

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA
WORKSESSION/REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
December 6, 2012**

APPROVED 1/10/13

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Open Public Meetings Law Statement:

This meeting, which conforms with the Open Public Meetings Law, Chapter 231, Public Laws of 1975, is a Worksession/Regular Public Meeting of the Planning Board.

Notices have been filed with our local official newspapers and posted on the municipal bulletin board.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Mayor Birkner
William Martin
Thomas Constantine
Daniel Olivier
Philip Cerruti
Richard Bonsignore
Jaymee Hodges, Chairman
Ann Costello (Alt. #1)
Keith Doell (Alt. #2)

ALSO PRESENT:

Thomas Randall, Esq., Board Attorney
By Steven Paul, Esq.
Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, Board Planner
Louis Raimondi, Brooker Engineering,
Board Engineer

ABSENT: James Schluter, Vice-Chairman (excused absence)
Councilwoman Ingrid Quinn (excused absence)

4. MINUTES: The **Minutes of 10/25/12 were approved** on motion made by Philip Cerruti, seconded by Dan Olivier, and carried unanimously on roll call vote. The meetings of 11/1/12 and 11/15/12 were canceled due to lack of applications to process.

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A motion to go into Public Session was made by Ann Costello, seconded by Keith Doell and carried.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Memo from Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, dated 11/26/12 RE: Ginger and Cream, 350 Center Avenue, Site Plan and Variance;

2. Memo from Brooker Engineering, dated 11/26/12 RE: Ginger and Cream;

6. RESOLUTIONS: None

7. PENDING NEW BUSINESS: NONE

8. VOUCHERS: \$3,107.50 - A motion to approve vouchers totaling \$3,107.50 was made by Ann Costello, seconded by Keith Doell and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

9. VARIANCES, SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR SITE PLANS:

SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS
The Board Professionals were sworn in

1. Ginger and Cream of Westwood, Inc., 350 Center Avenue, Block 807, Lot 17 - Site Plan and Variance - Ira Wiener, Esq. represented the applicant and gave a brief overview. The application was for renovation and expansion of an existing retail building in the Central Business District, known as "Ginger and Cream", a woman's boutique. A single story addition was proposed, which would add two dressing rooms, for a total of five. Two bulk variances, for rear yard and side yard, are required. The use is permitted in this zone. The property is bound on all three sides by parking areas. The proposed addition will add 499 sq. ft. of space to the rear of the existing building, bringing the total square footage to 2,454 sq. ft. of retail space. The architectural style would be the same as the existing building.

Ed Snieckus addressed completeness. There was a waiver for providing a key map, but the key map was provided. Also, a waiver will be required for submitting a landscaping plan, although the applicant should indicate if there will be any plant removal. Mr. Wiener stated it is really not needed as

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there really is no place for landscaping, unless the Board finds it can fit and makes sense. In that case they would agree.

Sue Bahng, owner of Ginger & Cream of Westwood, Inc. was sworn in and testified as to her extensive retail experience and finding this unique setting for their woman's boutique, which they opened about five or six years ago to provide a personalized shopping experience for women without having to travel to the mall. Their customers come from Westwood and around Pascack Valley. She lives two buildings down from the store. They also opened a children's boutique across the street and an outlet store on Irvington. They want to open a plus-size store in the future, as they cannot accommodate all sizes in their current store. They dress the woman from head to toe, spending a lot of time with each woman. The customers spend a good half hour or an hour in dressing rooms trying on different dresses, and since they have three small dressing rooms on ground level, the women often have to wait and sometimes must leave, and the customer is lost. Deliveries are by UPS. No one is that close on either side of the property or behind them. There is a driveway on the side of the house.

Photos marked Exhibit A1 were taken by Ms. Bahng in July and yesterday, which she described. Parking is never a problem for employees. Sometimes they get dropped off, or park in their lot or at the children's store lot across the street. Customers have the option of parking in two municipal lots. There are 13 spots on the street up to the pediatrician's office, which are usually available. The pediatrician's office and Hanami Restaurant have their own parking lots. This expansion would be good for the town because it is beautiful and maintains the integrity and architectural detailing in this commercial area. Their business is thriving and is a destination store.

Mr. Snieckus inquired if there was a residential use at the premises, and Ms. Bahng stated no. He further asked if there was a basement, and the response was yes, and it was used for storage.

Mr. Raimondi asked how they reach the gravel parking area. It is accessed by a shared drive on the adjacent property to the North, Ms. Bahng explained, which everyone uses, and it has never been a problem. He expressed concern if the property was ever sold. Mr. Wiener would provide something in writing if

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necessary. There were no further questions of Ms. Bahng. There were no interested parties present during this application.

Vincent Cioffi, Licensed Architect, Westwood, NJ was sworn in, qualified and accepted. Mr. Cioffi testified as to his Architectural Plans and Elevations, five sheets, dated 10/26/12. Mr. Raimondi questioned Mr. Cioffi per his report dated 11/26/12. The new handicapped ramp should be detailed. Mr. Snieckus addressed the request for the side yard variance where 10' is required and 3.9' is proposed, and rear yard variance where 30' is required and 26.7' is proposed. It was noted the addition would be over the crawl space in one small area. He also asked if any trees would be removed. Trimming and pruning would be necessary, Mr. Cioffi explained.

