

BOROUGH OF RIVER EDGE  
LAND USE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
October 21, 2020

Zoom - Meeting called order at 7:30 p.m.

Roll call please:

Mayor Papaleo – Absent (Excused)  
Chairman, James Arakelian - Here  
Vice Chairman, Dick Mehrman - Here  
Lou Grasso - Here  
Ryan Gibbons - Absent  
Michael Krey – Here  
Eileen Boland – Here  
Chris Caslin- Here  
Alphonse Bartelloni – Absent  
Dario Chinigo – Absent (Excused)  
Gary Esposito - Here

ALSO PRESENT:

Marina Stinley, Esq.

Chairman Arakelian made the required announcement concerning the Open Public Meetings Act: Adequate notice of this meeting has been displayed on both the bulletin board at Borough Hall, and published in the Record and Ridgewood News for the people who are interested in this meeting. The meeting is being recorded electronically through ZOOM, the ID. No. for the ZOOM meeting is 82559010122. No flag salute. No fire exits to worry about.

No minutes for approval.

**Memorializations:**

Hye Annie Lee, 830 Kinderkamack Road, lock 212. Lot 23 – Food Handler's License.

Motion to accept– So made, Mehrman, Second, Mr. Caslin. Roll Call – Mr. Arakelian – yes, Ms. Boland (recused due to absence at previous meeting) – Mr. Mehrman -yes, Mr. Grasso (recused

due to absence at previous meeting) – Mr. Krey -yes, Mr. Caslin – yes and Mr. Esposito – yes. Motion passes.

Tarikbin & Fatma Ok, 364 Lee Street, Block 1002, Lot 54 – Minor addition to the home – approval was given.

Ms. Stinley had one minor edit. The Planner who testified, Ms. Stinley neglected to include Professional Planner designation so she will include that in the Resolution. Motion as corrected for this memorialization – So moved, Mr. Krey, Second – Mr. Esposito. Roll Call – Mr. Arakelian – yes, Ms. Boland (recused due to absence at previous meeting) – Mr. Mehrman -no, Mr. Grasso (recused due to absence at previous meeting) – Mr. Krey -yes, Mr. Caslin – no and Mr. Esposito – yes. There are three yes votes and two no votes. Since its just for memorialization Ms. Stinley believes that is acceptable but she will have to confirm. Mr. Arakelian advises that the Board does have two of their voting members absent, so Mr. Esposito who is an alternate is officially a voting member for this evening.

### **Completeness Review:**

Asan Bretton, 17 Elizabeth Street, Block 1407, Lot 3 – Substantial renovation – proposed two-family dwelling. Requires a D variance.

Applicant requested that this application be moved to the next hearing. Motion to carry application November 4, 2020 – Mr. Mehrnamn, so made, Mr. Grasso, second. Roll call – Chairman Arakelian – yes; Ms. Boland – yes; Mr. Mehrman – yes; Mr. Grasso – yes; Mr. Krey – yes; Mr. Caslin – yes; and Mr. Esposito – yes. The application for Asan Bretton has been carried to the November 4 2020, meeting of the River Edge Municipal Land Use Board with no further notice needed.

Yackov Shamis – 230 Kensington Road, Block 707, Lot 24 – Develop 250 square feet patio. Improved lot coverage – variance relief required.

The application is complete and can be heard. Motion to move to regular meeting – Mr. Mehrman – so made, second – Mr. Esposito. Roll call Chairman Arakelian – yes; Ms. Boland – yes; Mr. Mehrman – yes; Mr. Grasso – yes; Mr. Krey – yes; Mr. Caslin – yes; and Mr. Esposito – yes.

### **New Business:**

Yackov Shamis – 230 Kensington Road, Block 707, Lot 24 – Develop 250 square feet patio. Improved lot coverage – variance relief required.

Applicant inherited property at 41% - builder got approval for 35%. Mr Behrens advises that regarding the “as built plan” in the Borough and the Borough has tightened that up within the last year and they are closely reviewing all the “as built plans” so this type of thing does not happened. So the existing condition is 41% , the proposed patio is 232 square feet which has been reduced to bringing it up to 44%. The lot size is 6,000 square feet which is considered undersized in the Borough. Seepage pits exists on the property. The builder went over the specs and no one caught it. Chairman Arakelian suggests that a memo go out to the building department to address this problem so the Borough can put a stop to it. Mr. Behrens advises that every “as built” is getting reviewed and signed off on.

Chairman Arakelin opens up to the Board for questions. Mr. Mehrman asked Mr. Behrens if the stepping stones are entered into the calculations. Mr. Behrens believed they were. Chairman Arakelian is fine with the application considering the special circumstances due to the builder and so far as the applicant agrees to abide by our Borough engineer as far as water retention he is fine with the application because of the special circumstances.

Ms. Stinley request clarification as to the size of the patio and the percent of coverage. For the purposes of the Resolution the patio is 232 square feet and as Mr. Krey pointed out that is really 3.8% of the lot size and there was some net deduction because the patio is covering some impervious coverage that is there and it may be worth noting both in the Resolution. Motion to open to the public; Mr. Krey, so moved – Mr. Mehrman -Second. All in favor – aye. Motion to close to the public - Ms. Boland, so made; second – Mr. Grasso. All in favor - aye. Motion on the application – Mr. Mehrman, offers a motion that the Land Use Board accept the application for the noted variance for maximum approved coverage for 230 Kensington Road, Block 707, Lot 24 and he would like to note that this lot is a substandard lot 60' width and that imposes a hardship for the applicant – Mr. Arakelian accepts the motion – second - Ms. Boland. Roll call – Chairman Arakelian – yes; Ms. Boland – yes; Mr. Mehrman – yes; Mr. Grasso – yes; Mr. Krey – yes; Mr. Caslin – yes; and Mr. Esposito – yes. Motion passes.

