

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 24, 2015 PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
BOROUGH HALL, BOROUGH OF HILLSDALE

MEMBERS PRESENT: M. Kates, M. Giancarlo  
F. Franco, J. Miano, Z. Horvath

MEMBERS ABSENT: E. Lichtstein, L. Calabria, J. Traudt, G. Biener  
Mayor M. Arnowitz, Councilman F. Pizzella

EMPLOYEES PRESENT: Nylema Nabbie, Esq., Board Attorney  
Christopher P. Statile, P.E., Board Engineer  
Caitlin Chadwick, Deputy Secretary

Chairman Giancarlo called the meeting to order with a reading of the Open Public Meetings Statement at approximately 7:35pm.

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

The meeting was opened to the public and Kevin O'Brien came forward to speak about concerns he had regarding the number of trailers on his neighbor's property. Board Attorney Nabbie asked Mr. O'Brien if he contacted the Building Department and he responded that he spoke to the Code Official. Chairman Giancarlo stated that enforcement issues are not under the Board's jurisdiction and it has no authority to intervene. The Chairman asked Mr. Statile about the borough ordinance regarding trailers. Mr. Statile stated that the ordinance states residents are only permitted to park trailers in rear yards, but does not state anything regarding the number of trailers a resident is allowed to have on his property.

Next, Marisa Cefali of 6 Manson Place, Hillsdale, came forward to voice concerns regarding application number PZ-08-12 Jeanne Marie Gardens. Ms. Nabbie confirmed for Ms. Cefali that the applicant will re-notice prior to the May 26<sup>th</sup> hearing.

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

MINUTES:

The *March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015* meeting minutes were approved by the Board.

BILLS:

Invoices from the Board Engineer, Board Attorney, and Board Planner were approved by the Board for payment.

RESOLUTIONS:

*2015-8; Block 503, Lot 4; Saddlewood Properties; 786 Hillsdale Ave.*

*Approval of Minor Subdivision application for the creation of 3 lots* was approved by the Board.

DISCUSSION:

***PZ-05-14; JKD Inc.; Block 1205, Lots 15 & 16; 30 Lake Drive  
Application to appeal the Administrative Officer's Decision***

Counsel for the Applicant – John Lamb, Esq.

Board Attorney Nabbie confirmed that the violation notice for this property was issued by the Zoning Official on 1/21/14. The Zoning Official then sent an additional letter dated 12/31/14 which referenced the original violation notice issued on 1/21/14. The appeal was not filed within 20 days of the 1/21/14 violation notice and therefore cannot be considered by the Board.

Mr. Lamb stated that his client now intends to submit an amended site plan application. Mr. Lamb also extended the time frame for the Board to act, indefinitely.

***Definition of a “family unit”***

Discussion of this topic was postponed until the April 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting.

***Sustainability Checklist/Guidelines***

Discussion of this topic was postponed until the April 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

***PZ-14-14; Mike & Diane DePiero; Block 1907, Lot 5; 90 Hillsdale Ave.  
Variance application for existing fence***

Ms. Marissa DePiero of 90 Hillsdale Ave. was sworn in before the Board.

On reviewing the applicant's notice, Board Attorney Nabbie found that not all variances being sought by the applicants were listed. The published notice also did not include any “catch-all” phrasing for possible additional variances that may be found to be needed.

The Board then took a short recess wherein Ms. Nabbie assisted the applicants with writing a proper public notice for their application.

The Board returned and Ms. Nabbie announced that due to issues with the published notice, the applicant must re-notice and is scheduled for another public hearing on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

***PZ-02-15; John Escobar; Block 405, Lot 10; 55 Bedford Road  
Bulk and use (height) variance application to reconstruct dwelling***

John Escobar of 55 Bedford Road was sworn in before the Board. Joseph Bruno, registered architect of 29 Pascack Road, Park Ridge was also sworn in before the Board to testify as an expert in architecture (but had not prepared the architectural plans). Mr. Escobar, who prepared his own architectural plans, explained that the existing home has three bedrooms and two bathrooms and was purchased in 2007. However as he and his wife have four children, they are proposing to add a second floor which will create two additional bedrooms and another bathroom.

