

**BERGENFIELD PLANNING BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
September 23, 2024**

Chairman Robert Rivas called the meeting to order at 8:00 P.M.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT**

In compliances with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates are confirmed at the Annual Meeting. Notice of this meeting was provided to the Record, Star Ledger, and Cablevision, posted on two municipal public notice bulletin boards and published on the borough website.

Any board member having a conflict of interest involving any matter to come before the board this evening is reminded they must recuse himself from participating in any discussion on this matter.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Mayor Arvin Amatorio, Phil Neville, Councilman Lodato, Robert Rivas, Romeo Abenoja, Ernesto Acosta, Jason Bergman, and Praveen Joseph

**Absent:** Joel Nunez and Miquel Vasquez

**Also Present:** Gloria Oh, Planning Board Attorney, Robert Yuro, Planning Board Engineer, and Hilda Tavitian, Planning Board Clerk

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led By Board Member Abenoja.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – August 19, 2024**

**Motion By:** Mr. Bergman

**Second By:** Mr. Abenoja

**All ayes. None opposed.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Two letters received from Bergen County Soil Conservation District regarding 87 Highgate Terrance and 70 Garden Street. Applications for soil erosion and sediment control were approved. No action needed, just advisory.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

**Comments by members of audience on matters not on evening's agenda**

No one.

**Motion to Close Verbal Communication**

**Motion By:** Mr. Bergman

**Second By:** Mr. Abenoja

**All ayes. None Opposed**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Site Plan – No report.

2. Parking/Legal – Mayor Amatorio stated there are companies interested in developing parking lots in town, but plans have not been submitted yet.

3. Capital Improvements – Mayor Amatorio stated the old borough hall building has been fenced and will be torn down soon. It will be torn down slowly.
4. Master Plan – Chairman Rivas stated it's on tonight's agenda to be discussed.
5. Liaison to Board of Adjustment – Board member Bergman stated at the last meeting there was one resolution adopted and the variance application for 16 Glenwood Drive North was carried to next month's meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Application:            Thomas John  
                                 49 Beechwood Street  
                                 Minor Subdivision  
                                 Carried from August Meeting

Bruce Rosenberg, Winne Banta Basralian & Kahn, 21 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ, attorney for applicant, stated the minor subdivision application was introduced at last month's meeting. He will formally present the application along with the engineer. The applicant is proposing to subdivide the lot into two fully conforming lots and construct two fully conforming single-family residences.

Steven Koestner, Koestner Associates Engineering, 61 Hudson Street, Hackensack, NJ, professional engineer, stated he prepared the subdivision plan dated 9/12/23, Exhibit A. There presently is a two-family dwelling with a detached garage. If application is approved, the structure will be removed and two new homes will be built. The property is 100 ft. in front and 100 ft. in depth. The proposal is to divide the property in half, into two 50x100 lots. Mr. Koestner stated this is conforming in the R-5 zone. The improved lot coverage does conform to the ordinance. Permeable pavers will be used for the proposed driveway on each of the properties. They will comply with all of the comments made by the board engineer.

Board engineer Yuro stated this is just a minor site plan before the Board and there has been no drainage or grading. There is a note that a formal plot plan or site plan must be submitted to the building department for review prior to anything moving forward should the subdivision be approved tonight.

Mr. Rosenberg stated they agree and understand that. Mr. Rosenberg stated nothing will be done until the subdivision is approved.

Chairman Rivas inquired if it hasn't gone to the officer yet.

### **Questions from Residents Within 200' & Beyond:**

No one came forward.

### **Public Comments:**

Asha Edwards, 67 Beechwood Street, stated she lives directly next to 49 Beechwood Street. She has young children and the owner currently rents the two-family home. At present, there are a lot of people coming in and out of the home and the amount of cars present is unsafe for her children. She can't imagine how unsafe it will be when it becomes a four-family property. Her kids ride their bikes up and down the street and walk to school. There are parties all night long with people smoking. The dynamics of the street will also change.

Mr. Yuro stated there is an existing two-family house on the property and the proposal is to subdivide the property and then construct two single-family homes. The drawing is labelling the existing structure on the plan.

Mr. Koestner stated the proposal is for two single-family dwellings consistent with the rest of the street.

