

Borough of Wood-Ridge Planning Board

Minutes of May 5, 2026

Wood-Ridge Municipal Building Council Chamber

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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 – excused
	Robert Ruhle – present
	Anthony Iacovino - present
	Christopher J. Inserra – present
	Omid S. Irani, Esq. – present
Class I Member (Mayor’s Alternate):	Borough Administrator Christopher Eilert–excused
Class II Member:	Zoning Officer Richard Pronti – present
Class III Member:	Councilman Michael Donato – present
Class IV Alternate Members:	Anthony Sarlo (Alt #1)-present
	Donald Conger (Alternate #2) present
	Christian Leone (Alternate #3) excused
	Christopher Musante (Alternate #4) present
Secretary:	Cathleen Calabro – present
Attorney:	Gerald Salerno, Esq. – present
Engineer/Planner	August Matarazzo, PE – present

The minutes of the **February 3, 2026** meeting were approved on a motion by Irani second by Pronti and a roll call of all members present and eligible to vote, voting yes except Finke and Conger who abstained.

Under New Business the following applications were approved:

**2026-74A** Michael Philips  
185 14<sup>th</sup> Street Blk 284/14  
Proposed addition/existing non-conforming setback

**Dennis Francis, Esq.** the applicant’s attorney stated the applicant is proposing to demolish the existing attic floor to construct a 1257 square foot addition to his single-family home. This addition would replace the second floor and rear roof. The applicant is also seeking to install a new front bay window and staircase. The applicant has four bulk variances that are all pre-existing non-conforming, which are lot width, front yard set back, side yard set backs.

Efram Ghobrial, the applicant’s architect was sworn in.

**Merna Kaldes** is an architect in training who will present the application. Ms. Kaldes was sworn in. The exhibits were marked in.

Exhibit A-6 was reviewed. The property is situated on a 5074 square foot corner lot. Ms. Kaldes addressed all the variances. She stated the applicant is proposing to renovate and expand the existing attic floor. The addition would match the existing foot print of the first floor. The building coverage remains at 24%, because nothing was added or proposed on the ground level. A new bay window is proposed on the 14 Street side. The existing stair case would be demolished and a new set of stairs would be installed.

The positive criteria outweighs the negative criteria. The renovations are a reasonable and practicable enhancement to an already non-conforming property.

Ms. Kaldes also stated that they will work with the Engineer to address the stormwater management to ensure all runoff is directed away from the proposed building.

Fourteenth Street would be determined the front yard. The FAR is conforming, the first floor and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor are 1286 sq. feet. for a total of 2572 sq.ft. which comes out to 0.506 which is less than .055 per the borough ordinance.

Efram Ghorbrial adopted Ms. Kaldes testimony.

The applicant would adhere to Neglia's requests.

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

**Application 2026-74A** was approved on a motion to conform to the conditions in Neglia's report by Donato second by Inserra and a rollcall of all members present voting yes.

**2026-72A** Donna Grillo Rodriguez  
471 Union Ave. Blk241/6.01  
Expansion of existing non-conforming addition

**Thomas Mesuk**, the applicant's architect was sworn in.

The exhibits were marked in.

He stated the applicant is proposing to add 315 sq. ft addition to the existing left side of the dwelling. The house sits on a corner lot which creates some challenges. The existing non-conforming front yard setback on Union Ave is 13.3 sq ft, the proposed is 13.3 and the required is 25 sq ft.

The rear yard setback required is 30ft, 2.9 is proposed and the building coverage is 30% the existing is 31.2 and the proposed is 37.9 %.

The applicant is looking to have her mother move in with her and create a small living area for her.

Exhibit A-9 was added and is the revised cover sheet known as T-1 which includes comments from Neglia's report.

Exhibit A-7 was reviewed. They are proposing to add 315 sq. ft consisting of a bathroom, family room and a small kitchenette with a sink and refrigerator, no stove. The remainder of the house would stay the same, with the exception of adding a barn door to separate the addition.

A discussion ensued regarding the potential of the addition becoming a rental in the future. Converting the garage into a living space is not permitted in Wood-Ridge.

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

**Application 2026-72A** was approved on a motion subject to conditions to remove the barn door, no stove and sign an affidavit to that effect by Inserra second by Iacovino and a rollcall of all members present voting yes.

The Board's next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2026.

With no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Submitted by:



Cathleen Calabro, Planning Board Secretary

Date: *June 9, 2024*