

**Borough of Pitman  
Combined Planning/Zoning Board Meeting  
Council Chambers  
Minutes of February 21, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Aspras called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Chairman Aspras, Mrs. Stech, Councilman Fitzpatrick, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Slenkamp, Mr. Owen, Mr. Romick, Mr. Franchi, Mr. Scutt, Mr. Austin

**ADVISORS PRESENT:**

Solicitor: Mr. MacDonald, Historic Commission: Mr. Walt Madison, Zoning Officer: Roy Duffield

**ABSENT MEMBERS:**

Mayor Razze, Mrs. Kelley, Mr. Fijalkowsk

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY, 2023 MINUTES**

Mr. Ryder motioned, second by Mrs. Stech to approve the January, 2023 minutes.

Chairman Aspras: <b>YES</b>	Mrs. Stech: <b>YES</b>
Councilman Fitzpatrick: <b>YES</b>	Mr. Ryder: <b>YES</b>
Mr. Slenkamp: <b>YES</b>	Mr. Owen: <b>YES</b>
Mr. Romick: <b>YES</b>	Mr. Franchi: <b>YES</b>
Mr. Scutt: <b>ABSTAIN</b>	Mr. Austin: <b>YES</b>

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:**

Mr. MacDonald swore in Mr. Madison, Chairman of the Borough of Pitman Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Madison presented the following applications for approval:

**Application 2023-07**

**The Crazy Kat  
11 S Broadway  
Block 73/Lot 3**

**Sign on window**

**Application No. 2023-08**

**Luigi Gattinelli/Salvatore Gattinelli  
68 S Broadway  
Block 2/Lot 5**

**Add entrance door**

**Application 2023-09**

**Michelle LaPlante  
198 S West Ave  
Block 21/Lot 31**

**Siding, porch repairs, roof repairs, foundation repairs**

Mr. Madison provided detail and a description for each application.

Mrs. Stech motioned, Mr. Slenkamp second **to approve Historic Preservation Commission Applications 2023-07, Application 2023-08 and Application 2023-09 as presented.**

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Councilman Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Mr. Franchi: **YES**

Mr. Scutt: **YES**

Mr. Madison reported to the Board that the owner of the property at 3 S Broadway has not submitted an application to the Historic Preservation Commission to address the temporary PVC material that was installed. Zoning Officer Duffield should cite the property owner but direction on that action should come from the Planning Board.

Solicitor MacDonald swore in Zoning Officer Duffield. Mr. Duffield advised that the property owner received temporary approval for the PVC material that was installed, with the condition that he come back to the Historic Preservation Commission's February meeting with an application for a permanent repair. Mr. Duffield advised that this is not a zoning violation, and is not sure what the violation actually is. Solicitor MacDonald advised that the violation is that the property is not compliant with Historic Preservation Commission guidelines.

Solicitor MacDonald read the violation in to the record to confirm that the property owner is in violation.

Chairman Aspras advised that the next agenda item is an application for a variance for front setback in the RA zone.

Solicitor MacDonald swore in the property owner, Vincent Gerace, 65 Colonial Avenue, Pitman, NJ.

Mr. Gerace advised that the proposed improvements to the property will enlarge the front step/porch and make the entrance wider and deeper than the previous step. Solicitor MacDonald asked Mr. Gerace if he took the picture that has been presented to the Board for review. Mr. Gerace confirmed he took the picture. Mr. MacDonald marked the picture as Exhibit 1.

Additional discussion on the steps, the zoning denial because of the setback violation and the roof that will be over the steps. Mr. Gerace confirmed that the improvements were denied by the Zoning Officer, and that is why he has made application to the Board. Mr. Gerace's in-laws live with his family, and the current steps are not wide enough to accommodate entering the house with a walker. In total, these renovations will increase the already non-conforming lot coverage by 1%. Mr. Slenkamp noted that he has looked at the property, and these improvements are similar to those of the other houses on the street.

Chairman Aspras opened the meeting to the public.

