



BOROUGH OF LEONIA
Leonia Planning Board

MINUTES

October 27, 2021

7:30 PM

**REMOTE MEETING VIA
GOTOMEETING**

The Borough of Leonia Planning Board held a special meeting on October 27, 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: Mayor Zeigler, Ron Wolf, William Russell, Councilman Pat Fusco, Chairman Michael DeGidio, Vice Chair Petti, Timothy Ford, Patrick Botten, Sean Thompson, Ira Gold, Haeseok Ko, Damee Choi

MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Board Attorney - Daniel Steinhagen, Zoning Officer - Dan Melfi, Planning Board Engineer – Drew Di Sessa, Planning Board Planner – Ryan Conklin, Planning Board Traffic Engineer – John Corak

Meeting called to order at 7:31 PM

FLAG SALUTE, OPENING MEETING STATEMENT, ROLL CALL

Chairman DeGidio announced to members of the public that application PB21-17 for the digital billboard sign would not be heard during the meeting. Per Mr. Steinhagen, the applicant will re-notice to the public regarding the new meeting date. Mr. Steinhagen also advised that application PB21-10 for 345 Grand Avenue will be carried to the November meeting of the Planning Board without further notice.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2021, meeting was made by: Mr. Botten

Seconded: Mr. Vice Chair Petti

All in Favor, with 1 abstention from Mayor Zeigler – Motion Passed

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION(S):

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

Motion to approve Resolution PB21-13 was made by: Mr. Ford

Seconded: Vice Chair Petti

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

NEW/CONTINUING APPLICATIONS:

PB21-03 – 282 Grand Avenue, Block: 1209/ Lot: 5

Rear Yard Setback, Side Yard Setback and Continuance of Use

Per Mr. Melfi, new plans were received. The applicant will be resubmitting their application and will send new notices to the public.

PB21-10 – Munr Kazmir/Sima Development LLC, 345 Grand Avenue, Block: 803/ Lot: 35 Rear Yard Setback –
Adjourned to the November 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 November 23, 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 November meeting. Mr. Steinhagen advised that the applicant extended the time for the Board to act on the application.

PB21-17 – Pacific Outdoor Advertising/Consolidated Rail Corp, LLC, Fort Lee Road, Block: 217/ Lot: 1
Variances related to Installation for Double-Sided Digital Billboard Sign within the Railroad Right of Way

Mr. Steinhagen advised that the notice for PB21-17 was not valid, and the applicant will re-notice.

PB21-16 – Robert & Lisa Robins, 101 Gladwin Avenue, Block: 1207/ Lot: 13 B
Building Coverage, Rear Yard Setback Variances

Mrs. Lisa Robins and Mr. Robert Robins of 101 Gladwin Avenue, Leonia NJ, were sworn in to provide testimony. Mr. Peter Pulice of Pulice Williams Architects, located at 344 Broad Avenue, Leonia NJ, was also sworn as a licensed Architect. Mr. Pulice was deemed qualified to provide expert testimony.

Mrs. Robins testified that she and her family have lived in the same house for 26 years. Per Mrs. Robins it was the beauty of the neighborhood, the beautiful older homes, the diverse population, and the excellent school system that attracted her and Mr. Robins to the town. Mrs. Robins stated that they have not made many improvements to the home over the years, and that the purpose of the application is to expand the kitchen and to also make improvements on the second floor to allow for an additional. Per Ms. Robins, it is their intent to integrate the new design into the architecture and the character of the home.

Mr. Pulice addressed the Board. Mr. Pulice reviewed the site plan, detailed the lot, and described the style of the home. Per Mr. Pulice, the lot is 75-feet by 75-feet, which according to Mr. Pulice deems the lot to be an existing non-conforming lot. Mr. Pulice further detailed the existing condition and features of the home and advised that the proposal is to add an addition in the rear yard, which will be two stories. Mr. Pulice stated that the existing rear yard setback is 10-feet and that the proposal would reduce the rear yard setback to 8.5-feet. Mr. Pulice advised that the 12.5-foot side yard setback will be maintained on the right-hand side of the home.

