

**Borough of Pitman  
Combined Planning/Zoning Board Meeting  
Council Chambers  
Minutes of June 19, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

Chairman Aspras, Mrs. Stech, Mayor Razzo, Council President Fitzpatrick, Mr. Ryder, Mrs. Kelley, Mr. Slenkamp, Mr. Owen, Mr. Romick, Mr. Franchi, Mr. Austin

**ADVISORS PRESENT:**

Solicitor: Mr. Clancy, Engineer/Planner: Tim Kernan, Historic Commission: Walt Madison, Zoning Officer: Roy Duffield

**ABSENT MEMBERS:**

Mr. Fijalkowski, Mr. Scutt

**APPROVAL OF MAY, 2023 MINUTES**

Mrs. Kelley motioned, second by Mr. Owen to approve the May 2023 minutes.

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mayor Razzo: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Mr. Austin: **ABSTAIN**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Franchi: **YES**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:**

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

Mr. Madison advised that at the June 13 meeting, the Commission reviewed 4 applications. Three were approved, (some with conditions), one application was denied.

Mr. Madison presented the following Historic Preservation Commission applications for approval:

**Application No. 2023-19**                                  **New construction, residential duplex**  
**RAM SJ PropCo 1, LLC**  
**120 East Ave**  
**Block 11 Lot 7**

Mr. Madison provided background on this application. The Historic Preservation Commission approved the application based on several conditions: Change (increase) the pitch of the porch roof, gables will have shakes and be a contrasting color to the siding, siding color will be a soft blue, gingerbread trim at all the columns, detail over the windows, ½ light door, and if storm door is installed must be full glass, windows option 1 in the list presented, dimensional shingles on the roof, vinyl rail with colonial spindles. Mr. Madison advised that the Applicant agreed to the conditions.

Motion made by Chairman Aspras, conditioned on affirmative action by the Planning/Zoning Board of Adjustment to approve the pending variance application and the conditions stipulated. Second by Mr. Ryder.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

The next Historic Preservation Commission application:

**Application No. 2023-20**                                  **Signage**  
**101 – 103 WJA, LLC**  
**101 West Jersey Avenue**  
**Block 82/Lot 1**

Mr. Madison explained that this application is for signage. The property owner already has received approval from the Historic Preservation Commission for the other features of the building.

Discussion on the signage proposed for the building. Mr. Madison advised that the applicant is removing the box signs on the front of the building and putting up flat metal signs with channel lettering and neon. Chairman Aspras asked if that style of sign is allowed under HPC guidelines – Mr. Madison advised it is. Chairman Aspras noted that once the box sign is removed, that type of sign is no longer grandfathered in for use. Mr. Owen asked if the 2 businesses are going to remain in the building with the sign above, Mr. Madison advised that is correct. Mr. Madison advised that there are also 2 signs on the side of the building. Chairman Aspras asked if those are box signs – Mr. Madison advised he cannot confirm that they are box signs. Chairman Aspras noted that new box signs are not permitted, but the Applicant can correct the application because he only recently submitted an application for

planning/zoning board of adjustment approval. Chairman Aspras recommends only approving the signs for the façade of the building.

Zoning Officer Roy Duffield advised the Board that the Applicant indicated to him that he intends to use the existing box signs on the Pitman Avenue side of the building. Mrs. Kelley advised that the signs on the Pitman Avenue side of the building have been taken down. She saw that today. Again, given the issues with the signs, Chairman Aspras recommended approving only the façade signage.

Motion made by Mrs. Kelley to approve the Historic Preservation Commission application for only the awning and front top sign. Second by Mrs. Stech.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

**Application No. 2023-22**

**Fence**

**Paul Bowen**

**118 5<sup>th</sup> Ave**

**Block 18 Lot 5**

Mr. Madison reviewed Historic Preservation Commission Application 2023-22. The Applicant intends to install fencing in compliance with Historic Preservation Commission guidelines.

Motion made by Mrs. Stech, second by Chairman Aspras to approve Application 2023-22.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

**Application No. 2023-21**

**Rear landing**

**Starr Bright Properties**

**231 Boulevard Ave**

**Block 27/Lot 15**

Mr. Madison advised that the Historic Preservation Commission denied this application. There was not enough information submitted and the proposed materials do not meet HPC guidelines. Mr. Madison spoke with the Applicant and he will come back to the Commission with a new application.

