

Florence, New Jersey 08518-2323
March 3, 2025

The Regular meeting of the Florence Township Board of Adjustment was held on the above date at the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, NJ. Chairman Puccio called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Secretary Sullivan read the following statement: "I would like to announce that this meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided to the official newspapers and posted in the main hall of the Municipal Complex."

Upon roll call the following members were found to be present:

Anant Patel	James Fevola
Dennis Puccio	Lou Sovak
Gina Sullivan	Charles Wible

Absent: Brett Buddenbaum, Daniel Studzinski, Ramesh Jayaram

Also Present: Solicitor David Frank
Engineer Hugh Dougherty
Planner Ed Fox

MINUTES

It was the Motion of Mr. Fevola, seconded by Mr. Wible to adopt the minutes from the regular Meeting of February 3, 2025. Motion unanimously approved by all members present. Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Patel abstained

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Letter from Zoning Officer Ted Lovenduski to Planning Board re: Zoning Ordinance changes

Mr. Lovenduski went back over the last couple years of Zoning Board applications and compiled some information about the common application types the Board receives. One common application is for impervious coverage. Currently, 20% impervious is allowed for the house and driveway and 5% for accessories in the R and RA Zones. In the RB and RC zone, the allowable coverage is 33% and 40% respectively. The active adult communities are allowed 50%. The RC zone is comprised of parts of Roebling and parts of the west side of Florence.

Mr. Lovenduski is requesting an increase in allowable impervious coverage in the R and RA zones to 35%. There is varying lot sizes in these zones from 1250sf and up to an acre. Currently the additional 5% for the accessories is not usually enough for most lots. More often than not, the homeowner will have to apply for a variance to add things to their property. Every application that came to the board for a bulk variance for impervious were approved last year.

If the allowed impervious is increased to 35%, then any application for greater than 35% coverage would be required to have stormwater mitigation. The stormwater mitigation would have to be signed off by the township engineer.

6.

The second issue that Mr. Lovenduski's letter brings up is storage containers being used in the AGR zone. These containers are not allowed in any zone but they are out there in the AGR zones. Mr. Lovenduski wants to allow them in the AGR zone on lots of a certain size, but not in the residential area of the AGR zone. Some of the criteria for a storage container could be if the property is farmland assessed or is being used as a commercial farm.

The third idea is allowing sheds up to 100sf in the RB and RC zones with only a zoning permit; there would be no need for a variance in those zones. These lots are already very small and are almost all over the allowed impervious without a shed but still have to abide by the setbacks.

These are common questions and issues that come up in the office, especially when homes are being sold in Roebling with existing sheds. It is very common for the shed to pre-date the zoning laws. And in that case, the seller has to remove the shed, or apply for a variance to get the CO. Applying for a variance then holds up the sale of the house.

Engineer Dougherty added that one of the responsibilities of the Zoning Board is to go back and look at what was approved over the previous year. This gets forwarded to Council in the Annual Report. Engineer Dougherty said that one of the concerns with increasing the impervious coverage is that anything that was built after 1980 has a basin that can accommodate the 25% allowed coverage. If the 35% is allowed, then those basins will be undersized and the DEP regulations now recommend that the basins be 1.5x larger than they are now. Engineer Dougherty said that the Board should look into mandatory stormwater mitigation.

Engineer Dougherty also used an example of the Zoning Ordinance from Princeton Township where they require a certain amount of stormwater mitigation per square footage of added impervious coverage. He said this is a clever rule of thumb for homeowners and helps residents think about the impact of their improvements on the neighborhood. Something like this can be recommended to Council.

Planner Fox said that Haddonfield Township has a similar stormwater mitigation in place and it is successful. He would also suggest that the containers be allowed on commercial farms.

