



BOROUGH OF LEONIA
Leonia Planning Board
MINUTES

JUNE 28, 2023

7:30 PM

LEONIA SENIOR CENTER

The Borough of Leonia Planning Board held its regular meeting on JUNE 28, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. located at 305 Beechwood Place, Leonia NJ.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Michael DeGidio, Vice Chair Ira Gold, Councilman Pasquale Fusco, Patrick Botten, Timothy Ford, William Russell, Sean Thompson, Haeseok Ko.

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: Mayor Judah Zeigler, Ron Wolf, Damee Choi

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney – Arthur Neiss, Engineer – Drew DiSessa, Planner – Sanyogita Chavan, Zoning Officer – Adam Myszka

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

Arthur Neiss, Attorney, introduced himself to the board as the cover for Daniel Steinhagen.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2023 meeting made by: Mr. Botten and Seconded by Mr. Ford:

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows

Mayor Zeigler:	Absent	Chair DeGidio:	Yes	Councilman Fusco:	Yes
Vice Chair Gold:	Yes	Mr. Russell:	Yes	Mr. Ford:	Yes
Mr. Botten:	Yes	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	Absent
Mr. Ko:	Yes	Ms. Choi:	Absent		

RESOLUTIONS

PB23-03 – 135 Fort Lee Road – Block 802, Lot 14

Motion to approve resolution PB23-03 was made by Mr. Ford and Seconded by Mr. Botten.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows

Mayor Zeigler:	Absent	Chair DeGidio:	Yes	Councilman Fusco:	Yes
Vice Chair Gold:	Yes	Mr. Russell:	Yes	Mr. Ford:	Yes
Mr. Botten:	Yes	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	Absent
Mr. Ko:	Yes	Ms. Choi:	Absent		

DISCUSSION ON BOARD MATTERS – NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Review of Zoning Ordinance 2023-10 – “Affordable Housing Overlay Zone”

Chair DeGidio explained that due to a conflict of Councilman Fusco the board would move up the discussion of the new overlay zoning Ordinance.

Sanyogita Chavan, Borough Planner, explained the Ordinance and her memo stating that the Ordinance is consistent with the Borough’s Master Plan.

Councilman Fusco made a statement about the location of the property for clarity. Ms. Chavan confirmed this.

Motion to find Ordinance 2023-10 consistent with the Master Plan was made by Mr. Botten and Seconded by Councilman Fusco.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows

Mayor Zeigler:	Absent	Chair DeGidio:	Yes	Councilman Fusco:	Yes
Vice Chair Gold:	Yes	Mr. Russell:	Yes	Mr. Ford:	Yes
Mr. Botten:	Yes	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	Absent
Mr. Ko:	Yes	Ms. Choi:	Absent		

Motion to approve the Resolution for Ordinance 2023-10 was made by Mr. Botten and Seconded by Councilman Fusco.

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows

Mayor Zeigler:	Absent	Chair DeGidio:	Yes	Councilman Fusco:	Yes
Vice Chair Gold:	Yes	Mr. Russell:	Yes	Mr. Ford:	Yes
Mr. Botten:	Yes	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	Absent
Mr. Ko:	Yes	Ms. Choi:	Absent		

NEW/CONTINUING APPLICATIONS

PB23-02 – Reuten Senior Ventures LLC, 2 Christie Heights Street, Block:503 / Lot: 2 – Seeking variances for use and parking for an Adult Daycare.

David Repetto, Attorney, Harwood Lloyd LLC, counsel for Reuten Senior Ventures, explained the application to the board.

Michael Reuten, owner of Reuten Senior Ventures, 60 Knollwood Rd, Saddle River, NJ, was sworn in and gave a presentation on his application to the board. Mr. Repetto asked a few questions about the clients and operations and Mr. Reuten answered.

Mr. Botten asked a question about the space and the number of staff. He also asked about the food deliveries.

Chair DeGidio asked about the clients being driven by vans and if that was an option. Mr. Reuten confirmed they have to be driven by vans by state regulations. He also spoke on day trips for clients. Chair DeGidio also asked if Leonia residents have preference, and Mr. Reuten explained that they are considering this. Mr. Repetto and Mr. Reuten stated that they have no problem making this a condition of approval assuming it does not violate any state regulations. Chair DeGidio also asked about inclement weather. Chair DeGidio asked about a sign, and Mr. Reuten explained that they do not have current plans for a sign but will come back when they do.

Vice Chair Gold asked about the condition of approval for giving Leonia residents preference and if it is allowed.

Mr. Botten asked a question about the van drivers on staff. He asked about the client to staff ratio, and Mr. Reuten confirmed that they are meeting state regulations.

Mr. Russell asked a question about the shifts during working hours and about the programs that will be held for the clients.

Mr. Ko asked some questions about the unused second floor and if they planned to use it for something in the future. Mr. Reuten confirmed there is no plan to use the second floor at this time. Mr. Repetto stated that should they have a desire to do this they will come back to the board.

Mr. Ford asked for some elaboration on the term medical model. Mr. Reuten explained.

Mr. Reuten explained the importance of a facility like the one he is proposing.

Drew DiSessa, Borough Engineer, asked a question about visitors. Mr. Reuten explained that visitors could be allowed but they are not expecting to see a lot of visitors. Mr. DiSessa asked a question about transportation and the shifts, and Mr. Reuten explained that scheduling is part of the job.

