

Borough of Wood-Ridge Land Use Board

Minutes of June 14, 2022

Wood-Ridge Municipal Building Council Chamber

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Finke. Chairman Finke read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Attendance was as follows:

Class IV Members:	Chairman Frank Finke – present
	Vice Chair Kevin Trotter – present
	Dominick Azzolini – excused
	Jeffrey Magnusson – excused
	Robert Ruhle – present
	Michael Donato - present
Class I Member (Mayor’s Alternate):	Borough Administrator Christopher Eilert–present
Class II Member:	Zoning Officer Richard Pronti – excused
Class III Member:	Councilman Joseph DiMarco – excused
Class IV Alternate Members:	Anthony Iacovino (Alt. #1) – present
	Christopher J. Inserra (Alt #2)-present
	Vacant (Alternate #3)
Secretary:	Cathleen Calabro – present
Attorney:	Gerald Salerno, Esq. – present
Engineer/Planner	Brian Intindola, PE – present
Planner	Paul Grygiel, PP - present

The minutes of the **April 5, 2022** meeting were approved on a motion by Inserra second by Donato and a roll call of all members present voting yes.

Under new business the following applications were presented:

2022-45A Linda & James Nesbitt
146 Seventh Street 236/25
Deck Height

Linda & James Nesbitt the owners of the property were sworn in. The exhibits were marked in. She is proposing to construct a 12’x20’ rear wooden deck off their main level on the 2nd floor. The height of the new deck would be 7 ft from the ground, exceeding the 4ft. requirement. The applicant will remove a window and install a 5 ft. sliding glass door onto the deck. The garage is not currently used for a car, it is used for storage. This would be considered a hardship variance under C1 due to the topography.

Brian Intindola, the board’s engineer has no issues with the applicant.

Chairman Finke declared the hearing of citizens to be open. With no one wishing to be heard, Chairman declared the Hearing of Citizens closed.

Application 2022-45A was approved on a motion by Trotter second by Ruhle, and a roll call of all members present voting yes.

2022-46A Creative me Workshop – Michelle Vanacore
219 Valley Blvd 296/12
Site Plan Waiver

Michelle Vanacore the owner operator of the business was sworn in.

Lauren Krause was sworn in.

The exhibits were marked in. The applicant is proposing to use the store front as a creative workshop where she would teach children and adults crafting workshops, painting, sewing, jewelry making, etc. She would like to schedule special events for children and adults associated with holidays, birthday parties, girls night out, anything anyone would like. She is also proposing toddler time, teen time, camps and workshops. The store will not be a daycare. There is not another location. The applicant was selling craft kits out of her home through Facebook and Etsy during the pandemic. The hours of operation would primarily be based on school schedules. She would have workshops after school or earlier if there was a half a day, but not to be there for longer than 3 hours. The concept would be scheduled workshops and also able to make appointments. There would be no more than 10-15 kids at a time. She will have to adhere to the maximum occupancy allowed. This business does not require a license. The applicant was a former director of a preschool in Secaucus and Lauren is a kindergarten teacher there. The store is 720 square feet. The weekends would be dedicated to scheduled parties. There are no set hours of operation.

Brian Intindola, the board's engineer has no issues with the applicant or the parking.

Chairman Finke declared the hearing of citizens to be open. With no one wishing to be heard, Chairman declared the Hearing of Citizens closed.

Application 2022-46A was approved on a motion by Eilert second by Trotter, and a roll call of all members present voting yes except Inserra who abstained.

Member Eilert stepped down from this application because of his Class IV status.

2022-43A Transformation Life Church
190 Valley Blvd 293/16
Expansion of Non-Conforming Use.

Andrew Kohut the applicant's attorney stated the applicant will move forward with the 6 board members. He stated this is a continuation of hearing, since the last meeting the applicant submitted a traffic and parking study dated June 2, 2022.

