

BOROUGH OF WILDWOOD CREST
Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – 3 May 2023 5 p.m.

The following are the minutes of the Wildwood Crest Planning Board as held on Wednesday May 3, 2023, at Borough Hall. The proceedings of the meeting are recorded and available for public inspection.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Mr. Davenport called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., lead the Pledge of Allegiance and read the statement of compliance with the open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL:

Patrick Davenport: present	Barbara Hunt: present	Brian Melchiorre: present
Don Cabrera: present	Joe Franco present	Angela Daniels: present
Gerry D'Antonio: present	Fred Mettler: present	Pete Cava: present
Brian Stuart: absent	Vince Tenaglia: present	Bradley Vogdes: present
Board Secretary Pamela Riper: present		
Solicitor Rob Belasco: present		
Engineer Will Hanson: present		

MINUTES:

April 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes deferred to June 7, 2023 meeting

APPLICATIONS:

Joe Franco, Don Cabrera, Pat Davenport, Barbara Hunt, Brian Melchiorre, Gerry D'Antonio, Angela Daniels and Vincent Tenaglia recuse themselves from the application hearing.

Application PB-23-01 for 6908 Atlantic Avenue a/k/a blk 62.02 lots 1, 2 & 3 in Zone R-1A owner Stephen and Jamie Del Monte; seeking appeal of administrative officer decision.

The Applicant was represented by Jennifer Barr, Esquire who requested a continuance of the hearing to the Planning Board meeting dated June 7, 2023 as the Applicant's Professional Engineer was unavailable and was unable to attend the May 3, 2023 meeting.

Solicitor Rob Belasco gave the objectors attorney, Kevin Balistreri, Esquire who represented Joseph & Jane Visalli a chance to speak. The Visalli's reside at 6900 Atlantic Avenue. Kevin Balisteri stated he felt the appeal was appealed untimely therefore a planner and/or engineer is not necessary. Kevin Balistreri and his clients requested the application proceed to be heard that evening.

On Motion of Mr. Cava and 2nd by Mr. Vogdes to approve the request of an adjournment:

Patrick Davenport: abstain	Barbara Hunt: abstain	Brian Melchiorre: abstain
Don Cabrera: abstain	Joe Franco abstain	Angela Daniels: abstain
Gerry D'Antonio: abstain	Fred Mettler: yes	Pete Cava: yes
Brian Stuart: absent	Vince Tenaglia: abstain	Bradley Vogdes: yes

Application PB-23-01 for 6908 Atlantic Avenue requesting a continuance of the hearing is hereby granted, and the Application will be scheduled to be heard at the Board's June 7, 2023 meeting without the need for the Applicant to re-notice property owners located within 200ft. of the property, and re-publish notice of the Application in the Press of Atlantic City or Cape May County Herald

Joe Franco, Don Cabrera, Pat Davenport, Barbara Hunt, Brian Melchiorre, Gerry D'Antonio, Angela Daniels and Vincent Tenaglia return to the meeting.

Joe Franco & Don Cabrera recuse themselves from the application hearing.

Application PB-23-05 for 7202 Seaview Avenue a/k/a blk 101 lots 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12.02, 20, 22 & 24 in Zone R-2 owner Boutique Crest, LLC; seeking "D" variance and "C-2" variance relief, preliminary site plan and final site plan approval.

The Applicant was represented by John Amenhauser, Esquire who outlined the nature of the application and the relief sought in connection with same.

Mr. Amenhauser advised the Board that the subject property is located in the Borough's R-2 zone and it is currently developed with a pre-existing non-conforming hotel known as the Cozy Crest Hotel.

The Applicant is proposing to convert the existing non-conforming 39-unit hotel to a multi-family dwelling containing a total of 37 residential units.

The Applicant previously appeared before the Board on February 21, 2023, at which time the Applicant requested relief similar to what's requested in connection with the Application pending before the Board. In connection with the prior application, the Applicant was proposing to convert the existing 39-unit hotel to a 39-unit multi-family dwelling. That Application was denied by the Board due to concerns related to the proposed off-street parking configuration and the number of proposed residential units.

The Applicant has modified the proposal to address the parking concerns raised by the Board and is now proposing to reduce the number of residential units from 39 to 37.