### **Borough of River Edge Re-examination Report of the Master Plan and Development Ordinances dated October 9, 2020.**

The document is broken up into several different sections:

1. Review of the legal requirements both for planning and re-examination reports as well as a list of previous Master Plan efforts undertaken by the Borough which dye back ll the way back to 1971;
2. Major problems and objections as well as the extent to which they have been addressed relating to the 2009 examination report;
3. Changes in assumptions and policies and objectives that have to do with changes in local conditions, state and county level changes. A significant change that may come to a head soon is the states marijuana policy which us on the November ballot;
4. Specific changes that are being recommended;
  - a. An affirmation of the goals and objectives as set forth in the Borough's previous planning documents which is the 1984 Master Plan also the 2009 re-examination report. The report does provide extra recommendations which talk about gateway enhancements to the Borough. Areas such as bridge crossings or significant entrances into the Borough which you typically want to be nice and let people know that they are entering River Edge and that its a special town;
  - b. How the Borough has addressed affordable housing and how they adopted an overlay zone and are in the process of adopting two redevelopment plans;

- c. Enhancing public transportation connectivity including the Borough's two train stations and number of bus routes;
- d. Addressing the Borough's properties that are directly along Route 4 east bound, 4 or 5 lots that are unique and might deserve their own zoning considerations apart from the typical C2 zone where they are currently located;
- e. C2 zone and circulation in that area and to the extent that the uses and the bulk regulations therein and whether or not they should be re-evaluated;
- f. Recreation and open spaces and the opportunity to enhance the Borough' many parks and green spaces. There is a recommendation about addressing smart growth and sustainability including provisions for electric vehicle charging stations which is now a requirement for any new land use plan element;
- g. Maintaining a diversity in non-residential rateables and exploring whether or not there should be some new permitted uses in the non-residential zones in town;
- h. Review the Borough's development regulations as to what developer's can do by maxing out homes so they leave prospective buyers without a patio or deck bringing them before the Board to consider those applications - doing something in terms of the permitted coverages among other considerations.

Those are the recommendations the committee has. Mr. Behrens feels that the report for the purpose of fulfilling the requirement is complete and they are recommending that the Board consider adopting it tonight and that they also consider expanding or reconsidering some the recommendations in the plan within the near future to have a more comprehensive range of actionable items.

- 5. The fifth and final re-examination requirement has to do with recommendations concerning redevelopment plans to which they acknowledge two redevelopment plans associated with the affordable housing requirement, those being the New Bridge Landing Station and Kinderkmack Road redevelopment plans. The Johnson Avenue redevelopment remains in limbo.

Mr. Behrens concludes his overview of the report. Chairman Arakelian opens to the Board for comment. Mr. Mehrman suggests a tweak in Section 4, Item 6 – Recreation and Open Spaces he would like to include recognition for the river walk. Mr. Mehrman fully endorses the document before the Board as it is today and he would like to see it approved. Mr. Krey had a question on page 5, 2.1 regarding character and viability of established neighborhoods. It also talks about mixed use development near the River Edge train station and New Bridge Landing – he had concerns as to mixed use development in that neighborhood. He wanted to know if the Borough was locked into that policy statement or is it something that could be looked at. Mr. Behrens suggests modifying the language to make it clear that it may not be appropriate in certain areas.

Motion is made to open to the public – Mr Grasso, so made – all in favor – aye. No comments from the public.

Mr. Mehrman makes as motion endorsing the 2020 Master Plan an redevelopment regulations as presented in the October 9, 2020 document prepared by Burgis Associates with the understanding that there will be two tweaks considered down the road and that the Board review any policy changes regarding the outlook and development within a certain radius of the train station locations and the reference to the river walk be entered into any revised document; second – Mr. Grasso. Ms. Stinley will prepare a Resolution to memorialize whatever the vote is tonight. Roll call - Chairman Arakelian – yes; Ms. Boland – yes; Mr. Mehrman – yes; Mr. Grasso – yes; Mr. Krey – yes; Mr. Caslin – yes; and Mr. Esposito – yes. Motion passes.

### **Requirements for remote meetings**

The state has issued guidance on all remote public meetings that are held by local government entities so Ms. Stinley drafted a Resolution that she provided to the Board with standard procedures that will need to be followed for noticing the public and having the public participate via ZOOM. Motion to approve the rules – So moved – Mr. Krey; second – Mr. Caslin. Roll call - Chairman Arakelian – yes; Ms. Boland – yes; Mr. Mehrman – no; Mr. Grasso – yes; Mr. Krey – yes; Mr. Caslin – yes; and Mr. Esposito – yes. Motion passes. Motion to accept the Resolution - Mr. Krey – so made; Mr. Caslin, second. Roll call - Chairman Arakelian – yes; Ms. Boland – yes; Mr. Mehrman – no; Mr. Grasso – yes; Mr. Krey – yes; Mr. Caslin – yes; and Mr. Esposito – yes. Motion passes.

Chairman Arakelian goes over with the Board as to what is coming up before the Board. Motion to adjourn – So made - Mr Mehrman, second – Mr Grasso. All in favor – aye. Any opposed any abstained.

Meeting adjourned.