



**BOROUGH OF LEONIA**  
**Leonía Planning Board**  
**MINUTES**

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**May 22, 2024** **7:30 PM** **LEONIA SENIOR CENTER**

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The Borough of Leonía Planning Board held its regular meeting on MAY 22, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. located at 229 Fort Lee Road, Leonía, NJ.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice Chair Ira Gold, Mayor Bill Ziegler, Councilman Christoph Hesterbrink, Patrick Botten, Ron Wolf, Sean Thompson, Damee Choi

**MEMBER(S) ABSENT:** Chairman Michael DeGidio, Timothy Ford, William Russell, Haeseok Ko

**ALSO PRESENT:** Attorney – Dan Steinhagen, Planner – Sanyogita Chavan

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2024, meeting made by: Mr. Botten and Seconded by Mr. Wolf:

On roll call, the vote was recorded as follows

Mayor Ziegler:	Abstain	Chair DeGidio:	Absent	Councilman Hesterbrink:	Yes
Vice Chair Gold:	Yes	Mr. Russell:	Absent	Mr. Ford:	Absent
Mr. Botten:	Yes	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	Yes
Mr. Ko:	Absent	Ms. Choi:	-		

*Motion Passes.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**NEW/CONTINUING APPLICATIONS**

**PB24-04 – Peter Costanzo, 163 Christie Street, Block: 1214 / Lot: 35 – Variances related to a variation in an as-built plan and the original approved plan.**

Mr. Steinhagen stated that this application would be moved to the next meeting with no further notice.

**PB24-06 – Grand Lee 2023, LLC, 363 Grand Ave, Block: 803 / Lot: 34 – Variances related to the construction of two ground signs.**

Matthew Capizzi, Capizzi Law Offices, Attorney for the project, presented the application.

Vice Chair Gold asked the purpose of a phone number on the sign and Mr. Capizzi answered him.

Mr. Steinhagen, Mayor Ziegler and Vice Chair Gold discussed what the board's responsibilities are and how the board should view the application. The board discussed the nature of enforcement and the board's powers in relation to enforcement.

Mr. Capizzi stated that all other actions have been done compliant and this was just an oversight.

Mr. Capizzi finished presenting the application.

Sean McClallan, Engineer, was sworn in by Mr. Steinhagen and had his qualifications accepted by Vice Chair Gold. Mr. McClallan presented the plans for this application.

Mr. Botten stated that phone numbers are not allowed on signs in this zone.

Ms. Chavan and Mr. Botten discussed what is permitted in the LI Zone.

Mr. Steinhagen clarified the ordinance that specifies where a telephone number is not allowed on a sign.

The board discussed the purpose of this restriction.

Mr. Capizzi stated that the phone number aids utility companies and vendors contacting the management office.

Vice Chair Gold expressed concern over the phone number from a traffic safety standpoint.

David Koslowitz, 2105 West County Land Road, Jackson, Property Manager, was sworn in by Mr. Steinhagen.

Mr. Koslowitz explained the use of the phone number on the sign and told a story in which the phone number aided in a safety matter with a utility company after hours solving a gas leak.

Vice Chair Gold asked if the phone number could be removed, and Mr. Koslowitz replied that not easily but if required yes.

Ms. Choi asked a question about the necessity of having two signs when there is only one access point. Mr. Koslowitz answered that there is pedestrian access on both sides.

The board opened the meeting to the public for questions.

Lydia Maurice, 392 Grand Ave, asked a question about the size of the letters on the signs, and the Engineer answered that this is an appropriate size.

With no more public present the board closed the public session.

Mr. Capizzi gave some closing remarks.

Mayor Ziegler asked Mr. Steinhagen about the procedure of the board, and Mr. Steinhagen explained the importance of discussion.

Mayor Ziegler stated that his belief is the aesthetic of the signs is appropriate and having two signs is good, but that the phone number is troublesome regarding safety concerns.

Vice Chair Gold stated having phone numbers on the signs serve a purpose for emergency contacts but this has to be balanced against the distraction from those phone numbers by passing drivers who might want to rent.

Mayor Ziegler asked Mr. Steinhagen how action taken tonight affects how the governing body may decide to change the sign ordinance. Mr. Steinhagen explained the ramifications that conditions and restrictions opposed by the board if the rules were to change in the future.

Councilman Hesterbrink stated that the safety benefit from the phone number outweighs the negative.

Mr. Wolf asked the board if this was brought before the board before it was constructed would they have approved the phone number, and Mr. Steinhagen explained that no signs are allowed in the zone the building is in and it should not be viewed in this way.

The board discussed with Mr. Steinhagen whether the board should be using computers or private research during a hearing, and that this is not what the board is meant to do.

Mr. Botten expressed concern over setting a precedent by granting this variance. Mr. Steinhagen explained that there is no precedent set when granting a variance.

Ms. Chavan explained the variance being sought and that the B zone is silent when it comes to signs in the ordinance.

Mr. Steinhagen, Ms. Chavan and the board discussed the variance presented and the ordinance.

Motion to Approve application PB 24-06, Grand Lee 2023 LLC, 363 Grand Avenue, made by Councilman Hesterbrink and Seconded by Mayor Ziegler.

Mayor Ziegler:	Yes	Chair DeGidio:	Absent	Councilman Hesterbrink:	Yes
Vice Chair Gold:	Yes	Mr. Russell:	Absent	Mr. Ford:	Absent
Mr. Botten:	No	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	No
Mr. Ko:	Absent	Ms. Choi:	Yes		

*Motion Passes.*

**COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**

Councilman Hesterbrink spoke on the proclamations made by the mayor and council. He then mentioned that there were discussions on the affordable housing requirements, the sign ordinance update, tree removal fee increases, rent increase being confirmed, and discussed Air B&B and whether it was allowed in the town and if it should be in the future.

**DISCUSSION ON BOARD MATTERS – NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**Ordinance 2024-08 Consistency Review**

Vice Chair Gold presented the Ordinance to the board.

Ms. Chavan spoke on the Ordinance and confirmed that it is consistent with the master plan.

Mr. Steinhagen confirmed that these were minor changes.

Motion to direct Sanyogita Chavan, Planning Board Planner, to write a letter of consistency to the Governing Body, made by Vice Chair Gold and Seconded by Mr. Botten.

Mayor Ziegler:	Yes	Chair DeGidio:	Yes	Councilman Hesterbrink:	-
Vice Chair Gold:	Absent	Mr. Russell:	Yes	Mr. Ford:	Yes
Mr. Botten:	Absent	Mr. Thompson:	Yes	Mr. Wolf:	Absent
Mr. Ko:	No	Ms. Choi:	Yes		

*Motion Passes.*

**PLANNING BOARD ATTORNEY REPORT**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – CORRESPONDENCE**

**CLOSED SESSION**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Greco  
Planning Board Secretary