Mr. Pulice also reviewed the layout of adjacent properties and lots in relation to the subject property. Mr. Pulice stated that there is a hardship for the applicant given the layout of the adjacent lot on Crescent Avenue. Per Mr. Pulice, the hardship is created since the adjacent property is on a different street resulting in a layout that creates a long, narrow lot which leaves the Robins' property deficient by 25-feet. Mr. Pulice advised that the proposed addition is intended to create less of an impact because the intent is to add to the rear yard as opposed to the side yards.

Mr. Pulice advised that the home has a second redundant stairs from the kitchen to the second floor. The proposal would remove the redundant stair to allow for more space to accommodate countertops, and

appliances. Per Mr. Pulice, the proposal would also include removing a wall to allow for open space between the kitchen and dining room. Mr. Pulice stated that the goal of the application is to maximize the efficiency of the kitchen. Mr. Pulice also advised that the footprint of the first floor will be mirrored on the second floor in order to include an added bathroom. Mr. Pulice further stated that the design of the addition would maintain the existing hip roof and it would connect back to the existing roofline in order to preserve the character of the home.

Upon questioning, Mr. Pulice confirmed that the roofing and addition will be shingled, and that the addition will have the hip roof. Mr. Pulice also confirmed that the rear exit will be moved and positioned so that there will be a door with a platform to exit out directly into the backyard from the kitchen.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Mr. Pulice. Mrs. Joanne Terrell of 97 Gladwin Avenue, Leonia NJ, inquired about grading and water diversion with respect to the proposed addition. Mr. Pulice advised that the proposal includes collecting the water with a leader and gutter system. Mr. Pulice also stated that he would recommend that the Robins divert the water to the left to a seepage pit allowing for stormwater management onsite. Mr. Pulice confirmed that there is not currently a seepage pit, however, it would be accepted as a condition of approval that a seepage pit system be added to the plan.

No additional members of the public provided questions. Hearing no further questions from the public, the public questioning portion was closed.

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

A motion to approve application PB21-16, with the condition that the seepage pit be added to the plan was made by: Mayor Zeigler
Seconded: Mr. Botten

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Mayor Zeigler:	yes	Councilman Fusco:	yes	Mr. Ford:	yes
Mr. Wolf:	yes	Chairman DeGidio:	yes	Mr. Botten:	yes
Mr. Russell:	yes	Vice Chair Petti:	yes	Mr. Thompson:	yes

Application PB21-16 is approved.

PB21-15 – 131 Fort Lee Road LLC/Sima Development LLC, 131 Fort Lee Road, Block: 802/ Lot: 16 Preliminary & Final Site Plan Approval, Residential Use in D-Zone, Building Height, Rear Yard Setback, Side Yard Setback, Parking Spaces, Parking Aisles and Parking Requirements Variances

Mr. Steinhagen advised that Mayor Zeigler and Councilman Fusco should not participate in the D-variance applications, PB21-15 and PB21-18. As a result, Mayor Zeigler recused himself from the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Carmine Alampi addressed the Board. Mr. Alampi advised that the 10-day legal notification was not made to New York Central Line Railroad, however, notice was given to the entity prior to the meeting. Mr. Alampi stated that he reviewed the notice requirement with Mr. Steinhagen, and it was determined that it did not violate the jurisdiction of the application

Mr. Alampi detailed the variances being sought for the application, to include use variance, density, number of units and the height of the building. Mr. Alampi also described the current conditions of the surrounding area and properties. Mr. Alampi stated that the building is not in good condition from the exterior and the applicant

wishes to make improvements to the building and thereby take the lead in improving the general condition of the area. Mr. Alampi also noted that a recently adopted law by New Jersey legislature that allows for providing charging stations as parking spaces for electric vehicles. Per Mr. Alampi, there are parking credits allotted for each charging station. Mr. Alampi also stated that despite the potential opportunity for parking credits per charging station, the applicant is seeking a significant parking variance.