Documents were then marked into evidence as follows:

**Exhibit A-1:** Addition and Alterations to the Escobar Residence, showing Schematic Section Compliant with Height Restriction and Schematic Section Proposed Variance from Height Restriction

**Exhibit A-2:** Photograph; View of Subject Property East Elevation

**Exhibit A-3:** Photograph; View of Subject Property Looking Southward Along Front Wall

**Exhibit A-4:** Photograph; Google Maps printout showing 55 Bedford Rd.

**Exhibit A-5:** Photograph; View of Subject Property South Elevation

**Exhibit A-6:** Photograph; View of Subject Property West Elevation

Mr. Bruno provided copies of all these exhibits to the Board. Mr. Statile reviewed the variances the applicant will need, stating front yard setback, impervious coverage, and building height variances will all be needed. No use variance for height will be required, as the applicant agreed to lower the building height at the start of the hearing.

Mr. Bruno stated that the first floor of the house will be remodeled and the exterior wall at the rear of the home is the only wall that will be removed. The existing first floor perimeter walls will remain intact. Mr. Bruno then spoke in detail about what the applicant is proposing and the variances that will be needed. When the Board asked about the steep roof pitch, Mr. Bruno stated that steeper roof pitches work better with colonial style homes and are more architecturally fitting to the colonial style, while a lower roof pitch is much more akin to a ranch style or split-level style home. Furthermore, Mr. Bruno stated, the excess roof height of the dwelling is mitigated by the large side yard setbacks.

Mr. Statile asked Mr. Bruno about the floor to ceiling height and Mr. Bruno informed him it is 8 feet. Mr. Franco asked how big the portico would be and Mr. Bruno responded about 42 sq. ft. and explained there will be a roof on the portico and it will be open at the sides. Mr. Horvath asked if pitch of the dormer heights would need to change in the event that the main ridge height was changed. Mr. Bruno responded that the dormer pitch would need to not exceed the main ridge height. Ms. Miano asked if anyone had checked the integrity of the existing interior walls and Mr. Bruno stated no. Mr. Statile explained to Mr. Bruno and Mr. Escobar that if any interior walls are torn down, a stop work order will be issued. They both acknowledged same.

The Board returned to the discussion of ridge height and Mr. Bruno explained that a lower pitch will be noticeable if looking at the side of the home. It was confirmed that the applicant is using stick frame and will be using the attic of the home for mechanical storage of two air conditioning units as well as ducts. Ms. Miano asked if the impervious coverage could be adjusted to be more in compliance. Ms. Kates asked if the pool and patio were pre-existing, Mr. Bruno confirmed that they were. Ms. Kates also asked if the applicant will submit a site plan for drainage. Mr. Statile stated that he needs a topographic survey that shows the proposed house with building height and seepage pits. Ms. Kates asked the Board Attorney if the Board can make the submission of the topographic survey and a site plan for drainage conditions of approval. Mr. Statile stated that the Board should sort through all changes at once, and conduct an informal poll for the applicant.

Chairman Giancarlo asked for confirmation from Mr. Bruno and Mr. Escobar that the attic is going to be non-useable and limited to just mechanical storage space; Mr. Bruno and Mr. Escobar

confirmed that to be correct. Building height and impervious coverage were discussed further, and the Board was in agreement that the building height should be lowered and impervious coverage reduced. Mr. Statile stated that this application has a 3% overage on impervious coverage and that the installation of seepage pits on the property will mitigate that overage.

The meeting was opened to the public. Deborah Loganchuk of 63 Bedford Road, Javier Gutierrez of 84 Standish Road, and Matthew Rega of 92 Standish Road all came forward to state that they had no objections to the application. Seeing no one else to speak on the matter, the meeting was closed to the public.

Mr. Statile stated that he needs a plot plan and drainage calculations. Mr. Bruno stated that the applicant calculated the elevation by taking the average around the house and set the ridge height based on that number. Mr. Horvath stated that the topographic survey will confirm that for the Board. It was also confirmed that the applicant amended the plan to eliminate the need for a “d” height variance.

The applicant also waived all statutory time frames and extended the time for the Board to act. Board Attorney Nabbie announced that the application will be carried to April 21<sup>st</sup> and that no additional notice will be required. Mr. Bruno stated that he will send Ms. Nabbie a letter confirming that the applicant has amended his application to eliminate the need for a “d” variance.

Chairman Giancarlo and Board Engineer Statile discussed public notice issues. Building height was also discussed and Mr. Statile said that Hillsdale’s requirement used to be 25 ft. and it was then changed to 30 ft. Mr. Statile stated that Mr. Escobar’s house is closer to the roadway, which exacerbates the height issue visually.

Ms. Kates asked if the Environmental Commission can receive copies of Mr. Statile’s review reports and Mr. Statile responded yes and stated that he will send them to Scott Raymond.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Chadwick  
Deputy Secretary