

**BOROUGH OF PARK RIDGE  
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
June 21, 2016  
REGULAR MEETING**

The Public Meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Borough of Park Ridge was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Chairman Raman stated that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. He then asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call Board:

Chairman Sid Raman	Present
Mr. Robert Brennan	Absent
Mr. Jake Flaherty	Present
Mr. Thomas Hoskins	Present
Mr. William Walker	Present
Dr. Eric von der Lieth	Absent
Mr. John Sigillito	Present
Mr. Tom Lepore, Alt. #1	Present
Mr. Eric Wagner, Alt. #2	Present

Also Present:

Mr. William Rupp	Board Attorney
Mr. Robert Ludwig	Zoning Officer
Ms. Eve Mancuso	Board Engineer
Mr. Brigette Bogart	Board Planner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

May 17, 2016

Mr. Hoskins made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and approved all.

**MEMORIALIZING RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL**

**APPLICATION #ZBA 16-07**

**Madison Enterprises  
Block 1406, Lot 6  
161 Kinderkamack Rd.  
Revised Site Plan**

Motion to approve: Mr. Flaherty

Second: Mr. Sigillito

Ayes: Mr. Hoskins, Mr. Walker, Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Sigillito, Chairman Raman

Nays: Mr. Lepore

**HEARINGS**

**APPLICATION #ZBA 16-08**

**Michael & Kathleen Lustica  
Block 2501, Lot 6  
236 Knoll Dr.  
FAR, Rear Yard**

Changing the order of the agenda, Chairman Raman called the applicant for ZBA 16-08 to present their application.

Joseph Bruno, Architect  
29 Pascack Rd.  
Park Ridge, NJ

Michael Lustig  
236 Knoll Dr.  
Park Ridge, NJ

Mr. Bruno and Mr. Lustig were sworn in to provide testimony.

Mr. Bruno described the project as a proposed addition that would create a master suite and convert the current small master bedroom into a closet. The existing covered porch would be converted to an open porch. The property is in the R-15 zone and the proposal would require two variances; one for FAR and one for the rear yard setback. The rear yard setback will be 32 feet where 45 feet is required. This is an extension of the current condition. The home has an existing FAR of 26.4% where 25% is required in the zone. The addition would result in a slight increase to an FAR of 26.66%. The plan does not include a need for a building coverage variance as at 14.93% the building coverage is substantially less than the required 20%. Mr. Bruno explained that the rear yard setback is a current condition that is a result of the undersized lot and the grant of the rear yard setback would not add an additional encroachment, thus maintaining the current open space of the rear yard. He further stated that the FAR request is just .26% which would be barely perceptible. He believes that the aesthetic improvement would justify the small variance condition.

The board discussed the merits of the application and agreed with Mr. Bruno's assertions.

Mr. Flaherty made a motion to approve the variances. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sigillito and approved by all.

**APPLICATION #ZBA 16-09**

**Park Ridge Board of Education  
Block 1602, Lot 1  
81 Pascack Rd.  
Conditional Use Variance**

Mr. Robert Mancinelli, attorney for the BOE came forward to present the application.

Mr. Mancinelli explained that the Park Ridge BOE has entered into an agreement with the property owner of 81 Pascack Rd. to use the now single family home as a D3 educational use to house a small number of special education students who have graduated from High School but are qualified for a transitional, life skills program.

Lisa Bernardo  
Director of Special Education  
85 Pascack Rd.  
Park Ridge

Ms. Bernardo was sworn in by Mr. Rupp to offer testimony about the proposed program. The Board accepted Ms. Bernardo's qualifications to offer such testimony.

Ms. Bernardo stated that some children that have graduated High School still have an IEP with the special services department and the school district has an obligation to educate these children. The children that would qualify for the program to be discussed are currently sent to out of district programs at a great cost to the school district. She further stated that the program proposed would be of great benefit to children within the Borough as it may be less intrusive than traveling to out of district programs.

The goal of the program is to provide adult life skills education including job training, home economics skills and community involvement.

Some of the benefits of this particular location include the close proximity to the school for possible use of the gym or cafeteria and access to the school nurse. The location is also within walking distance to the Borough's business district which can be invaluable to the students' ability to learn to interact with the community better and have jobs within the community.

The plan would be for the location to house no more than 8 students with a ratio of four students to 1 teacher and 1 job coach. The first year of operation the program would limit itself to 5 students.