Marked were the following:

- B-1 – Pennoni Review Letter, Dated 10/21/21
- B-2 - Stonefield Review Letter, Dated 10/21/21
- B-3 – H2M Review Letter, Dated 10/25/21
- B-4 – Fire Marshall Memorandum, Dated 10/27/21

Mr. Steinhagen further clarified the legislation concerning electric vehicles. Per Mr. Steinhagen, it requires that any site plan for multifamily residential use provide at least 15% of the parking spaces to be dedicated to electric vehicle charging. Mr. Steinhagen also noted that there is an implementation schedule for when the charging stations have to be actually available to be plugged in. Mr. Steinhagen further explained that the applicant has to provide 15% of spaces for electric vehicles, for which there is a two for one credit, but for no more than 10% of the parking spaces.

Mr. Robert Zaccone of Robert Zaccone & Associates, located at 212 White Avenue, Old Tappan, NJ, was sworn in to provide expert testimony as an architect. Mr. Zaccone provided details regarding his education, professional experience, and his licenses. Mr. Zaccone was deemed qualified to testify before the Board.

Marked were the following:

- A-2 – Proposed Ground Floor, Proposed Typical Floor Plan, dated 7/22/21
- A-3 – Proposed Penthouse Floor Plan, dated 7/22/21
- A-4 – Proposed Elevations, dated 3/31/21

Mr. Zaccone reviewed the building elevations plan and described the various views depicted on the plan. Mr. Zaccone also described the materials that will be used for the exterior finish. Mr. Zaccone stated that the proposed plan includes garage parking on grade level with four additional floors containing apartment units. Per Mr. Zaccone, the top floor includes two penthouse units, and a spa fitness center. Mr. Zaccone stated that the building height is in compliance with the Ordinance. Per Mr. Zaccone, the height at the highest peak is 65-feet, four-inches. Mr. Zaccone stated that this height includes the elevator and stair tower that protrudes above the roofline. Mr. Zaccone confirmed that the height measured to the roofline itself is 55-feet, four-inches which includes the four residential levels above the parking level. Mr. Zaccone also described additional amenities that are included in the proposed plan such as the ability to provide a conference room, lounge space and an outdoor terrace.

Mr. Zaccone also reviewed the floor plans depicted in Exhibits A-2 and A-3. Mr. Zaccone testified that there will be a total of seven units per floor on floors two through four and most of the units, with a few exceptions, are 1-bedroom units. Per Mr. Zaccone, these floors will also include two studio units along with five one-bedroom units. Mr. Zaccone advised that he has identified one studio and one 1-bedroom unit, per floor on floors two through four, to be designated as affordable housing units. Mr. Zaccone confirmed that the studio units were approximately 400 square feet, and the one-bedroom units were approximately 615 square feet.

Upon review of Exhibit A-3, Mr. Zaccone noted that the two penthouse units have two-bedrooms and include the same amenities as the other apartment units. Mr. Zaccone also stated that the rooftop terrace will have a guardrail for security and safety. The rooftop terrace and fitness center will be accessible for all residents. Mr. Zaccone stated that each penthouse unit is approximately 890 square feet.

Discussion was held regarding the height of the building that Mr. Zaccone testified to versus the height stipulated on the exhibits presented and the site plan. It was determined that Mr. Zaccone will accept the higher height presented in the site plan. Mr. Botten inquired about the minimum size requirements for each apartment unit. Per Mr. Zaccone, compliance of minimum size requirements for each unit will be examined further. Additional discussion was held regarding the number of affordable units listed on the plan as compared to Mr. Zaccone's testimony and the required number of units per the Borough's 15% set aside. Mr. Alampi advised that the applicant will clarify the total number of affordable units proposed. Mr. Alampi confirmed that the current plan is to rent the units.

