

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
REORGANIZATION & REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING  
January 12, 2023**

**APPROVED 1/26/23**

**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 **Reorganization & 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:** Jaymee Hodges, Chairman  
Dan Olivier, Vice-Chairman  
Mayor Raymond Arroyo  
Christopher Montana, Councilmember  
William Martin  
Keith Doell  
Anthony Zorovich  
Yash Risbud  
Beth Staples, Alt. #1  
Kristy Dougherty, Alt. #2

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Steven Paul, Esq., appeared on behalf of  
Thomas Randall, Esq., Board Attorney  
Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, Board Planner  
Brandon Goldfine, Boswell Engineering  
Board Engineer  
Ed Senkevich, Boswell Engineering

**ABSENT:** Ann Costello (excused absence)

**SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS**

The following members were sworn in by Mayor Arroyo:

- William Martin - Class II Member - Term expiring 12/31/23;
- Dan Olivier - Class IV Member - Term expiring 12/31/26;
- Councilmember Chris Montana - Class III Member - Term expiring 12/31/23;
- Kristy Dougherty, Alt. #2 Member - Term expiring 12/31/24;

**REORGANIZATION MEETING**

**NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Thomas Randall, Esq. requested a nomination for the position of Chairman of the Planning Board.

A motion to nominate **Jaymee Hodges** as Chairman of the Planning Board was made by William Martin and seconded by Yash Risbud. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of William Martin, seconded by Yash Risbud, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed the nominations for Chairman. On roll call vote, all members voted yes.

**NOMINATIONS FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Chairman Hodges, requested a nomination for the election of a Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board:

A motion to nominate **Dan Olivier** as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board was made by William Martin and seconded by Keith Doell. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of William Martin, and seconded by Keith Doell, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed nominations for Vice-Chairman. On roll call vote all members voted yes.

**NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF RECORDING SECRETARY FOR THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Chairman Hodges requested a nomination for the appointment of a Recording Secretary for the Planning Board:

A motion to nominate **Mary R. Verducci** as Recording Secretary for the Planning Board was made by Mayor Arroyo and seconded by William Martin. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of Mayor Arroyo, seconded by William Martin, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed the nominations for Recording Secretary. On roll call vote, all members voted yes.

**NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY FOR THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Chairman Hodges requested a nomination for the appointment of a Board Attorney:

A motion to nominate **Thomas W. Randall, Esq. and Steven Paul, Esq., Randall & Randall, Esqs.**, as Attorney for the Planning Board was made by William Martin and seconded by Keith Doell. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of William Martin, seconded by Keith Doell, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed the nominations for Board Attorney. On roll call vote, all members voted yes.

**NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER FOR PLANNING BOARD:**

Chairman Hodges requested a nomination for the appointment of a Professional Engineer:

A motion to nominate as **Brandon Goldfine, PE, Boswell Engineering**, Professional Engineer for the Planning Board was made by Councilmember Montana and seconded by Mayor Arroyo. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of Councilmember Montana, seconded by Mayor Arroyo, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed the nominations for Professional Engineer. On roll call vote, all members voted yes.

**NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNER FOR THE PLANNING BOARD:**

Chairman Hodges requested a nomination for the appointment of a Professional Planner of the Planning Board:

A motion to nominate **Ed Snieckus, PP, Burgis Associates** as Professional Planner for the Planning Board was made by Mayor Arroyo and seconded by Keith Doell. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of Mayor Arroyo, seconded by Keith Doell, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed the nominations

for Professional Planner. On roll call vote, all members voted yes.

**ADOPTION OF 2023 MEETING DATES:** A motion for **approval** of the meeting dates for 2023 was made by William Martin, seconded by Dan Olivier, and carried unanimously.

**ADOPTION OF PROCEDURAL RULES & BY-LAWS:** Carried to the next meeting;

#### **REGULAR MEETING**

**4. OPEN TO PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

A motion to open to public was made by Dan Olivier, seconded by Yash Risbud, and carried. There were no questions or comments, and the matter was closed to the public on motion by Yash Risbud, seconded by William Martin and carried.

