improvements.

7. Restaurants are significant part of the downtown activity in Westwood. The efforts to assist restaurants with outdoor dining during the pandemic have proven successful and have contributed to the greater vibrancy of the downtown. It is recognized though that while a business district such as Westwood can be characterized as a "foodie" district and the more recent business openings have advanced this image. The districts evolution over the next ten years needs to maintain this image but not to overweight the amount of this use. A balance of uses is needed.

8. The work from home business activity has contributed to the patronage of restaurants and services. The activity is broadening the use of the district throughout the day. This will continue to influence the use of the district.

9. The work from home and changing demographic of residents has increased the need to improve pedestrian safety and safer connections and access through intersections and crossings improvements. There is also the need for features such as racks for bikes in key locations. The use of alternative modes of

transportation will increase as a result of greater availability of E-bikes and related mobility devices.

10. A general recognition was that with the latest regional housing development resulting from various municipal affordable housing settlement agreements, will have a cumulative effect on the population in the region. While this can have the effect of increased commerce to stores and businesses, it can also cause a greater demand on parking supply and general traffic circulation.

11. The master plan should be updated to recognize these issues and to also plan and clearly define the business district scale intended through tools such as density limits or form limits. These factors would set a framework that is defensible.

12. Future updates to the Master Plan should incorporate planning for transitional zone or areas to surrounding single family areas where possible. This is recognized as a favorable feature of the Borough.

13. The master plan should identify the key components with a focus to maintain the health safety and welfare of the business district. Additional consideration is the emergency services to future increases in density the cumulative effect can cause greater delays and when coupled with the train crossing delays this can have a significant impact.

14. Future mixed use should also include a minimum amount of FAR composed of retail or commercial space in order to maintain the commercial context to the pedestrian realm and vibrance of the district.

15. It has been a successful mantra for the Boroughs to implement incremental land use changes over time for economic improvement to avoid unbalancing the districts resources and drastically changing the downtown.

2. Adoption of Procedural Rules & By-Laws - Noted for approval - Carried to the next meeting;

11. ADJOURNMENT - On motions, made seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

MARY R. VERDUCCI, Paralegal
Planning Board Secretary