Mr. Ford inquired about the structural construction of the building. Per Mr. Zaccone, the first level up to the level of the second floor will be concrete to provide fire retardancy and fireproofing for the residences above, and metal stud for the remainder of the structure. Mr. Zaccone advised that he would not rule out wood frame in lieu of metal stud for the remainder of the building.

Further discussion was held regarding other features of the building that would pertain to general maintenance or facilities management such as trash containment or disposal, maintenance supply rooms, and locations for heating systems. Per Mr. Zaccone, further review with regard to these items presented will be undertaken with the applicant and the mechanical, engineering, and plumbing professionals. Mr. Ko inquired about the window locations on the elevation plan when compared to the floor plans. Mr. Zaccone advised that the floor plan showing individual windows will take precedence over the elevation plan that shows strip windows. Further discussion was held regarding the placement of the heating systems. Mr. Zaccone stated that hot water tanks would be included in each individual unit, however, this would be something that required further review.

Mr. Ryan Conklin of H2M was officially sworn in as the Planning Board Planner for 2021.

Mr. Conklin advised that his review letter regarding the project did indicate that there was a minimum size requirement, however it was not applicable in this matter but was intended to be utilized for comparison. Per Mr. Conklin, it is applicable to the B-zones or the multifamily zone. Mr. Conklin also reviewed the affordable housing unit requirements and inquired as to whether a variance would be required for any deviation from the standards. Further discussion was held regarding the required percentage of affordable units based on the number of bedrooms. Mr. Conklin requested that a rendering be submitted for review and also commented on storage needs for package deliveries and the placement of the structural columns on the parking level. Upon questioning Mr. Zaccone advised that the height of the garage opening is 12 feet.

Mr. Steinhagen inquired about the exposure of the parking level. Mr. Zaccone confirmed that part of the parking level is covered by the building while some areas will be exposed to the exterior.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Mr. Zaccone.

No members of the public provided questions.

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

Mr. Michael Hubschman of Hubschman Engineering, located at 263 S Washington Avenue, Bergenfield, NJ, was sworn in to provide testimony as a Professional Civil Engineer. Mr. Hubschman detailed his educational and professional history. Mr. Hubschman was deemed qualified to testify before the Board.

Marked was the following:

A-5 – Engineering Site Plan, dated 5/14/2021 (5 pages total)

Mr. Hubschman detailed the dimensions of the property, breakdown of apartment units and common area features. Per Mr. Hubschman, the lot is 60-feet by 150-feet. Mr. Hubschman stated that the plan includes a total of 23 units, with a breakdown of 15 one-bedroom units, six studio units and two 2-bedroom penthouse units. Mr. Hubschman also stated that there are 21 parking spaces proposed with one space dedicated to ADA. Mr. Hubschman also explained the height calculation that he used for the engineering plan.

Mr. Hubschman reviewed the current grading and drainage on the site as well as the proposed drainage plan. Per Mr. Hubschman, the proposal includes a seepage pit system, and the plan would reduce impervious coverage by 794 square feet. Upon questioning, Mr. Hubschman stated that the existing condition of the site is 100% covered and there is no drainage system in the rear of the property. Mr. Hubschman further stated that the water drains off to the rear of the property. Mr. Hubschman also stated that there will be some landscaping added to the site.

Mr. Hubschman reviewed the parking level and confirmed that the parking stalls are 17.5-feet in depth, with a 24-foot two-way drive aisle. Mr. Hubschman briefly reviewed the landscaping plan and also reviewed the existing streetscape detail and stated that the proposed plan would match the existing streetscape. Mr. Hubschman also detailed the area for utility meters and fire connections and responded to various issues that were raised such as parking for electric vehicles and trash area. Mr. Hubschman also reviewed the zoning table and existing conditions as well as the zoning requirements for the variances being sought. Mr. Hubschman reiterated that the building height per his measurement is 66.05-feet. Mr. Hubschman also stated that 42 parking spaces are required and confirmed that there are 21 spaces proposed.

