

Borough of Wood-Ridge Planning Board

Minutes of August 1, 2023

Wood-Ridge Municipal Building Council Chamber

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 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
	Jeffrey Magnusson – present
	Robert Ruhle – present
	Anthony Iacovino - excused
	Christopher J. Inserra – excused
Class I Member (Mayor's Alternate):	Borough Administrator Christopher Eilert – present
Class II Member:	Zoning Officer Richard Pronti – present
Class III Member:	Councilman Michael Donato – present
Class IV Alternate Members:	Omid S. Irani, Esq. (Alt. #1) – present
	Anthony Sarlo (Alt #2)-present
	Donald Conger (Alternate #3) present
	Christian Leone (Alternate #4) present
Secretary:	Cathleen Calabro – present
Attorney:	Gerald Salerno, Esq. – present
Engineer/Planner	Brian Intindola, PE – present

The minutes of the **June 12, 2023** meeting were approved on a motion by Pronti second by Donato and a roll call of all members present voting yes except Magnusson who abstained.

Resolution 2023-52AR was approved on a motion endorsing the Doyle School project that is consistent with the redevelopment & master plans by Donato second by Trotter and a roll call of all members present voting yes except Magnusson and Eilert who abstained.

Under New Business the following applications were presented:

2023-54A Chipdee Academy of Music
255 Valley Blvd. 312/14
Change in Tenancy/Use Variance

John (Chip) Degaard is the owner of the music studio currently located in Hasbrouck Heights. He was sworn in and the exhibits were marked in.

He is proposing to teach, perform and record music at the new location. He has 4-5 part time employees giving music lessons to 2-3 students at one time. Mr. Degaard is very involved with the special needs music schools. He also noted that the staff are all certified music instructors. There would be a concert 1-2 times per year on a Sunday right before Father's Day. There would be about 40 people in attendance. He stressed how important music is to the creativity of the students. He would install soundproof walls for the noise between the businesses.

The basement would only be used for storage. The hours of operation would be 11:00 am until 8:00 or 9:00 pm. during the week and Saturday's would be 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, closed on Sunday's.

The board's planner stated that this application could be viewed as a request for a D1 variance, since it is not expressly listed as a permitted use in the RB district.

Chairman Finke declared the hearing of citizens to be open.

Ron Kistner, a councilman from Hasbrouck Heights noted that the town will be losing a good business and Wood-Ridge will be gaining an asset.

Fanchette Degaard, Chip's wife stated most of his students stay with him throughout college.

Gabe Valle, the music director from Assumption Church stated he is very excited to see that Wood-Ridge would be gaining a music studio.

Member Eilert stated that the studio would have to comply with occupancy allowed for the concerts.

Gerald Salerno, the Board's attorney stated in his opinion, the Board could consider the proposed use as a personal service being provided for the students, which is a permitted use in the zone. He also stated that if the board agreed, it could treat this as a new tenant application and waiver of site plan.

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

Application 2023-54A Motion by Ruhle seconded by Magnusson to treat the new proposed use as a permitted use and to grant waiver of site plan. and a roll call of all members present voting yes.
call of all members present voting yes.

Carried from the June 12th meeting application 2023-53A Metropole.

2023-53A Metropole, Inc.
188 Hackensack Street 276/19
Change in Tenancy

David Finlay the owner of the business was sworn in. Additional exhibits were marked in. The site plan A-9 was reviewed. The applicant addressed the parking issue that was discussed at the previous meeting. Clients will pick up material once or twice a week so there will be very little traffic coming in and out of the building except for the employees. The hours of operation are 7:30 am – 4:00 pm. The applicant will repave the area and put up a fence around the perimeter for privacy. Thirty tons of stone is delivered once a year. The delivery truck would have to back into the lot from the county road. A discussion ensued regarding the Board's concerns with the outdoor storage of the stone and other materials, the parking, and the delivery of the stone and the traffic concerns on Moonachie Ave. He stated that his business is highly specialized,

concentrating on the ornamental end of the sculpting. He was unaware that the Borough zoning ordinance specifically prohibits manufacturing concrete in Wood-Ridge.

Brian Intindola, the board's engineer/planner testified that this application is for a concrete manufacturing business, which is not permitted in any zone in Wood-Ridge. He stated this application requires a D1 Variance because the applicant is making concrete products. This is a dusty operation and a very challenging application.

Gerald Salerno, the board's attorney explained to the Board and the Applicant the proofs necessary under the Municipal Land Use Law to justify the grant of a D (1) variance. The applicant is asking for the following variances:

- a. a use variance since concrete manufacturing is not permitted in this zone.
- b. a use variance for outdoor storage of materials, which is another prohibited use.

Mr. Salerno explained that the applicant must demonstrate specific criteria under the law, the board has to be satisfied that the applicant has shown special reason, that this property is suited for the type of proposed use they are asking the board to grant. They would also have to show that the use variance can be granted without causing substantial detriment to the public good. Lastly the applicant would have to show that the proposed use would not substantially impair the intended purpose of the zoning ordinance or the master plan.

The applicant needs to decide whether or not to buy the building. Mr. Finlay apologizes for coming before the board not being fully aware of the zoning laws.

The applicant is going to carry his application to next month without any further notice. He will notify the office whether he is going to carry or withdraw the application.

Chairman Finke declared the hearing of citizens to be open.

Maura Allegretta residing at 499 Wood-Ridge Ave was concerned with the expansion of a business once they are approved. He was told the applicant would have to follow what is stated in the resolution, and if the applicant deviates from the approved use then they would have to come back before the board for approval.

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

Application 2023-53A is carried to the October 3 meeting without any further notice.

With no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Submitted by:


Cathleen Calabro, Planning Board Secretary


Date