Mr. Neiss asked a question about staffing and if this is a concern. Mr. Reuten expressed that while staffing is always a concern, he is confident and that he cannot operate without the proper staff.

Chair DeGidio opened the floor to public comment. Hearing none he excused the witness.

Mr. Repetto called his next witness.

Louis Luglio, Traffic Engineer, Dynamic Traffic, 50 Park Place, Newark, NJ, was sworn in and named his qualifications. Mr. Luglio gave a presentation on the traffic patterns of the application. Mr. Luglio answered some questions on logistics asked by Mr. Repetto.

Chair DeGidio asked if the application had taken into account the traffic caused by Kulite. Mr. Luglio answered that they had not looked into this overlap. He informed that they have the flexibility to adjust their schedule to accommodate this traffic overlap. Chair DeGidio asked a question about handicap parking spaces. Mr. Luglio answered that the intention is to stripe out additional ADA spaces. Chair DeGidio discussed with Mr. Luglio the size of the lot and if cars had adequate space. Chair DeGidio asked about electric vehicle charging spaces and Mr. Luglio stated there was no plan for this but they absolutely could.

Vice Chair Gold asked some questions about traffic and expressed concern over the overlap with Kulite's traffic.

Mr. Botten asked Mr. DiSessa about the process to change an intersection and light timings. Mr. DiSessa explained the process and that he was recording this as a possible condition of approval. Vice Chair Gold expressed concern over this and how long it would take. Mr. Luglio spoke briefly on this concern and gave his professional estimate of how long it would take.

Vice Chair Gold continued to express concern over the traffic being added to an already heavy traffic road. Vice Chair Gold asked for the applicant to gain information from Kulite on their hours of operation. Mr. Repetto offered to get the information and come back at the next meeting.

Mr. Botten asked a question about shifts and the number of cars coming in and out throughout the day. Mr. Repetto stated that if the board would like, they would be willing to move the shifts around.

Mr. DiSessa asked a question about parking if the building were fully occupied. Mr. Luglio confirmed Mr. DiSessa's estimate, but that they would not be using the building at full capacity. They stated that they would be happy to come back to the board should they ever think about adding functionality to the building. Mr. Repetto stated that this is not the plan. Mr. DiSessa asked about requirements for adult daycare parking. Mr. Repetto answered that they are thinking of parking in terms of what they need. Based on their needs, there is an abundance of parking.

Mr. Botten encouraged the applicant to use a specific path when entering the parking lot.

Chair DeGidio opened the witness to public questions.

Vito Mazza IV, 430 Grandview Terrace, asked a question about the clients and their physical impediments. Mr. Reuten answered that the clients are not acute care. Mr. Mazza asked if there are studies on delays caused by loading and unloading clients causing delays in the operations and the shifts. Mr. Reuten answered that all of these things are taken into account and adjusted as needed. Mr. Mazza asked about the traffic patterns and discussed with Mr. Luglio, expressing some concern over the timing.

Thomas Jeffrey DeGraw, Architect, DeGraw & DeHaan Architects, Middletown, NY, was sworn in, gave his qualifications and gave testimony on the application.

Chair DeGidio confirmed for the record that the plans he testified are the ones the board was given and Mr. Szabo confirmed that correct.

Chair DeGidio opened questions to the board and the public, none withstanding he moved to the last witness.

John P. Szabo Jr., Planner, Burgis Associates, Inc., 25 Westwood Ave, Westwood, NJ, was sworn in, gave his qualifications and gave testimony on the application.

Ms. Chavan agreed with the planner’s interpretation that the proposal would qualify as an inherently beneficial use.

Chair DeGidio asked if there were any thoughts on the property in terms of trees and greenery. Mr. Szabo stated that while it is not a part of this application, they saw some areas that could be improved in this regard.

Mr. Repetto stated that they would take a look at the landscaping for when they come back at the next meeting.

Chair DeGidio opened the floor up to the public.

Vito Mazza IV, 430 Grandview Terrace, asked a question about the demographic studies. Mr. Szabo answered his question. Mr. Mazza also discussed with Mr. Szabo the elderly population in Leonia, and the affordability of this proposed adult daycare.

The board deliberated on the testimonies given.

Chair DeGidio stated four items that the applicant would look into and confirmed that they would return at the next meeting.

Mr. Neiss carried the application with no further notice to the July 26, 2023 Regular meeting.

DISCUSSION ON BOARD MATTERS – NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Special Meeting Date

The board discussed the possibility of a special meeting, and determined it not necessary for the month of July, and that there is a possibility of having another Redevelopment discussion at the July 26, 2023 meeting and possibly moving that meeting to a different location. Chair DeGidio asked to discuss with both Mr. Steinhagen, Planning Board Attorney, and Mr. Greco, Planning Board Secretary, about the logistics of moving the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD ATTORNEY REPORT

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – CORRESPONDENCE

Vito Mazza IV, 430 Grandview Terr, asked a question about the Ordinance reviewed tonight and Chair DeGidio answered his question. Mr. Mazza also asked a question about emergencies and Chair DeGidio commented about following up with the Fire Marshall about getting a review letter.

ADJOURNMENT

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

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Greco
Planning Board Secretary