B. Letter From Parker McCay re: ZB# 2024-02 61 Cathy Lane update

This application for a Use Variance came through the Board last year. There have been ongoing conversations about redevelopment plans and it has been taking quite a while. The letter is asking for another month on the agenda before we dismiss it in hopes that the redevelopment plan comes together soon and is adopted by Council soon

A Motion was made by Mr. Fevola and seconded by Mr. Patel to adjourn the application, with notice to the April 7, 2025 meeting. Motion unanimously adopted by all members present.

APPLICATIONS

A. ZB#2025-01: Request for extension of approvals for Florence Plaza (ZB#2022-04)
2043 Route 130 Block 159 Lot 5.06

Mr. James Burns is the attorney for the applicant. The applicant is here to request a two-year extension of the site plan approval. There is already use approval and the subdivision was approved through 2023. Since then, there has been a surge in construction and material costs. Interest rates have also climbed to unprecedented levels which has affected all developers. The applicant has the intention to finish this project so they are asking for an extension to allow more time to complete it. The applicant is looking to extend the approvals to Sept 1, 2026.

Engineer Dougherty said that when the original application was approved, the stormwater infrastructure had been built as part of the approval in 2006. In 2021, DEP changed some standards and when the applicant came back in 2022 which included green infrastructure. A waiver of conformance was given from the new regulations but the applicant was asked to provide some green infrastructure and they did comply. In 2023, DEP changed the rules again and if the application was submitted prior to 2021, the 2023 regulations don't apply. Engineer Dougherty said that the applicant is exempt from the 2023 stormwater rules. Engineer Dougherty said that the Board doesn't need to implement any additional stormwater requirements.

Solicitor Frank said that a variance expires one year after approval typically. He added that in a case like this, the variance would be attached to the subdivision or site plan and that follows the duration of those approvals.

Chairman Puccio asked if the two-year extension can be approved as a one-year extension and require the applicant to update the Board on the status in September 2025, and decide on the second-year extension at that time. Solicitor Frank said that would require Mr. Burns to attend a meeting or write a letter with an update to the Board in September.

Ms. Malia Reichmann is one of the applicants. Solicitor Frank swore her in and she confirmed that everything that Mr. Burns has outlined already has been accurate. Ms. Reichmann said that providing the Board with an update at that time would be acceptable.

It was the motion of Mr. Fevola seconded by Ms. Sullivan to approve Application ZB# 2025-01 for a one-year extension and the applicant will notify the Board with an update in September 2025.

Upon roll call, the Board voted as follows:

YEAS: Fevola, Sullivan, Sovak, Wible, Puccio
NOES: Patel

B. ZB#2024-14: Application from The Reginald Lewis Group for Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision on property located at 316 West Third St Block 38 Lot 3, *continued from December 2, 2024, adjourned pending new plans, continued from February 3*

Solicitor Frank said that he recently spoke to this applicant's attorney regarding this application at a recent event. The attorney's applicant said that he had just received these amended plans.

8.

The applicant does intend to come back to the Board according to their attorney. Solicitor Frank requested that the attorney issue a letter to the board but it had not been received as of this meeting.

A Motion was made by Mr. Fevola and seconded by Ms. Sullivan to carry the application to April 7, 2025 with new public notice. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Zoning Board Rules & Regulations

The Board is going to take some time to update the Rules and Regulations since they have not been updated in some time. There are some additions to the rules such as a definitive end time to the meetings. Some of the changes that need to be updated also are the internal office procedures. Solicitor Frank said that the Board can refer to the Planning Board's rules for some ideas. Chairman Puccio has a copy of the Planning Board rules which he will review and will send an email with his suggestions to the Board for their input.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one from the public attending in person and the Zoom moderator confirmed that no one was being muted by us.

Hearing no one wishing to speak, it was the Motion of Mr. Patel, seconded by Mr. Fevola open & to close public comment. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

ADJOURNMENT

It was the Motion of Mr. Fevola, seconded by Ms. Sullivan to adjourn the meeting at 8:26PM. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

Gina Sullivan, Secretary

GS/ah