This application amounts to a substantial modification of the prior proposal, and, as such, there are no issues of *res judicata*.

Mr. Amehauser reviewed the relief requested by the Applicant and he informed the Board that both interior and exterior renovations to the structure and site are proposed.

Mr. Amenhauser distributed a packet containing three (3) color renderings of the proposed structure which was received by the Board, and which was marked as **Exhibit A-1**.

At the outset of the presentation, the Applicant represented that he was willing to maintain the existing roofline associated with the northern building rather than reconstruct the roofline to create a consistent peak; however, after extensive discussions with the Board, the Applicant and the Board agreed that modifications to the roofline were appropriate and would improve the aesthetic appearance of the northern building.

Brian Murphy, P.E., P.P. of M.V. Engineering, LLC was also present at the meeting on behalf of the Applicant. Mr. Murphy was accepted by the Board as an expert in the field of engineering and he was sworn in to testify with respect to the proposed site and architectural plans prepared by Gerald F. Santucci, A.I.A., consisting of eleven (11) sheets, dated September 26, 2022, and last revised March 21, 2023, which were received by the Board, and which are incorporated herein as fact.

Mr. Murphy reviewed the existing site plan for the benefit of the Board.

The subject property contains frontage along Seaview Avenue, Rambler Road, and Orchid Road.

Mr. Murphy testified that the Applicant is proposing to maintain the existing structures located on site, and he informed the Board that many of the 'C' variances requested by the Applicant are required in order to address pre-existing non-conforming conditions which are not being exacerbated in connection with this proposal.

Mr. Murphy advised the Board that the Applicant is proposing to convert the existing 39-unit, non-conforming motel to a 37-unit multi-family residential dwelling.

He reviewed the existing and proposed off-street parking arrangement for the Board.

Existing back-out parking will be maintained along Rambler Road and Seaview Avenue. As a condition of approval, the Applicant will construct raised curb along Orchid Avenue.

A total of 46 off-street parking spaces are proposed; however, 7 off-street parking spaces are proposed to be stacked, and 2 additional parking spaces will be handicap accessible spaces. Accordingly, Mr.

Murphy opined that, while 46 parking spaces are provided, in reality a total of 37 can be counted, which amounts to 1 parking space per unit.

Mr. Murphy testified that the proposed stacked parking spaces are located along Orchid Avenue, and these parking spaces will be assigned to individual units. These parking spaces are proposed to be 9ft. x 18ft.

In response to a question posed by the Board, Mr. Murphy testified that a total of 32 8ft. x 18ft. off-street parking spaces are proposed on site, 20 of which are pre-existing. He indicated that support posts exist in this area of the property which impacted the off-street parking layout, and which likely prompted the utilization of the existing undersized parking spaces. The remaining parking spaces located on site are compliant with the required 9ft. x 18ft. parking space size.

Mr. Murphy informed the Board that several of the existing parking spaces located along Seaview Avenue and Rambler Road encroach into the Borough right-of-way.

He confirmed that none of the existing or proposed off-street parking spaces will encroach any further into the public right-of-way than what currently exists on site.

Mr. Murphy testified that the Applicant's proposal would result in the elimination of a pre-existing non-conforming hotel use in the R-2 zone. The proposal to convert the existing structure to a multi-family dwelling is more in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood and the residential uses permitted in the R-2 zone.

Mr. Murphy opined that the subject property is particularly suited to accommodate the proposed use as the structures already exist on site, and the proposed residential use will significantly reduce the impact of the transient use on the surrounding neighborhood.

He reviewed and confirmed the 'C' variance relief sought in connection with the application. As a condition of approval, the Applicant will provide lot coverage and building/coverage calculations to the Board Engineer for review.