Pastor James Armpriester the church's lead pastor was sworn in. He has been the pastor at Transformation Life Church for 10 years. He explained to the board that the church is an inherently beneficial use and the role that the daycare plays in that mission. Pastor Armpriester stated their mission is to provide a safe and effective start of lifelong learning, social skill development and preparing the next generation to do good in the world around them. Pastor

Armprister explained the church's mission. He stated there is a growing demand for childcare providers, the pandemic forced some daycares to close and the Wood-Ridge school district phased out their pre-school program. Pastor Armprister purposely sought out Wood-Ridge to open a church and daycare in town. With the development of Wesmont and the residents of Wood-Ridge the need for childcare is growing and that is giving TLC the perfect environment for them to thrive. They need to utilize both floors for their growing daycare, the downstairs is already approved. Pastor Armprister went on to give testimony regarding the need for daycare and the outreach of the church.

A discussion ensued regarding the dynamic of the program, the safety of the children, the parking the pickup and the drop off.

The boards Attorney Mr. Salerno clarified that the application was submitted by the church. The daycare is part of the church's budget.

Chairman Finke declared the hearing of citizens to be open. With no one wishing to be heard, Chairman declared the Hearing of Citizens closed.

The applicant's attorney marked in additional exhibits.

Connor Hughes the applicants engineer with Dynamic Traffic was sworn in.

The traffic and study report were reviewed. It surveyed the available parking on the three streets surrounding the church, Valley Boulevard, Wood-Ridge Ave and Columbia Blvd. He conducted parking counts on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 during 3 different time frames throughout the week day. They were from 6:30-9:30 am; 11:00 am-12:00 pm; and 2:30-6:30 pm. these hours coincide with the peak hours of the daycare operation. The survey considered 137 parking spaces total along the 3 streets, during the time frame it was found that 79 of those spaces were available which occurred after 6:15 pm when the daycare is ending for the night. During the morning there were between 98-134 spaces available and midday were 86-92 spaces available. Those counts include the existing daycare parking. Currently there are six staff members in the morning and 2 more in the afternoon. Twenty percent of the daycare children are walk-ins from the surrounding neighborhood, so only 80% of the 120 students would be driving to the site looking for a parking spot, that equates to 96 children driven out of the 120 totals. The expansion is from 44 to 120 students, that being an additional 76 students and 8 staff members. Page 5 and 7 of the report was reviewed. The study showed 34 opens spaces available with the increase of 76 students. It takes 5 minutes to drop a student off.

Mr. Connor stated that there would be more than sufficient parking to accommodate the expanded use.

Member Ruhle confirmed that the traffic study was conducted on only one day, and all the projections were for that day only.

The board members raised concerns regarding the safety and traffic in the area. The possibility of crossing guards was discussed.

The Board Engineer, Brian Intindola reconfirmed the applicant's exhibits regarding the parking spaces. The length of the spaces along Columbia Blvd and Wood-Ridge Ave were 20ft long, allowing for a 50ft off set from the stop sign. He confirmed there is no crossing guard by TLC.

The church has control of when the garbage needs to be moved. Mr. Intindola discussed snow removal.

Paul Grygiel the boards planner asked if events were factored in on the parking and traffic safety.

It will take years before the church gets to 120 students.

Chairman Finke asked the applicant if they would consider decreasing the enrollment by half to see how the traffic and parking situation works out. Pastor Armpriester explained that the state says they need approval from the town to expand to 120 students for the space upstairs otherwise they will not allow them.

The church is currently approved for 76 students by the town and the state, they are seeking approval from the board to utilize the upstairs, if not the state will not certify them for use.

After the applicant took a 5-minute recess it was granted to carry the application to the July meeting. The applicant's attorney stated they will talk to the state and explain the boards concerns. No further notice will be required. The matter will be carried to the July 12, 2022 meeting.

Also Under New Business the following Resolutions were approved:

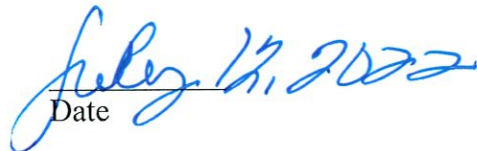
Resolution 2022-44AR was approved on a motion by Donato by second by Iacovino and a roll call of all members present voting yes except Eilert who abstained.

Resolution 2022-6BR was approved on a motion by Trotter by second by Donato and a roll call of all members present voting yes.

With no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Submitted by:


Cathleen Calabro, Land Use Board Secretary


Date