**5. MINUTES:** The Minutes of the **12/8/22** meeting were approved on motion made by William Martin, seconded by Dan Olivier, and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Memos of Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, Updated 12/12/22 & 12/15/22 RE: Land Use Plan, with discussion below;
2. Notice from NJDEP - read by Chairman;
3. Boswell Engineering company information packet of services provided;

**7. RESOLUTIONS:** None

**8. PENDING NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Grace Episcopal Church, 9 Harrington Avenue - Site Plan with Bulk Variances for construction of an ADA ramp - Need Site Plan;** Still incomplete per Mr. Snieckus, as they are missing items and corrections are needed; Carried to next meeting;

**9. VARIANCES, SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR SITE PLANS:**

SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

**10. DISCUSSION:**

1. **Boswell Engineering** - PB Engineer for 2023 - Brandon Goldfine, PE appointed;
2. **Adoption of Procedural Rules & Bylaws** - Carried to next meeting.

**3. Memo of Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates - Updated 12/12/22** RE: Land Use Plan Goals and Objective Review - Review and Board discussion below;

**4. Memo of Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates - Updated 12/15/22** RE: Land Use Plan-Emerging Development Considerations Review - Review and Board discussion below;

**Excepts/Summary of key updates of above were discussed by Mr. Snieckus (in bold):**

**From the Memo Updated 12/15/22:**

**Emerging development considerations for review**

The Borough's Land Use Plan sets forth the distribution prospective intensities of use for a variety of land uses in in Westwood as the basis for the municipality's zone plan guidance for future development. The following identifies a number of emerging local and regional planning issues to be considered as the Borough contemplates amending the master plan's existing goals and land use policies and/or establishes new goals and policy statements for review and consideration.

The pandemic driven evolution of a virtual workplace has also changed how Westwood and area residents work, with working from home has become more commonplace. This has extended and changed the time of day, along with the day of the week when goods and services are typically sought by patrons. This change or daytime presence of residents has had the effect of growing commerce by allowing an expanded timeframe to perform household errands or to frequent a local food destination. **While this is generally a benefit to the district, it can have the effect of increasing demand on publicly accessible parking supply in the central business district.**

a. Central Business District. **This land use category encompasses both the Central Business District (CBD) and the Central Business District/Special Pedestrian Environment (CBD/SPE) as identified on the Borough of Westwood Zone Plan. The encompass the Westwood and Washington Ave corridor west of Kinderkamack Road..**

**The specific CBD/SPE zoned area of this land use classification encompasses properties fronting Westwood Avenue. The CBD/SPE District is for the development of a traditional, pedestrian oriented downtown walk-in trade commercial center containing a mixture of compatible land uses in a distinctive streetscape which enhances and promotes the commercial center of the Borough. It**

shall be composed of an integrated and compatible design with respect to the relationship and location of buildings, parking, circulation, walkways, landscape amenities, and buffer features. The CBD Plan of the 1993 Master Plan details these specific design standards recommended for the CBD/SPE as well as the CBD Zone.

Retail and service commercial uses are to be encouraged at street level in the CBD/SPE corridor. Such uses as offices, photography studios and other activities which are not as dependent on walk-in trade should be defined to locate on the second floor of buildings in this area. The CBD zoned area of this land use classification is designated for uses similar to the CBD/SPE Zone although permit a greater variety of retail and service uses which complement the established context and scale of this area of the Borough. The development criteria established for the CBD and the CBD/SPE zones reflect the specified context of this land use classification and the defined development pattern and vision for the district. While it is known there are building forms that exceed this regulated pattern, it is goal and vision of the Central Business District land use classification that the defined context be maintained except as may be further amended by the Borough governing body from time to time. This land use classification also includes the objective to maintain the established lot pattern and development scale between lots which supports the planned context of the district. The established framework of smaller incrementally developed lots and building forms is a foundation of this objective and preferred over larger uniform aggregated developments and building form.

Within this framework the following is recommended:

- ~~• A distinct Special Pedestrian Environment is proposed to be delineated within the CBD, encompassing the Westwood Avenue corridor and the properties fronting Westwood Avenue. The CBD Plan details the specific design approach for this corridor. Retail uses should be encouraged at street level in the CBD corridor, encompassing those properties with frontage on Westwood Avenue. Such uses are offices, photography studios and other activities which are not as dependent on walk-in trade should be directed to locate on the second floor of buildings in this corridor. [To be removed due to the subsequent amendment creating the CBD/SPE zone]~~
- ~~• The implementing ordinances should enumerate a detailed list of permitted uses in the CBD, replacing the broad general language of the current code, in an effort to clarify what is acceptable in this district. [Amended]~~