With respect to the D(1) use variance and 'C' variance relief, Mr. Murphy opined that several of the purposes of zoning, outlined within N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2, are advanced in connection with this application and support the relief sought by the Applicant as it:

Promotes the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of persons, neighborhoods, communities and regions and preservation of the environment as there's no proposed increase in the number of units and the proposed population density is appropriate;

Provides sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of agricultural, residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses and open space, both public and private, according to their respective environmental requirements in order to meet the needs of all New Jersey citizens as the applicant is proposing to significantly upgrade a dilapidated structure;

Promotes a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangement as the proposed improvements will incorporate architectural elements which are in keeping with the Borough and the surrounding neighborhood as interior and exterior renovations are proposed which will improve the aesthetic appearance of the site; and

Encourages coordination of the various public and private procedures and activities shaping land development with a view of lessening the cost of such development and to the more efficient use of land as the applicant is proposing the adaptive reuse of an existing site which will lessen the cost of development.

Mr. Murphy further opined that the application can be granted as there are no substantial detriments to the public good and the application does not impair the intent and/or purpose of the zone plan or zoning ordinance as the proposed use is more consistent with the surrounding neighborhood compared to what currently exists on site.

In response to a question posed by the Board, Mr. Murphy testified that no exterior signage is proposed on site.

Mr. Murphy indicated that waivers are requested from providing a landscaping plan, community impact statement, and a stormwater management plan as the site is fully developed with nearly 100% impervious coverage and any impact to the community would be positive by virtue of the elimination of the non-conforming hotel use.

A question arose in relation to the impact that existing off-street parking would have on required site triangles.

Mr. Murphy confirmed that one parking space along Orchid Road and one parking space along Rambler Road could impact required site triangles. Accordingly, the Board recommended, and the Applicant agreed, to eliminate two parking spaces, resulting in a total of 44 off-street parking spaces on site. As a condition of approval, the Applicant will submit revised plans depicting the elimination of two (2) off-street parking spaces impacting the site triangles located along Rambler and Orchid Roads.

Tiffany Morrissey, P.P. of Tiffany A. Cuvillo, PP, LLC was also present at the meeting on behalf of the Applicant. Ms. Morrissey was accepted by the Board as an expert in the field of land planning and she was placed under oath and was sworn in to testify.

Ms. Morrissey reviewed and confirmed the variance relief sought by the Applicant.

Ms. Morrissey opined that the site is particularly suited to accommodate the proposed use.

She agreed that the purposes of zoning identified by Mr. Murphy would be advanced in connection with this application and she provided additional testimony in support of same.

In addition, she advised the Board that the Applicant's proposal would also encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use or development of all lands in this State, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare.

Ms. Morrissey indicated that the site has been developed with a hotel since 1979. The existing hotel is a non-conforming use and the property is underutilized and had been vacant prior to the Applicant purchasing same.

Ms. Morrissey opined that the proposed conversion to a multi-family residential use is more consistent with the uses that are permitted in the R-2 zone. The Applicant is proposing improvements to the existing building façade, eliminating single-pane windows, incorporating dormers, and creating architectural interest in an effort to provide a more residential look to the existing structure.

Ms. Morrissey advised the Board that a variety of unit sizes are proposed by the Applicant in an effort to market the property to individuals and families. The proposed units will contain anywhere from 306SF to 1700SF.

Ms. Morrissey reviewed existing multi-family dwellings in the surrounding neighborhood and she confirmed the size of the units associated with same. She opined that the unit sizes proposed by the Applicant are consistent with what exists and what's become expected in connection with development of this nature.

Ms. Morrissey addressed provisions of the Borough's Master Plan which outline concerns associated with hotel/motel conversions and the need to maintain existing hotels/motels to support the Borough's tourism industry and the Wildwood Convention Center.

The existing hotel is a non-conforming use in the R-2 zone and she argued that same should be eliminated in order to bring the site into closer conformity with what's permitted and envisioned for the zone in question.

She testified that maintaining non-conforming hotels/motels in the R-2 zone was not envisioned by the Borough's Master Plan.

She opined that the Applicant's proposal provides an opportunity for the adaptive reuse of the existing structure and would improve the site and lessen the impact that same has on the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Morrissey testified that the proposed conversion would eliminate a transient, higher turnover use and she indicated that the proposal to incorporate 44 off-street parking spaces, 37 of which can be counted, is sufficient to accommodate the needs of the 37 proposed residential units.

With respect to the requested waiver from submitting a Community Impact Statement, Ms. Morrissey testified that the Applicant is proposing a conversion which will benefit the community and the surrounding neighborhood through the elimination of a non-conforming use.