The students would be provided with bussing and be dropped off in the High School parking lot. No renovations would be required in the home as the single home setting is what is needed to achieve the goals of the program. No signs or lighting or landscaping is proposed. The NJ State Department of Education has inspected the site and given preliminary approval for the proposed program. Any additional State or County approvals would be obtained prior to the use being initiated. Ms. Bernardo stated that they would like to have the program ready by the upcoming school year.

Ms. Bernardo explained that one of the benefits of an in district program would be the cost savings of sending qualified students to out of district programs which are substantial. The cost to send a student out of district is between \$57K-\$90K with an additional cost of approximately \$16K for transportation.

The Board expressed some concern over safety of the students walking from the High School parking lot to the school and the street crossing required.

Ms. Bernardo explained that the students would arrive at a different time than the High School students which would alleviate congestion and be accompanied by an adult on their short walk to the building.

Additionally, the Board asked whether the building was ADA compliant and whether the State required it to be compliant. Ms. Bernardo answered that while the building is not compliant, that is not a requirement of the State. She further stated that no one program is right for every student and there are many different programs throughout the state that cater to the many different need of a diverse special need population; while it is possible that a handicapped student would qualify for such a program, no offering can accommodate everyone and a handicapped student would likely need a more specialized program which is available out of district.

Mr. Robert Wright  
Business Administrator, BOE  
85 Pascaek Rd.  
Park Ridge

Mr. Wright was sworn in by Mr. Rupp. He stated that he felt this was an ideal location, particularly suited to the school's need. He further stated that the Board would enter into a lease agreement with the owner of the property that could be terminated if the program were not successful. In response to a Board question, Mr. Wright stated that buying the building was not financially feasible for the Board. Mr. Wright also addressed the ADA compliance concern and said that they would be open to making changes to the site if a handicapped student was in need, although he reiterated what Ms. Bernardo stated that not all programs can be suited to all students and that if a handicapped student needed a similar program there are different programs to offer.

Lisa Phillips  
Professional Planner

Ms. Phillips was sworn in by Mr. Rupp and her credentials accepted by the Board to offer Planning testimony.

Ms. Phillips gave an overview of the site and submitted site pictures that were marked as exhibit 9.

She stated that the site is uniquely suited to what is an inherently beneficial use in the best interest of the public. She stated that the residential character of the home would be maintained as the small group of students would only be present during regular school hours and essentially using the site as a home, learning things that can only be taught in an authentic residential setting. She further stated that no signage would be present to identify the site as anything other than a home. Ms. Phillips feels that the positive aspects of the proposal far outweigh any negative aspect of granting the conditional use permit.

Ms. Bogart concurred with Ms. Phillips testimony and stated that all issues she had raised in her review were adequately addressed in testimony.

Mr. Joseph Bruno  
29 Pascack Rd.  
Park Ridge

Mr. Bruno was sworn in by Mr. Rupp to offer expert architectural testimony.

Mr. Bruno addressed the layout of the home. He stated that while the home contained two floors the second floor would only house a small office for staff with no considerable file storage. There will be no sleeping or bathing in the home. The layout of the home including a large kitchen is ideal for the use being requested. Mr. Bruno also addressed an earlier concern mentioned by the Board Engineer about safety for students walking from the drop off point of the High School to the subject property. He stated that it is a brief walk, to be undertaken not at peak traffic time and the students would be accompanied by a staff member. He further proposed that instead of crossing Wampum near the High School the administrators might consider walking the students all the way up Wampum and crossing at the crosswalk near Pascack Rd. for added safety. Additionally, Mr. Bruno addressed the issue of ADA compliance. He stated that the setup of the bathroom and size of the kitchen would allow for an upgrade if necessary in the future, but for the reasons offered by Ms. Bernardo, it would be unlikely that it would be necessary.

There being no members of the public wishing to speak, Mr. Mancinelli offered some closing remarks and the hearing was closed.

The Board discussed the merits of the application and Mr. Flaherty offered a motion to approve the conditional use variance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hoskins and approved by all.

Chairman Raman then shared an email from Mr. Brennan stating that he is resigning from the Board due to time constraints from his job. Chairman Raman acknowledged Mr. Brennan's long tenure and service to the Borough and wished him well.

There being no more business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern  
Zoning Board Administrator