Motion made by Chairman Aspras to deny, without prejudice, Application No. 2023-21. Second by Mrs. Stech.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Raze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Chairman Aspras advised that the next item on the agenda is the continued application of RAM SJ PropCo 1, LLC, 120 East Avenue, Block 11, Lot 7.

The Applicant's Attorney, John Shindle, of the firm Ward, Shindle and Hall, addressed the Board. Mr. Shindle advised that Mr. Hall represented the Applicant in May, but Mr. Shindle will be handling the application this month.

Solicitor Clancy reminded all that they are still under oath.

Mr. Shindle reviewed the traffic statistics obtained from the Borough Police Department – there was only one accident at the intersection. The Applicant has also received approval from the Borough Historic Preservation Commission with some exterior changes.

Mr. Owen inquired on the number of parking permits available. Mr. Shmuel, the Applicant, advised that Grove parking regulations entitle each unit to 2 parking permits. Residents are entitled to 1 permit, which is issued by the Police Department. That is 6 permits in total.

Chairman Aspras asked Mr. Kernan to brief the Board on his updated review letter.

Discussion on the Historic Preservation Commission approval, the differences (if any) between the old building and the proposed new building, the sidewalk and shoring during construction.

Additional discussion on the setbacks of the former structure. Mrs. Kelley noted that when the former house was torn down, all pre-existing conditions cease to exist. Discussion on the Applicant's ability to rebuild the existing structure. The Applicant explained that the time frame he faced prevented him from rebuilding the structure, and he had to tear the old building down. The Applicant stated that he did not have enough time to finalize a redevelopment plan with the Borough for the property. Mr. Ryder asked the Applicant if he was aware of the condition of the structure when he took ownership of the property. Mr. Shmuel advised he was, but always thought the structure could be rehabilitated. The time constraints did not allow for the rebuilding.

Chairman Aspras opened the public hearing on this application.

Lee Meinhart, 233 Bells Lake Road, Turnersville, addressed the Board with his significant concerns on this project. Mr. Meinhart owns construction and crane businesses and owns several properties in the Borough. Mr. Meinhart advised he had been in the former structure, and it had very low ceilings and very small rooms. He does not agree with allowing this building because of the size – it is too small for a duplex. And the parking is an important issue. His tenants can get parking permits, but there is still nowhere to park in the Borough, even with a permit

Mr. Shindle asked Mr. Meinhart to describe the buildings he owns in the Borough and asked if Mr. Meinhart felt that the proposed building would add competition to his properties for parking. Mr. Meinhart advised his tenants find parking, but it is not easy.

Mr. Austin and Mr. Ryder asked the Applicant to review the footprint of the building, room sizes and ceiling heights. The Applicants' Architect, Logan Dry, reviewed those details. Mr. Dry advised that the new building must meet current building code regulations.

Board Solicitor Clancy reviewed the application with the Board. The first vote will be for the use variance application and will be voted on by only the zoning members.

Chairman Aspras motioned to approve the application for the use variance. The Chairman stated that the proposed use is replacing what was there but will be a better structure, the sight distance and parking issues have been resolved. Second by Mr. Ryder.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**, for the reasons stated and also because there is no detriment to the zoning code

Mrs. Stech: **YES** for the same reasons                      Mr. Ryder: **YES** the Applicant bought the property intending to rehab it, but was thrown a curve ball by the Borough which he didn't expect and he should not have to bear the burden on that.

Mrs. Kelley: **NO** does not think a duplex is a good fit in the Historic District, and there was an opportunity to correct that here.

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES** because of the positive reasons previously stated, and this building does not increase the existing parking situation.

Mr. Owen: **NO** the parking continues to be an issue.

Mr. Romick: **YES**, the parking was addressed, and a new house in the Grove on the same footprint is acceptable.

Chairman Aspras advised that the next vote will be on the bulk variances.

Solicitor Clancy and Engineer Kernan reviewed the variances to be considered: building area, parking, side yard setbacks and distance between structures.

Motion made by Chairman Aspras, second by Mr. Romick to approve the request for the above listed variances.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **NO**

Mrs. Kelley: **NO**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **NO**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder's no vote is due to the 5 foot 8 inch distance to the nearest building and fire safety concerns.