Solicitor MacDonald swore in Katherine Hoh, 101 Colonial Avenue, Pitman, NJ. Mrs. Hoh testified that the proposed improvements to Mr. Gerace's property are an aesthetically positive improvement to the neighborhood, and the steps will be safer with the addition of the railing. She has no opposition to the Geraces proposed renovations.

Solicitor MacDonald swore in Tracy Gerace, 65 Colonial Avenue, Pitman, NJ. Mrs. Gerace advised that there will be a small portico, not a huge porch over the steps. Chairman Aspras asked if any changes will be made to the door, Mrs. Gerace advised there will not be any changes to the door. Mr. Aspras asked if most of the houses on Colonial Avenue have a porch, and Mrs. Gerace advised that they do. Mrs. Gerace confirmed that the proposed renovations are for aesthetic appeal and to enable her parents the ability to get in the front door. Mr. Ryder asked why her parents presently go around to the back door – Mrs. Gerace advised because they need a railing to get in the house.

There being no further public comment, Solicitor MacDonald recapped the application and testimony. This is an application for a bulk variance (a C variance) that requires a full Board vote. There is a hardship cited in the application, and aesthetics are a component of a C 2 variance. The application presents no substantial detriment to the neighborhood, and there are minimal negative criteria as presented.

Mr. Scutt motioned, second by Mr. Franchi to approve the application for setback variance for 65 Colonial Avenue as presented.

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Councilman Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **NO**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Mr. Franchi: **YES**

Mr. Scutt: **YES**

Mr. Ryder stated his reason for voting against the application – he is not in favor of increasing the already non-compliant lot including the front yard setback and overage of the lot coverage.

All other members stated on the record their reasons for approving the application as presented. The Factors stated included that the proposed renovations are consistent with the other homes in the neighborhood, the aesthetics will add to the neighborhood, the lot coverage increase is negligible, the

increase in lot coverage does not substantially impact the zoning ordinance and the safety of the residents while entering the house.

Solicitor MacDonald advised the applicant that the approval of the variance will be memorialized by Resolution of the Board at the March meeting.

#### **ZONING OFFICER REPORT**

Mr. Duffield stated that everyone should have a copy of his report. Mr. Duffield advised he would entertain any questions at this time, and he is available to Board members at any time in addition to the meeting.

Mr. Ryder stated that the pole barn encroachment issue at 509 S Woodbury Road must be addressed. Mr. Duffield agreed and advised that a survey of the property is needed to verify that the building is not encroaching on Borough property, and Mr. Duffield noted that the building also exceeds the maximum height allowed. Mr. Duffield advised the Board that the property owner has proceeded with the construction of the pole barn with no permits. Mr. Duffield answered all questions with regard to the properties mentioned in his report. Mr. Duffield advised that he has issued a violation notice to the property owner of 178 West Avenue because of the noncompliant fence that has been installed.

#### **SITE PLAN COMMITTEE**

Mr. Fijalkowski was absent from the meeting, but Chairman Aspras noted that a couple of applications will be coming up.

#### **SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE**

No report

#### **MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

No report

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Owen advised that there are no new details on the EV charging stations, the paperwork is in process.

The Committee is looking in to replacement of the digital sign at the corner of Holly & Broadway.

Mr. Owen questioned the denial of the wood shop at 55 E Holly. Mr. Duffield advised that this location is in the C 1 District, and not permitted. It would be permitted across the street in the C 2 district.

Additional discussion on the language in Borough Code with regard to permitted uses. Mr. Owen suggested that the Borough review the language used in the Washington Township code regarding permitted and non-permitted uses.

Extensive discussion on the language in the ordinance, the process and conditional uses.

#### **COUNCIL REPORT**

Council President Fitzpatrick advised that Borough Council is currently working on the 2023 budget.

The National Guard attended the January work session meeting to discuss the Armory property, and it there was good news. There is a party that is interested in the property.

Discussions continue with the attorney for the owner of the Sony property.

The review of the amendments to the accessory building ordinance continues, particularly with regard to the streets in the Grove.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Stech motioned, second by Chairman Aspras to adjourn at 8:00 pm.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Abdill  
Recording Secretary