

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
REORGANIZATION/REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
February 28, 2019**

APPROVED 3/14/19

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
Dan Olivier, Vice-Chairman
Mayor John Birkner
Erin Collins, Councilmember
William Martin
Thomas Constantine
Ann Costello
Dritan Xhillari (Alt. #1)
Kristy Dougherty (Alt. #2)

ALSO PRESENT:

Thomas Randall, Esq., Board Attorney
Louis Raimondi, Board Engineer
Ed Snieckus, Burgis Associates, Board Planner

ABSENT: Yash Risbud (excused absence)
Keith Doell

REORGANIZATION MEETING

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS:

Board Members were sworn in by Thomas Randall, Esq.

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

- William Martin, Class II Member, 1 Yr. term, expiring 12/31/2019;
- Dritan Xhillari, Alternate Member #1, 2 Yr. term, expiring 12/31/2020;
- Dan Olivier, Class IV Member, 4 Yr. term, expiring 12/31/20;
- Kristy Dougherty, Alternate Member #2, 2 Yr. term, expiring 12/31/20;

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 Ann Costello and seconded by William Martin. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of William Martin, seconded by Ann Costello, 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 Mayor Birkner. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of Mayor Birkner, seconded by William Martin, 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 Birkner, and seconded by Councilmember Collins. There were no further nominations.

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

Upon motion of Mayor Birkner, seconded by Councilmember Collins, 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.** as Attorney for the Planning Board was made by William Martin and seconded by Ann Costello. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of William Martin, seconded by Ann Costello, 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 **Louis A. Raimondi** as Professional Engineer for the Planning Board was made by Thomas Constantine and seconded by Dan Olivier. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of Thomas Constantine, seconded by Dan Olivier, 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 **Burgis Associates** as Professional Planner for the Planning Board was made by Ann Costello and seconded by Mayor Birkner. There were no further nominations.

Upon motion of Ann Costello, seconded by Mayor Birkner, all in favor, none opposed, the Board closed the nominations for Professional Planner. On roll call vote, all members voted yes.

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

ADOPTION OF 2019 MEETING DATES:

Upon motion of William Martin, seconded by Ann Costello, all ayes, the Board adopted the 2019 Meeting Dates for the Planning Board as amended. The meeting dates will be published in the Official Newspaper.

ADOPTION OF PROCEDURAL RULES & BY-LAWS:

Upon motion of William Martin, seconded by Dan Olivier, all ayes, the Board adopted the Procedural Rules & Bylaws, with copies to be distributed to Board Members.

REGULAR MEETING

4. MINUTES: The Minutes of the **1/24/19** meeting were approved on motion made by Thomas Constantine, seconded by Dritan Xhillari and carried unanimously on roll call vote by members eligible to vote, Ann Costello, Mayor Birkner and Dritan Xhillari.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Letter of First Westwood Realty, dated 1/27/19 RE: Reexamination of the CBD/SPE - see discussion below;

6. RESOLUTIONS: None

7. PENDING NEW BUSINESS: None

8. VOUCHERS: A motion to approve Vouchers totaling **\$700.00** was made by Thomas Constantine, seconded by Ann Costello, and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

9. VARIANCES, SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR SITE PLANS: None
SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS
The Board Professionals were sworn in.

10. DISCUSSION:

1. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan Amendment

Ed Snieckus presented the rehab obligation. Rehabilitation obligation need to vote on as amendment to housing element. He gave background. Amendment to Ordinances in the "RW-RM Retail/Wholesale-Residential Multifamily Affordable Housing Overlay Zone", requested by Court Master. Present before the Board for review as to consistency with the Master Plan. It is

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

not inconsistent is the terminology. William Martin question about creating one unit in each zone for affordability. Mr. Martin refer back to Governing Body the amended housing element and fair share plan as described by Mr. S. Seconds by AC

2. Ordinance 19-2 Review Report back to Mayor & Council not inconsistent with Master Plan. Motion by William Martin, with second by Ann Costello, that the Ordinance as amended by Mr. Snieckus is not inconsistent with the Master Plan and should be adopted in the Mayor and Council's actions going forward.

3. Master Plan Re-examination Update - Mr. Snieckus discussed consistency with Master Plan and any Goals and Objectives must be done in sequence. That is why the Board is going back to see what it says in the CBD and other zones. This is the restarting of that discussion. A schedule will be set for this process and we can get feedback from the public as to the needs and wants of the community to make adjustment and respond to those needs. Mr. Snieckus described the zones and their purposes. He discussed CBD/SPE businesses. Mayor Birkner presently we have seven vacancies on Westwood Avenue. The challenges are real. He asked Board & Council Members to keep ears open to see what changes we need to make, taking the suggestions and recommendations and mold them into this document moving forward. Things are changing. Residents are changing, needing transportation. We are a Transit Village. It will take a considerable amount of work, time and effort to move Westwood into the 21's Century.

4. Open to Public:

Bruce Meisel, First Westwood Realty came forward with regard to the CBD/SPE Zone, specifically to provide information to the Board as to the past and current market and how it is changing. He submitted a letter dated 2/27/19 RE: Re-examination of CBD/SPE, suggesting additional permitted uses for the zone.

We cannot be compared with Ridgewood, which is huge, and we will not have a duplication of uses like Ridgewood. Ridgewood is not a walking town, like Westwood is. Parking decks being built in Ridgewood are extremely expensive. There is no question the market is drastically changing. You don't see shoe stores. Certain uses just do not exist anymore. It is much harder to rent spaces than before, and remain vacant. There aren't nearly

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

as many calls as there used to be. We really don't have another year to talk about this. He suggested expanding the uses and having those uses help our anchor retail uses to bring foot traffic into town.