She testified that the proposed conversion would lessen the traffic impact in the surrounding neighborhood, and the proposal to add parking would be a significant improvement for neighboring property owners. She argued that the proposed conversion would a positively impact the community thereby justifying the request for this waiver.

Ms. Morrissey further opined that the Applicant's proposal presents no substantial detriments to the public good and the application does not impair the intent and/or purpose of the zone plan or zoning ordinance. She indicated that there is no feasible way to comply with the requirements of the R-2 zone without demolishing the existing structure which she indicated is not an efficient use of the land.

In response to a question posed by the Board in relation to the proposed units and the number of bedrooms located within same, Ms. Morrissey confirmed the following:

Building A will consist of:

Seven (7) 1-bedroom units;

Seven (7) 2-bedroom units; and

One (1) 3-bedroom unit.

Building B will consist of:

Nineteen (19) 1-bedroom units;

Two (2) 2-bedroom units; and

One (1) 4-bedroom unit.

The Applicant, Alfonso Cuoco, appeared and he was placed under oath to testify before the Board.

Mr. Cuoco confirmed the number of proposed units, the square footage of said units, and the number of bedrooms within each unit.

Mr. Cuoco confirmed that the Application proposes 2 units less than what was original proposed in connection with the prior application. He indicated that the 2 units that were eliminated were previously located in the northern building.

Mr. Cuoco advised the Board that the existing site contains approximately 100% impervious coverage. He testified that he intends to incorporate landscaping elements around the exiting pool area and he

agreed to incorporate landscaping within the area of the site triangle located at the intersection of Orchid and Seaview Avenues as the parking space that was proposed will be eliminated to address impacts on the site triangle.

In response to a question posed by the Board, Mr. Cuoco testified that HVAC mechanicals will be mounted to the building in an existing alleyway and same will be located between approximately 12ft. to 17ft. above grade. As a condition of approval, the Applicant will submit revised plans reflecting the proposed location of HVAC mechanicals.

An extensive discussion took place between the Applicant and the Board in relation to the Northern building and existing gap in the roofline. The Applicant originally proposed revisions to the plans which sought to maintain the existing void space; however, after discussing same with the Board and hearing concerns from same, the Applicant proposed to eliminate the existing building space in an effort to create a more aesthetically pleasing structure. As a condition of approval, the area of the northern building located underneath of the new A-frame roof will be utilized exclusively for storage purposes.

Mr. Cuoco indicated that he intends to install two (2) egress windows in the front portion of the storage area and two (2) egress windows in the rear portion of the storage area beneath the above referenced A-frame roof.

Borough Engineer Marc DeBlasio, P.E., P.P., C.M.E., prepared an Engineer's Report dated April 26, 2023 which was received by the Board and which is incorporated herein as fact. Will Hanson, P.E., a professional engineer and employee with Mr. DeBlasio's office, appeared at the meeting and reviewed said Report for the benefit of the Board, and he note the conditions outlined therein. As a condition of approval, the Applicant will comply with any and all comments/conditions set forth within the Engineer's Report.

The Meeting was opened to the public for comment. A total of five (5) individuals addressed the Board in connection with this Application, namely:

John D'Amico, owner of the property located at 8003 Atlantic Avenue, appeared and he was placed under oath to testify before the Board. Mr. D'Amico advised the Board that any concerns that he had with respect to parking had been adequately addressed by the Applicant. He indicated that he supported the project and the proposed elimination of the pre-existing non-conforming hotel use. Mr. D'Amico indicated that the renovations to the site significantly improve the appearance of the property and the surrounding community.

Tom O'Donnell, owner of the property located at 300 E. Rambler Road, appeared and he was placed under oath to testify before the Board. Mr. O'Donnell advised the Board that he supports the Application and the relief sought in connection with same. He indicated that he purchased his property approximately 3 years and he acknowledged that the current owner/applicant has significantly improved the site and the operation of the hotel.

William DiAntonio, owner of the property located 7200 Ocean Avenue, appeared and he was placed under oath to testify before the Board. Mr. DiAntonio agreed that the elimination of the non-conforming hotel in the R-2 zone was a positive. He indicated that the renovations to the existing structure are an aesthetic enhancement and a significant upgrade to the surrounding neighborhood.