- The ~~location~~ **front setback** of new buildings **should be maintained** within close proximity of the street line, with parking situated to the rear of the site. The Borough's intent is to establish a uniform building line in the CBD **and CBD/SPE corridor**, through the use of maximum street setback provisions, in an effort to reinforce the prevailing **front setback** pattern in this area and reaffirm the "downtown corridor" **context**;
- The provision of additional benches, landscape features, facade improvements and other similar public and private actions;
- The ~~imposition~~ **development** of uniform signage designed to reinforce a central business district identity and the provision of additional street furniture, common landscape features, facade improvements and other similar public and private actions.

**From the Memo Updated 12/12/23:**

**Overview**

As we amend the Borough's Land Use Plan of the Master Plan it is important to review and be aware of the current goals and objectives in formulating amendments. The following are the current goals and objectives from the latest Master Plan Re-examination Report. In addition, we have begun to define some of the new issues for inclusion as updates and new issues as amendments to the Land Use Plan. This is only to start the conversation and will be periodically updated as we move through this amendment process.

**Current Goals and Objectives**

The following are the current Goals and Policies of the Land Use Plan of the 1993 Master Plan and as updated in the various reexamination reports. **In addition, we offer the following refinements to improve and update the text (in bold or with strikethrough's) to refine the intentions and address current issues.**

**Goal 1:** To maintain and enhance existing areas of stability in the community and encourage a proper distribution of land uses by designating areas in the **Borough's Land Use Plan** which have their own uniform development characteristics. A principal goal of this plan is to preserve and protect the residential character, scale and moderate density of the community by restricting incompatible land uses from established residential areas, and limiting

intensities of use to the level, and locations as prescribed herein.

**Goal #1 Policy Statement:** The Borough of Westwood recognizes that one of its most significant attributes is its uniform land use arrangement **formed through the use of specific appropriate densities and housing types whose locations are informed by topographic, environmental and geographic factors. These residential areas** are assigned so that there are limited intrusions by nonresidential development ~~in residential neighborhoods~~ **to retain their established pattern of development.** The plan's land use recommendations are designed to protect and reinforce the prevailing detached single family residential development patterns in the community, encourage attached residential development only in those areas specified in the plan, preclude any introduction of incompatible non-residential use in areas designated for residential use, and reinforce the intensities-of-use recommended in this plan.

**Goal 2:** To ensure that any prospective development and/or redevelopment is responsive to Westwood's environmental features **and limitations**, and can be accommodated within the community's infrastructure **capacity** development.

**Goal #2 Policy Statement:** The Borough seeks to encourage development, which is sensitive to the community's unique physical characteristics, and preserves the Borough's sensitive environmental elements. Particularly, the Borough encourages development which preserves steeply sloped areas (defined to include any slope of minimally fifteen percent grade), protects **and discourages development in and protects** wetlands and flood plains, and retains vegetation (particularly trees of a caliper of minimally eight inches, and clusters of trees). The Borough expressly recognizes that one of its attributes is the extensive treed character of so many of its building lots, and consequently it is recommended that a planned program of tree preservation, through appropriate ordinance regulation, be imposed to ensure the retention of this natural feature. B Additionally, the Borough takes cognizance of the fact that there are numerous sites in the municipality that are typified by extensive environmentally sensitive features and therefore may not be able to accommodate their full zoned development potential.

**Goal 3:** To encourage and provide buffer zones to separate incompatible land uses.



**Goal #3 Policy Statement:** The Borough recognizes the need to reinforce the delineation of **zone** boundaries separating residential and non-residential sections of the community. Appropriate buffer/screening devices are to be encouraged to separate incompatible land uses in order to minimize adverse impacts on residential properties. This should be accomplished primarily within the framework of appropriate open space buffer strips containing suitable planting elements (including such elements as multiple rows of plant material, planting clusters, etc.), in an effort to protect residential areas and to retain and reaffirm the community's overall landscape amenity.

**Goal 4:** To provide a variety of housing types, densities and a balanced housing supply, in ~~appropriate~~ defined locations **as provided in the Land Use Plan** to serve the Borough and region.