William Martin questioned Mr. Meisel as to his opinion of uses only allowed on second floors as mentioned by Mr. Snieckus. Mr. Meisel agreed that those uses should be allowed on the ground floors as well. Mayor Birkner commented people are looking for a Hoboken-type vibe, coming off the train to a thriving downtown. The downtown retail centers in several down suffered when the malls came in. Westwood has always stayed ahead of the curve as a retail-entertainment-downtown area, and now the malls are recreating that downtown element. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, just bring in a contemporary curve. Ms. Costello asked why the Gap left town. Mr. Meisel explained their profits went down every month and are now closing 200 stores. The foot traffic became less and less. Mr. Snieckus asked if any spaces are looking for service commercial, and Mr. Meisel stated yes. Beauty services are thriving, with repeat customers coming every week. We have a great mix of uses, and we need to help them. Mayor Birkner stated we need to help them expand and should get their input via the shop owners and the Chamber, as to what would be complimentary to them.

Chairman Hodges request permission from Board for him and Mr. Oliver to attend the Chamber meeting to see what would facilitate their establishments as well. Councilwoman Collins commented valet parking was discussed. Ridgewood has it. Parking during the day is well-utilized, but valet might be beneficial. Mayor said a private vendor could come in like Ridgewood. Erin also commented she has a 13 year old and they walk to Starbucks and Veterans Park, and there is not much else for the adolescents to do. Studying cafes would be beneficial for socializing. Parents would gladly spend the money to have their children occupied. Chairman Hodges agreed they needed somewhere to hang out and keep out of trouble and be occupied. Mr. Martin said there was discussion in the 2011 discussion of the Master Plan about valet parking in the LB1 zone, with cars being parked there and returned. He believes the use of Lyft and Uber will increase over time. People are giving up their second cars. Valet could help the owners of the LB1 zone. Mr. Snieckus commented it was parking as a principal use. Mr. Martin said there are art uses and voice instruction, and there

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

could be music instruction. Retail service and small group is something they cannot get on the internet and could be very successful and a plus. Mayor Birkner added visual and performing art spaces should be considered. Tattoo studios have become upscale, art studios and should also be considered. Ms. Costello stated there used to be a bowling alley in Emerson. Mr. Hodges stated there used to be one where Melting Pot and Granita Grill are. Mayor Birkner could see that in Westwood Plaza.

Beth Dell came forward. Essentially you are competing with the internet and malls. Service uses are where you need to go. She sees the Board is really on top of it and thanked them.

Jill Strasberg, Woodcliff Lake, suggested an upscale spa and blow-dry bar, as service businesses.

Ms. Letizia, a Westwood stay-at-home mom, sees the same type people during the day. There are different type of people that need to be serviced. She mentioned a working space. Mayor Birkner commented there is so much diversity in the types of businesses. Extended hours and allowing businesses to be open until 9pm would be beneficial. Mr. Martin stated they are not restricted; they just don't stay open. They need to look carefully at apartments upstairs from businesses staying open late. Also the Zoning Board's annual list of approvals will be sent to the Planning Board so they can see what the Zoning Board is doing and how it overlaps, such as Trader Joe's expanding.

Councilmember Erin Collins suggested a store directory for the stores and parking like they have in the malls. Mr. Martin stated it is done in an app with advertising. Mr. Snieckus said some businesses would have a smart board and advertise. This could be brought up to the Chamber.

Mayor Birkner look at the approved uses in the CBD/SPE and have a printout at the next meeting to see what we want to improve upon, along with easing restrictions, such as relaxing parking requirements and rooftop bars. Mr. Snieckus suggested he could take the uses and separate them into categories, to see where we are with the current standards and where we should be. We could have specific meetings for specific zones. He could do this for the next meeting. Ms. Costello suggested allowing restaurants with liquor licenses to have outdoor seating.

(WWPB 2/28/19 Minutes)

John J. Lamb, Esq. was present and came forward on behalf of the Hackensack University Medical Center. The good news is the hospital is doing fairly well. He discussed with the hospital representatives, that it is time to put in more details in the CBD/SPE zone, and they should make sure that the Hospital Zone also thrives. The hospital is also planning for the future. It doesn't have an immediate need, but rather long range. They believe it will eventually need a parking garage. They are looking at possibly adding five to six stories. The hospital is updating its concept/internal master plan and will make recommendations to the Mayor and Council in the future. When there is a discussion of the Hospital Zone, they would like to be a part. The Borough Planner would be in touch with him at that time. Chairman Martin asked, and Mr. Snieckus responded we currently still have a budget remaining in the reexamination of the Master Plan.

Lauren Letizia, Chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission gave a report for the year 2018. The Commission is responsible for maintaining a list of historic architectural resources within the Borough. Ms. Letizia spoke about the designation of the Train Station as an historic site, and there are about 150 other sites they have on their list. They are tying in businesses with the 123rd anniversary of the Borough of Westwood. Mayor Birkner commented the presentation of the report was very well done. It is an ambitious project. Councilmember Collins commented to Ms. Letizia, it is a pleasure working with you and your group on the commission.

There were no further discussions.

11. ADJOURNMENT - On motions, made seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at approx. 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**MARY R. VERDUCCI, Paralegal
Planning Board Secretary**