Sharon O'Donnell, owner of the property located at 300 E. Rambler Road, appeared and she was placed under oath to testify before the Board. Mrs. O'Donnell advised the Board that she supported the project and agreed that the improvements proposed by the Applicant are a significant improvement to the neighborhood.

Lillian Costa, owner of the property located at 215 E. Monterrey Avenue, appeared and she was placed under oath to testify before the Board. Ms. Costa supported the project and agreed that the proposed renovations and the elimination of the hotel use are a tremendous improvement to the neighborhood.

No additional members of the public addressed the Board in connection with this application.

Accordingly, the public portion of this application was closed.

No additional members of the public addressed the Board in connection with this application.

Accordingly, the public portion of this application was closed.

Board Solicitor Robert Belasco, Esquire reviewed the variance relief sought by the Applicant and provided the findings of fact for the record.

Findings of Fact accepted on motion of Ms. Hunt and 2nd by Ms. Daniels

Patrick Davenport: yes

Barbara Hunt: yes

Brian Melchiorre: yes

Don Cabrera: abstain

Joe Franco: abstain

Angela Daniels: yes

Gerry D'Antonio: yes

Fred Mettler: yes

Pete Cava: yes

Brian Stuart: absent

Vince Tenaglia: abstain

Bradley Vogdes: abstain

The Board accepted the findings of fact and thereafter opened the Application up for deliberation.

During deliberations, the Board commended the Applicant on revisions made to the plans to address the Board's concerns raised during the February 2023 meeting.

Board Members agreed that the Applicant's proposal amounted to a significant improvement to the site, and they agreed that the Applicant had addressed issues related to off-street parking.

Board Members agreed that consolidating existing units to improve the parking deficiency would improve the project and lessen the impact that a parking deficiency would have on the surrounding residential neighborhood.

The Board agreed that the benefits associated with the Applicant's proposal outweighed any detriments.

Board Members agreed that the Applicant's proposal advances several goals and objectives outlined within the Borough's Master Plan.

The Board found that the purposes of zoning identified by Mr. Murphy and Ms. Morrissey would be advanced in connection with this proposal and supports granting the relief requested by the Applicant.

The Board finds that granting the proposed variance relief presents no substantial detriment to the public good nor will it impair the intent or purpose of the zone plan and zoning ordinance.

On Motion of Ms. Daniels and 2nd by Mr. Cava for approval of preliminary and final major site plan, D(1) use variance and "C" variance relief:

Patrick Davenport: yes

Barbara Hunt: yes

Brian Melchiorre: yes

Don Cabrera: abstain

Joe Franco abstain

Angela Daniels: yes

Gerry D'Antonio: yes

Fred Mettler: yes

Pete Cava: yes

Brian Stuart: absent

Vince Tenaglia: abstain

Bradley Vogdes: abstain

Joe Franco & Don Cabrera return to the meeting.

RESOLUTIONS MEMORIALIZING BOARD ACTIONS: None

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTIONS: None

OLD BUSINESS: (Keep all items under old business)

Condo/Hotel Conversion

Bike Connectivity Path

Bulkheads

NEW BUSINESS:

Joe Franco recommends a 3- or 5-minute block for public comments. The Planning Board unanimously agreed to a 3-minute block for public comments.

OPEN TO PUBLIC COMMENT:

Joe Viscomi, owner of the property located at 308 E Washington thanked for planning board for their time and efforts in keeping Wildwood Crest such a great place. He went into discuss cautions in variances. Commented that Wildwood Crest does not need to bend on variances for big developers. He showed the board a Homes Magazine from 1995 to showing the cost of homes now and then and how great the town is doing.

Joe Franco thanked William Bumbernick, who recently resigned from the Planning Board for all his time and work he put into the planning board over the past years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next regularly scheduled meeting is 7 June, there is one application scheduled at this time to go before the board on that date.

ADJOURN: On motion of Mr. Cava, second by Mr. Vogdes and unanimous voice vote, the Chairman adjourned the meeting 5pm.

Pamela Riper

Planning Board Secretary