Mrs. Kelley agrees with Mr. Ryder, and believes that the 10 feet from structures is very important.

Mr. Slenkamp advised that he believes the developer is attempting to do the best he can with the lot.

Mr. Owen's no vote is also due to the distance between structures.

Mr. Romick stated he voted yes due to the uniqueness of the situation and he feels this will be a better structure than what was previously there.

Chairman Aspras advised that the next application is use variance and site plan for Pitman Petroleum, LLC, 5 North Woodbury Road, Block 145, Lot 2.

Bob Baronowski, Attorney for the Applicant of the firm Hyland Levin Shapiro LLP addressed the Board. Mr. Baronowski introduced representatives for the Applicant, Jared Mathoan, Mr. Sing, Civil Engineer Adam Denz and Professional Planner Jim Miller.

Mr. Baronowski outlined the use variance request. The Applicant is proposing to convert the mechanic shop portion of the building to a retail store. Mr. Baronowski stated that the Borough Zoning Officer has denied the zoning application because the combination of the retail store with the gas station portion of the property is not an expressed permitted use - an interpretation of the ordinance is needed. Chairman Aspras advised that is a separate process.

Board Solicitor Clancy swore in James Miller, PP. Mr. Miller stated that the combined uses are not permitted by ordinance, but there has been some additional discussion on the matter between the Borough Professionals on this matter and whether or not a use variance is needed. Chairman Aspras stated that it would still be an override of the Zoning Officer's decision. Mr. Miller reviewed the language in the Borough Code regarding this combined use. In his opinion, the literal interpretation of the code would allow this use. Chairman Aspras again stated it would be an override of the Zoning Officer's decision. Zoning Officer Duffield stated that he has no objection to overturning his previous denial based on the Board's interpretation. Additional discussion on the proposed uses and the Borough ordinance.

The Board agreed that a use variance is not needed for this combined use.

Solicitor Clancy clarified that only bulk variances would be needed, and no vote on the use variance is needed. Mr. Baronowski asked if the decision that a use variance is not needed could be incorporated in to the final resolution. Mr. Clancy agreed.

The Board moved on to the site plan review.

Mr. Baronowski detailed the proposed operations for the property. Hours of operation of the retail component would be 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, the same as the gas station. The store will primarily sell packaged goods, and coffee. There will be no kitchen and only 1 employee in the store. This will be an incidental use to the gas station.

Applicant Jared Mathoan was sworn in by Solicitor Clancy. Mr. Mathoan confirmed the details of the retail operation provided by Mr. Baronowski. There will be a microwave for customers' use, but no cooking. Deliveries will be made during business hours and will not interfere with the gas station operation.

Mr. Baronowski asked Mr. Mathoan if the deck on the back of the property would be removed, Mr. Mathoan advised it has been removed. Evergreen plantings have been done, the trash enclosure will be replaced with a masonry structure, and the same sign will be used, just updated.

Parking will conform to ordinance requirements.

Mr. Owen asked if the owner could keep the grass strip area along the parking lot free of signs for sight distance. Mr. Mathoan agreed.

Civil Engineer Denz was sworn in by Solicitor Clancy. Mr. Denz reviewed the improvements that will be done on the property, including the trash enclosure, a new cooler on the exterior wall, relocate ADA parking spaces and install a new ADA ramp on the front of the building. There are presently 17 parking spots available, and only 7 are required. Mr. Kernan advised that the spaces for the gas station cannot be included in the calculation for the store – Mr. Denz advised there would then be 9 spaces for the store.

Mr. Denz testified that the only increase to impervious coverage would be the outside cooler. Access points to Woodbury Glassboro Road remain the same.

Chairman Aspras asked if the use has County approval – Mr. Baronowski advised that is pending. Mr. Baronowski stated that all comments in Mr. Kernan’s review letter will be addressed.

Mr. Kernan reviewed his comments and advised that all have been addressed except maybe lighting.

Mr. Kernan will need to visit the property at night to inspect the property for lighting.

Mr. Kernan also recommends landscaping along the rear property line.

Mrs. Stech asked if lighting will be installed over the entrance door to the store. Mr. Denz advised he will review the lighting to be sure it is addressed.

Chairman Aspras opened the meeting to public comment on this application.

