

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 11, 2018 PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
BOROUGH HALL, BOROUGH OF HILLSDALE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chariman M. Giancarlo, Vice Chairwoman J. Miano, E. Lichtstein  
F. Franco, Mayor Ruocco, S. Raymond, E. Alter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Pizzella, M. Kates, L. Calabria

EMPLOYEES PRESENT: N. Nabbie, Esq., Board Attorney  
C. Statile, P.E., Board Engineer  
C. Chadwick, Deputy Secretary

Chairman Giancarlo called the meeting to order with a reading of the Open Public Meetings Statement at approximately 8:00pm.

OPEN TO PUBLIC (for matters not on the Agenda):

As no one wished to speak, the meeting was closed to the public.

MINUTES:

The *December 7, 2017 Meeting Minutes* and the *December 14, 2018 Meeting Minutes* were approved by the Board. The Deputy Secretary will edit the December 14<sup>th</sup> minutes to reflect that Mr. Raymond was absent.

INVOICES:

Invoices from *C.P. Statile, P.A.* and *Gittleman, Muhlstock & Chewcaskie* were approved for payment by the Board.

COMPLETENESS REVIEW:

*PZ-15-17; Salvatore Russino; Block 1116, Lot 11; 55 Maple Avenue*  
*Use "d" variance application for an addition to a single-family dwelling*

Board Engineer Statile explained the nature of this application to the Board, stating the applicant seeks to reconstruct the dwelling. Mr. Statile stated the application is incomplete due to deficiency in two items, including a survey and another technical issue; the applicant has been notified of same.

BOARD BUSINESS:

*Attendance*

Mayor Ruocco asked the Board about the attendance issue it previously discussed. Board Attorney Nabbie stated she contacted the respective Board member regarding her lack of attendance and explained to the member that after four consecutive unexcused absences, the Board reserves the right to automatically remove the member from the Board. Ms. Nabbie further clarified that the member in question was Ms. Calabria and the absences have not been excused by the Board. Therefore, a position on the Board is now open and available. Ms. Nabbie recommended the Board vote. Mr. Alter asked what the Board will vote on, exactly. Ms. Nabbie stated the Board should make a motion to recommend the governing body remove Ms. Calabria from the Board and to fill the vacancy, referencing a municipal vacancy law. Ms. Nabbie explained that this procedure is clearly outlined in the Hillsdale Planning Board's By-Laws and certain situations qualify excused absences such as medical reasons, family members with medical conditions, emergency situations, etc. However, regardless of the reason for the absence, Board members are still obligated to

contact the Board Chairperson and advise he or she will not be present at the meeting and state why. Ms. Nabbie further stated the by-laws precede her role as Board Attorney. Mr. Alter explained he was on the committee that approved the by-laws in the past.

Mr. Franco voiced concern stating other Board members have been absent as frequently as Ms. Calabria, etc. Ms. Nabbie stated Ms. Calabria's absences have become detrimental to Board business, especially during use variance applications as the Board does not have five or more members present, in part due to Ms. Calabria's absences which then lead to applicants' attorneys needing to continuously request adjournment. Mr. Franco expressed concern regarding the Planning Board By-Laws and the possibility of some Board members not being aware of them. Mayor Ruocco stated the Mayor and Council approve their by-laws annually and recommended the Planning Board do the same. Mr. Statile and Ms. Chadwick confirmed the Planning Board By-Laws are available for access on the ftp site. Furthermore, Ms. Chadwick stated she will email the members a copy of the by-laws. Chairman Giancarlo stated he will organize with Ms. Chadwick attendance records form for the upcoming meeting and include a section for absences and whether they have been excused or are unexcused. Ms. Nabbie stated she has observed the same issue on various other land use boards she serves and created a form to assist in this matter; she stated she can prepare a similar form for this Board if they wish. Chairman Giancarlo referenced the Planning Board attendance records for 2017 that showed that Ms. Calabria had attended just 5 of the 17 and 5 of 18 if this meeting was included. Mayor Ruocco then asked Mr Statile if he could remember a comparable absentee record in his 30 years as Planning Board engineer and he could not.

Vice Chairwoman Miano made a motion to recommend to the Hillsdale Mayor & Council that Ms. Calabria be removed from the Board due to her absences which created a detriment to the Planning Board's business and that they replace her with a new member as there is now a vacant spot on the Board. Chairman Giancarlo seconded this motion. The Board was polled and the motion passed. The Board members all expressed gratitude to Ms. Calabria for her contribution to the Board over the several years during which she served, citing her role as Chairperson and her past efforts on behalf of the citizens of the Borough.

### *Miscellaneous*

Dr. Lichtstein thanked Mayor Ruocco for reappointing him the Board. Board Attorney Nabbie, Board Engineer Statile, and Deputy Secretary Chadwick thanked the Board for their re-appointments as well, stating it's a pleasure to serve.

Due to a Mayor and Council meeting occurring on November 8, 2018, the Board motioned to reschedule their first November meeting for November 20, 2018. The meeting will still begin at 7:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Chadwick  
Deputy Secretary