**Motion to Approve Minor Subdivision**

**Motion By:** Board member Bergman

**Second By:** Board member Abenoja

**All present voting in favor. None opposed.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Review of Master Plan Reexamination Report

Stan Slachetka, special projects leader from Pennoni Associates, stated in addition to the master plan reexamination report there are recommendations included that amend the land use plan of the master plan. The master plan reexamination report is required pursuant to the municipal land use law. The Planning Board is required to take a comprehensive review of the municipality's master plan at least once every 10 years. A lot of the goals, objectives, issues, and concerns regarding the master plan and land use planning in the community both in 2005 and 2017 (when master plan reexamination report was last revised) is listed in this master plan reexamination report. Mr. Slachetka stated a lot of those goals and objectives are reaffirmed or continued or shown to be reduced. There is an itemization of the major problems and objectives related to land development in the borough the last time the master plan reexamination report was done. There is a section in this report that provides that information. The second section is the extent that the problems and objectives have changed and any recommended modifications in the various goals and objectives that were listed in the last reexamination report. The next section includes the extent of the changes with the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis of the master plan or the development regulations. He stated sections 2-4 address the requirements of the municipal land use law. There is also discussion of local trends, population and housing trends in the municipality, and an overview of regulatory changes in state, county, and municipal policies and objectives. The next section is recommendations concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans into the land use development regulations of the community and land use element of the master plan. A detailed review of the existing development plans, redevelopment of area redesignations was done. There were two previously redevelopment plans adopted by the borough, Area D redevelopment plan and West Church Street redevelopment plan. Mr. Slachetka stated they made a recommendation for these redevelopment plans formally be made a part of the land use element and be incorporated into the zoned and zoning map of the community. The last section addresses recommendations concerning appropriate locations for public electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Mr. Slachetka stated the borough has a EV ordinance that would implement what the law requires for electric vehicles.

Mr. Slachetka stated the proposed land use plan element amendment specifically relates to zone R40, the Knickerbocker Country Club. Map 5 on page 41 of the report shows the R40 and adjoining zones in the borough as well as Teaneck Township, City of Englewood, and the Borough of Tenafly. There's an analysis on pages 38-40 that gives a detailed description of the various zoning districts in proximity to the R40 district. Mr. Slachetka explained that they looked at the minimum lot sizes in each of the zone districts within the borough. The residential zones that adjoin the R40 include the R-5, R-6, R15, R-M (Garden Apartments zone), and R-S (Senior Citizens) districts. The table on the bottom of page 39 shows the minimum lot sizes in each district. The recommendation is looking at the existing characteristics of the residential areas around the golf course, the existing zone districts, and the minimum lot sizes. There is some variation in the R-5 and R-6 zones. The recommendation would be to amend the land use plan map to indicate the area zoned R40 be changed to a R20 district, where there is a minimum lot size of 20,000 sq. ft. He stated currently in the R40 district, there is no impervious lot coverage standard. There should be an impervious lot coverage standard established if the Board agrees with the recommendation.

There are no other alterations to the borough's zone plan that is being recommended. There is no significant or fundamental alteration of the community's zone plan nor its land use planning approach.

Chairman Rivas stated the recommendations have to be legislated by the governing body. He inquired if the amendment has to be subject to a public hearing.

Mr. Slachetka stated that is correct. The municipality's zoning ordinance pursuant to the municipal land use law has to be substantially consistent with the land use plan element and housing plan element of the master plan. Any ordinances have to be crafted by the governing body. The Planning Board needs to review the proposed ordinance for consistency with the master plan. Mr. Slachetka stated it would be. As part of the ordinance process, there would be a first reading, referral to the Planning Board, and then there would be a second hearing by the governing body.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if the Knickerbocker Country Club was rezoned, what would be the smallest lot allowed.

Mr. Slachetka stated they looked at it from a land use planning prospective and the largest size permitted is R15. He stated he would not recommend going below 15,000 sq. ft. A portion of the Knickerbocker Country Club is already zoned R20, or 20,000 sq. ft. lots in Tenafly. It made sense to have that level of consistency of development and create a good transition between the R15 to the R20.

Mayor Amatorio stated the biggest area of the Knickerbocker Country Club is in Bergenfield. He inquired if it would be consistent with the master plan if the entire golf course was zoned in R-5 or R-6. Mayor Amatorio inquired if the borough is precluded from creating R10 districts.

Mr. Slachetka stated the current master plan has it as R40. It would be a much more dramatic change to reduce it to R-5 or R-6. The Planning Board can make that determination. They felt moving it to R20, being close to R15 was the appropriate way to go. The majority of the properties are in the R15 district. M. Slachetka stated if the borough feels it's in the best interest and best policy from land use prospective, he can only make the recommendation as a planning professional.

#### **Public Comments**

No one came forward.

#### **Motion to Adopt Master Plan Reexamination Report & Accept Amendments to the Land Use Plan**

**Motion By:** Board member Bergman

**Second By:** Board member Neville

**All present voting in favor. None opposed.**

#### **MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING**

**Motion By:** Board member Bergman

**Second By:** Board member Abenoja

**All present voting in favor. None opposed.**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Hilda Tavitian, Clerk  
Planning Board