Questions by Board Members followed. Mr. Wiener stated Mr. Cioffi would work with Mr. Snieckus in the event additional landscaping was necessary after the ramp was put in. Mr. Cerruti and Ms. Costello had questions regarding the trees and shrubs. Mr. Cioffi felt they would be able to build the addition without killing the trees, but if they had to be replaced, the new trees would not be as mature. Mr. Snieckus was concerned about the impact to root systems of the arborvitaes. He also commented that newer trees would adapt better to the new addition than older trees.

Mr. Martin recommended ways to shorten the handicapped ramp, which would be more in line with Mr. Eichenlaub's plan, and would be an aesthetic improvement. The point was well received. Mr. Wiener said they were willing to work with the Board on same.

Mayor Birkner also expressed concern about the arborvitaes and would like to see some plantings around the ramp area. Mr. Olivier suggested building the proposed addition on piers rather than on a solid foundation to reduce the risk of losing the arborvitaes. Mr. Cioffi said he always builds on solid foundations, as it is beneficial in many ways. Mr. Constantine questioned the architect about ways to save the arborvitaes as well. Mr. Bonsignore asked about the siding of the addition, and it would be made to match the existing.

Richard Eichenlaub, RL Engineering, Licensed Engineer, was sworn in and accepted. Mr. Eichenlaub testified as to his plan,

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Plot/Erosion Control Plan, one sheet, dated 9/26/12, signed 11/12/12. Also submitted was a Storm Water Runoff & Soil Movement Calculations Report by r. Eichenlaub, dated 10/2/12. It is a conforming use in the zone, on a small lot, with the existing structure centered on the lot, proposing a rear extension just under 500'. The existing ramp has to be removed to allow the construction of the addition. The back of the proposed addition will be 5-1/2' past the ramp. Additional grading will be done. Pruning of the arborvitaes will be necessary. They are approximately 12-14' in height, providing significant screening to the site, as they are surrounded by parking areas. Five cars can be parked in the gravel parking area. The addition will not impact any of the neighbors in a negative sense. The property is a small piece of property, and it is difficult for them to shift the building any further to the North without reconfiguring or extending further back towards the rear property line, given the size of the addition.

Mr. Raimondi asked Mr. Eichenlaub why he did not title his plan a site plan, and also about the ramp construction, whether it would be wooden or concrete. Also, the wood would have to be off the ground. The seepage pit should be moved from beneath the entrance walkway to have the cleanout cover in the grass area. It was agreed to.

Mr. Snieckus talked about the landscaping and asked how far they had to cut into the existing trees. Mr. Eichenlaub responded at least 18-24". Mr. Snieckus addressed the side and rear yard setback variance relief and pre-existing, non-conforming parking variance relief per his Memo dated 11/20/12. The applicant would increase the parking condition on site by two spaces. Mr. Hodges commented a wooden ramp would be more aesthetically pleasing than a concrete ramp. They agreed. He also asked about the fire suppression system.

Mr. Wiener briefly summarized the application, pointing out there is no detrimental impact on the neighbors, and they are a permitted use in the zone. The applicants take huge pride in their business. It is a great asset for Westwood and would allow them to continue to operate their business at their current level. It is an enhancement to the town. The lot is very narrow. Based on the hardship, and for all the reasons as stated, they respectfully request that the Board grant the variances, with any conditions.

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There were no further questions, comments or discussions. There were no interested parties present.

A motion for approval was made by Richard Bonsignore, who commented it does exactly what the Master Plan encourages. It is a local business that should be supported. The motion was seconded by William Martin. On roll call vote, all members voted yes. Mayor Birkner commented it is a project they want to see, and he supports our local businesses. He appreciates their success and looks forward to their continued success and growth. Mr. Martin commented the Master Plan supports this architecturally, and it is compatible with the existing structure. Mr. Constantine commented he was excited about this, and Ann Costello commented she was particularly interested in maintaining the character of the town and this is an enhancement. Chairman Hodges commented he speaks with many people around Bergen County who express that they love to come to Westwood, and he wished them luck and continued success. Mr. Cerruti, Mr. Olivier and Mr. Doell wished them good luck and success.

A motion to return to Worksession was made by Ann Costello, seconded by Richard Bonsignore and carried.

10. DISCUSSIONS:

1. Master Plan Amendments/Definitions by - Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates - Amended criteria definitions RE: Impervious Coverage Issue and Residential Garage Issue - Mr. Snieckus prepared a single sheet for review and discussion. He would appear at the Mayor and Council worksession meeting in January to describe the Board's clarification of the coverage factor, replacing wording "and loosely graveled areas" with "surfaced with stones or gravel"; and for residential garages the criteria would require a one-car garage for a single family home with up to three bedrooms and a two car garage for a single family home with more than three bedrooms.

2. William Martin discussed the Historic Preservation Commission, and that comments were made it should be a committee rather than a commission, which is stronger and more powerful.

There were no further questions, comments or discussions.

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11. ADJOURNMENT - On motions, made seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at approx. 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

MARY R. VERDUCCI, Paralegal
Planning Board Secretary