Zoning Officer Roy Duffield advised that there is a clothing donation bin on site, and that is not permitted where fuel is sold. Mr. Mathoan agreed to have the bin removed permanently.

Chairman Aspras closed the public comment portion.

Mayor Razze asked for confirmation that there will be no light pollution on the property that will affect the neighboring properties.

Mr. Kernan recommends a night light study to make sure all issues are addressed. Mr. Denz advised he will do that study.

Mr. Kernan advised based on the application, no variances are needed.

The Site Plan Committee recommends approval of the application.

Motion made by Mr. Romick, second by Mrs. Stech to approve the application based on the agreed conditions – vegetation, lighting, removal of the clothing bin and other conditions outline in Mr. Kernan’s review letter.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Chairman Aspras advised that the next item on the agenda is a request for site plan waiver from Marathon Capital Strategies, LLC, 109 West Jersey Avenue, Block 83, Lot 19.

Mrs. Stech provided background on this application. The Site Plan Committee met with the gentleman who will be operating out of this location. He is changing this from a retail operation to an office. There will be no customers visiting the site, it will be telephone and computer operation, with the owner and 1 employee. There will be no signage because there will be no walk in customers. Chairman Aspras noted that this is a permitted use in this zone.

Motion made by Mrs. Stech, second by Mr. Slenkamp to approve the request for site plan waiver.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Chairman Aspras advised that he would ask to add an item to the agenda. 113 West Jersey Avenue, Benedetti properties, was approved for site plan waiver several months ago but the approval was not memorialized.

Mrs. Stech advised that this business licenses sports organizations and then makes shirts for the organization. There will only be 2 other employees, probably part time.

Discussion on the space and the other businesses in the space now and in the past.

Chairman Aspras asked the Solicitor for guidance on the process given the situation. Solicitor Clancy recommends re-approving the site plan waiver and then memorialize that approval.

Motion made by Mr. Owen, second by Mr. Romick to approve the request for site plan waiver.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Motion made by Mr. Slenkamp, second by Chairman Aspras to memorialize the site plan waiver approval for Benedetti properties.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mayor Razze: **YES**

Council President Fitzpatrick: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Solicitor Clancy reviewed the conditions of approval for a use variance and request for site plan waiver for Salmon Signs, Block 194 Lot 14 and Block 194 Lot 1. An additional condition of approval is the consolidation of the lots.

Motion made by Mrs. Kelley, second by Mr. Ryder to approve the memorialization resolution.

Roll call:

Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Slenkamp: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

Solicitor Clancy reviewed the conditions of approval for a use variance and request for site plan waiver for David Berger, Block 118, Lots 2 and 14. Chairman Aspras advised that the submission of the wetlands delineation approval should also be a condition of approval.

Motion made by Mr. Owen, second by Mrs. Kelley to approve the memorialization resolution.

Roll call:



Chairman Aspras: **YES**

Mrs. Stech: **YES**

Mr. Ryder: **YES**

Mrs. Kelley: **YES**

Mr. Owen: **YES**

Mr. Romick: **YES**

### **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.

There were no questions from the Board.

### **SITE PLAN COMMITTEE**

Mr. Fijalkowski is not in attendance, and the Chairman is not aware of any applications.

### **SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Kelley advised there is no report

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

Mr. Slenkamp advised that there were 2 recent events. On June 3, there was a planting event at Alcyon Lake, and on June 10 the Bio Blitz, which is a mini earth day, was held at Alcyon Lake.

### **MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

Mr. Ryder advised that he has no report.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Owen advised that the EDC will be sending out an email with a QR code for voting for the "Best of Gloucester County" to encourage voting to promote Borough businesses and recognize the Pitman 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade as the Best in Gloucester County.

### **COUNCIL REPORT**

Council President Fitzpatrick advised that unfortunately, the recent tragic drowning at Alcyon Lake has been forefront in the Borough for the past week.

Mayor Razzo noted that the announcement of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade Grand Marshall is forthcoming.

Chairman Aspras asked for confirmation that the accessory use amendments have been passed. Council President Fitzpatrick confirmed it has been adopted.

**OTHER OLD OR NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Aspras read a thank you letter to the Board from former Solicitor MacDonald for the dinner and recognition for his years of service to the Board.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Stech motioned, second by Chairman Aspras to adjourn at 9:05 pm.

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Abdill  
Recording Secretary