



BOROUGH OF LEONIA
Leonía Planning Board

MINUTES

September 22, 2021

7:30 PM

**REMOTE MEETING VIA
GOTOMEETING**

The Borough of Leonia Planning Board held a special meeting on September 22, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. via remote video conference in lieu of an in-person meeting due to the Coronavirus pandemic and Governor Murphy’s Executive Orders 107 and 152 that restrict public gatherings.

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Russell, Councilman Pat Fusco, Chairman Michael DeGidio, Vice Chair Petti*, Timothy Ford, Patrick Botten, Sean Thompson, Ira Gold, Damee Choi

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: Mayor Judah Zeigler, Ron Wolf, Haeseok Ko

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Board Attorney Daniel Steinhagen, Zoning Officer Dan Melfi

Meeting called to order at 7:33 PM

FLAG SALUTE, OPENING MEETING STATEMENT, ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2021, meeting was made by: Mr. Ford

Seconded: Mr. Russell

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mr. Russell:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes	Mr. Gold:	yes
Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes	Ms. Choi:	yes

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION(S):

PB21-14 – Bambini Plus LLC, 470 Broad Avenue/260 Harrison Street, Block: 509/ Lots: 1 & 2 Preliminary & Final Site Plan Approval, Change of Use, Use

Motion to approve Resolution PB21-14 was made by: Mr. Thompson

Seconded: Mr. Ford

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mr. Russell:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes	Mr. Gold:	yes
Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes	Ms. Choi:	yes

Extension of Approval for PB18-13 – 401 Grand Avenue, Block: 803/ Lot: 38

Motion to approve Extension of Approval for PB18-13 was made by: Mr. Russell

Seconded: Mr. Ford

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mr. Russell:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes	Mr. Gold:	yes
Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes	Ms. Choi:	yes

NEW/CONTINUING APPLICATIONS:

**PB21-10 – Munr Kazmir/Sima Development LLC, 345 Grand Avenue, Block: 803/ Lot: 35 Rear Yard Setback –
*Adjourned to October meeting***

Mr. Steinhagen announced to members of the public that the 345 Grand Avenue matter for Munr Kazmir/Sima Development LLC was being carried to the October 27, 2021, remote meeting of the Planning Board. Mr. Steinhagen advised that there will be no further notice published or mailed to property owners within 200 feet. Mr. Steinhagen also advised that the login information for the meeting will be posted to the Borough website in advance of the October meeting.

PB21-13 - Jung Sook Seo/David Seo, 354 Broad Avenue, Block: 805/ Lot: 15 Change of Use or Occupancy

Mr. David Seo was sworn in to provide testimony.

*Mr. Steinhagen noted that Vice Chair Petti has joined the meeting at 7:41 PM and will be eligible to vote on the application.

Mr. Seo testified that he has been in the restaurant business for 20 years and that his Master Chef has been in the business for 50 years. Mr. Seo stated that he has one restaurant location in Ridgeland NJ. Per Mr. Seo, the proposed restaurant will be Omakase style sushi. Mr. Seo stated that if approved, Leonia will be his second location. Mr. Seo stated that he chose Leonia because he attended high school for one year in Leonia and the landlord for 354 Broad Avenue is a good friend. Mr. Seo also testified that there are no plans to change the kitchen layout, however, the proposed plan includes adding an office in order to provide a private room experience. Upon questioning, Mr. Seo confirmed that he will apply for all required approvals. Mr. Seo advised that operating hours will be 11:30 AM to 9:30 PM (last call), Mondays through Thursdays and the last call, if allowed, will be at 10:30 PM on Fridays and Saturdays.

Marked was the following:

A-1 – Proposed New Layout, Dated 9/21/21

Chairman DeGidio inquired about restaurant signage. Per Mr. Seo, the signage will be a symbol designed by the Master Chef that translates to “hobby” in Japanese. Mr. Seo also provided details regarding the cooking style and the variety of food options that will be offered at the restaurant.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Ms. Seo.

No members of the public provided questions.

Hearing no questions from the public, the public questioning portion was closed.

Mr. Steinhagen inquired about the square footage of the restaurant. Mr. Seo stated that he believed the square footage is approximately 4,200 square feet. Mr. Seo stated that the prior occupant was BB Bakery.

The meeting was opened to the public for comments.
No members of the public provided comments.
Hearing no comments from the public, the public comments portion was closed.

A motion to approve application PB21-13 was made by: Mr. Botten
Seconded: Mr. Ford

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mr. Russell:	yes	Vice Chair Petti:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes
Councilman Fusco:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes	Mr. Gold:	yes
Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Botten:	yes	Ms. Choi:	yes

PB21-13 was approved.

DISCUSSION ON BOARD MATTERS – NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

Community Input Workshop: Chairman DeGidio discussed the postponement of the planned workshop. Per Chairman DeGidio, October 19, 20 and 21 are being considered for new workshop dates. The Chairman advised that he would consult with the Borough Administrator, Andrea Wardrop, to see if the High School can accommodate any of the proposed dates.

Meridia Capodagli Update: A meeting was held with Meridia, the Chairman, Ms. Choi and Mr. Steinhagen to discuss reducing the project from five floors to four floors and below-grade parking. Per Chairman DeGidio, the discussion focused on reiterating points addressed in the letter sent to Meridia following their presentation to the Board. Mr. Steinhagen provided additional detail regarding a subsequent call he had with Meridia and Mr. Botten. Per Mr. Steinhagen, Meridia is waiting on additional test data regarding the viability for below-grade parking. Mr. Steinhagen detailed other topics addressed during the call such another property in Leonia with similar characteristics to the Meridia proposal.

Chairman DeGidio advised that the Laws & Ordinances will be sending the Planning Board the Cannabis Ordinance for input for any suitable areas where any one or more of the restricted classes would be acceptable from a land use perspective. Chairman DeGidio advised that he would work with the Planner to add into the ongoing work of the Master Plan. The Chairman also stated that the Mayor and Council would like the Planning Board to review the ordinance that restricts home businesses. Chairman DeGidio stated that due to Covid-19 and the trend for home businesses, the Mayor and Council would like the Planning Board to assist in drafting a potential ordinance. A Subcommittee was formed to review the existing ordinance and discuss potential opportunity for revision. The Subcommittee members include Chairman DeGidio, Mr. Botten and Ms. Choi. Vice Chair Petti advised that the IRS has requirements for at-home businesses. Per Mr. Melfi, the Zoning Ordinances referencing work from home restrictions are 290-7-D and 290-7-E

COUNCIL LIASION REPORT:

Councilman Fusco had nothing further to report.

BOARD ATTORNEY REPORT:

Mr. Steinhagen had nothing additional to report.

ZONING OFFICER REPORT:

Mr. Melfi advised that the October meeting will have a full agenda. Mr. Melfi provided brief detail regarding a couple of the applications expected to be presented before the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – CORRESPONDENCE:

With no further business presented, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by: Mr. Botten

Seconded: Mr. Russell

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Copeland
Planning Board Secretary