**Goal #4 Policy Statement:** The Borough contains a broad and varied housing stock consisting of detached dwellings, townhouses and multi-family units **that have been methodically planned and developed**. The Borough's policy is to continue to accommodate this ~~broad array of housing, and to encourage plan for the provision of~~ additional townhouse and multi-family residential development, in accordance with the specific delineations depicted in the land use plan ~~map~~ but not to **intensify development densities beyond those prescribed herein** ~~encourage any additional attached residential development beyond that which is depicted on the Land Use Plan Map.~~ The Borough's housing policy recognizes that the State has specifically refined the housing issues to direct attention to the specific need for lower income housing. Within this framework Westwood has adopted several housing elements that were either certified by COAH or are to be approved by the New Jersey Superior Court **to address this need, where deemed appropriate, at appropriate densities to ensure public health, safety and welfare are maintained and are consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Borough's Land Use Plan.**

**Goal 6:** To discourage the proliferation of two family and multi-family dwellings **that are unplanned and inconsistent with the Borough's Land Use Plan.**

**Goal #6 Policy Statement:** The Borough recognizes and acknowledges the existence of two-family and multi-family dwellings in the community. However, it has been determined that additional two-family dwellings and multi-family units, exclusive of those planned sites set forth in this plan, represent an intrusive element which erodes the ~~established~~ **carefully planned established**

**development pattern** of the community and represents ~~a drain on an overburden on Borough roadways, managed facilities and services.~~ The Borough's land use policy is designed to prevent the construction or expansion of two-family and multi-family units except as provided herein. It is the express policy of the Borough to not permit any other ~~additional~~ **such** development not identified in the Westwood Land Use Plan.

**Goal 7:** To preserve and enhance the Borough's commercial areas by: defining their functional role in the community, enhancing the quality of life within the commercial center through an appropriate mixture of activities; **protect ongoing economic vitality of the CBD/SPE and CBD zones via continuing low rise development to maintain scale, modest density and moderate use intensity that will preserve the unique established context and maintain a pedestrian friendly streetscape that is the source of the zone's continued viability;** ~~encouraging the assemblage of small properties to foster an efficient and attractive design;~~ encouraging the use of the design elements identified in the Land Use Plan; and, considering **alternative means to address parking needs** through the **potential joint sharing of parking resources consolidation between adjacent properties where feasible** and the expansion of off-street parking to provide greater ~~convenience for shoppers and~~ **accommodations** for patrons.

**Goal #7 Policy Statement** added **low-rise** to buildings and **improvements** to landscaping.

**Goal 11:** To support the overall philosophy of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) as a means of providing growth management on a state-wide basis while retaining the principals of home-rule.

**Policy Statement:** The Borough maintains that the general intent of the SDRP, to manage growth within the framework of an assessment of needs and infrastructure capabilities, and the SDRP's specific Metropolitan Planning Area designation for Westwood, represents a **broad regional** ~~reasonable~~ approach to growth management **although, it needs to be informed by the Borough's established scale, capacities and vision for the community.**

**Goal 13: Policy Statement (d)** added "**riparian buffers**" and added **new subparagraph (j) To incorporate alternative modes of transportation in planning, where determined appropriate.**

**NEW GOAL AND POLICY STATEMENT FOR INCLUSION IN LAND USE PLAN:**

The following is a new goal and objective for consideration in the amendment to the Land Use Plan of the Master Plan.

Goal 14: A Borough policy is to promote appropriate development that is consistent with the established architectural and development form of the community by maintaining adequate space through features such as setbacks, height and coverage limits of buildings and adjacent properties as prescribed by the zone plan herein. This space provides the health and wellness benefits of light, air and open space for the residents and general population consistent with the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law act (NJSA 40:55D-2) on a lot or tract.

Policy Statement: The Borough of Westwood is a suburban community in scale with building height limits coverage and setback requirements that maintain light air and open space that defines the existing and prescribed architectural and development context of the community. Such requirements establish and sustain the health and welfare benefits of the occupants of a parcel of land and the surrounding public by maintaining access to light air or open space and the intended expansive view of the natural sky dome. The benefits are important to both the residents of individual homes and those in multifamily vertical living. These regulatory requirements should be retained on balance with proposed improvement plans.

Mr. Snieckus would prepare updates and present them via email prior to the next meeting, where they will be discussed for action.

There were no further questions comments or discussions and none from the public.

**11. ADJOURNMENT** - On motions, made seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

MARY R. VERDUCCI, Paralegal  
Planning Board Secretary