Discussion was held regarding the parking spaces. Per Mr. Hubschman, parking spaces would need to be assigned to units. Mr. Hubschman also stated that the columns would impinge slightly into some of the parking spaces. Mr. Hubschman suggested that there would need to be lease agreements dictating parking space allotment. Chairman DeGidio inquired about storage of maintenance items for the building. Per Mr. Hubschman, the trash rooms on each floor may be repurposed for maintenance storage needs. Mr. Alampi stated that the intent of the trash rooms would be for recyclables and dry waste, and solid or wet waste would be delivered to another area. Mr. Alampi also stated that the intent for the trash rooms would be clarified at a later time.

Ms. Choi reiterated her concern regarding spacing for hot water system in each unit as well as the HVAC system on the property.

Mr. John Corak of Stonefield Engineering was sworn in as Planning Board Traffic Engineer. Mr. Corak stated that the column is not an issue in terms of the size of the parking stall, however, Mr. Corak stated that there is a concern regarding the placement of columns in the middle of parking spaces which may impact car-door swings. Mr. Hubschman stated that he will review the placement of columns with the Architect. Mr. Corak also advised that parking or management of vehicular demand be fleshed out more for the next meeting. Mr. DiSessa requested that further detail be provided for drainage overflow for the next meeting and to provide the trash enclosure detail on the revised plan. Mr. Steinhagen commented that the parking requirement be reviewed and detailed thoroughly for the next meeting and also include the specifics for the electric vehicle parking structures and location for those spaces.

Mr. Melfi advised the applicant to provide the following information or plans for the next meeting: the total number of affordable units, set of plans for each floor, details regarding HVAC system, revised elevation drawings to match floor plans, copy of rendering, options for deliveries being made to the building, clarification for trash rooms on each floor and a roof plan.

The meeting was opened to the public for questioning of Mr. Hubschman.

Ms. Lydia Maurice of 392 Grand Avenue, Leonia NJ, inquired about access for fire trucks and ambulances. Per Mr. Hubschman, the building is fully sprinklered. Mr. Hubschman posited that fire trucks would manage potential fires from the road. Mr. Hubschman stated that there is a proposed fire connection at the front of the building. Mr. Hubschman also stated that an ambulance vehicle could pull into the parking garage or that the ambulance could stop on Fort Lee Road.

No other members of the public provided questions.

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

Mr. Steinhagen announced to members of the public that the 131 Fort Lee Road/ Sima Development matter was being carried to the November 23, 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, which is the same as tonight's meeting, will be posted to the Borough website in advance of the November meeting. Mr. Alampi consented to the extension of time for the Board to act on this application.

Chairman DeGidio advised that the November 23, 2021, meeting is on Tuesday as opposed to Wednesday as regularly scheduled.

DISCUSSION ON BOARD MATTERS – NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

Community Input Workshop: Chairman DeGidio extended his thanks to the Board members who attended the Workshop and the Borough Administrator for setting up the event. The Chairman also extended his gratitude to H2M for their presentation.

COUNCIL LIASION REPORT:

Councilman Fusco had nothing further to report.

BOARD ATTORNEY REPORT:

Mr. Steinhagen advised that the application for 176 Fort Lee Road would also need to be carried. Mr. Steinhagen announced to members of the public that the 176 Fort Lee Road matter for Citiview Associates was being carried to the November 23, 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 November meeting.

Mr. Steinhagen advised that he received an inquiry regarding the status of the Redevelopment Plan from Capodagli Properties. Chairman DeGidio advised that H2M has been given the green light to work on the Redevelopment piece of the plan.

BOARD ENGINEER:

Mr. DiSessa had nothing additional to report.

ZONING OFFICER REPORT:

Mr. Melfi commented that we will have a very busy couple of months.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – CORRESPONDENCE:

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

Seconded: Vice Chair Petti

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Copeland
Planning Board Secretary