MINUTES
CLIFTON PLANNING BOARD
MEETING April 24, 2025

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Planning Board of the City of Clifton, New Jersey, held at the City Hall, Clifton, New Jersey on April 24, 2025. Pursuant to the "Open Public Meeting Act" all notice requirements were satisfied. The time, place, date, and form of notice was announced as well as advising all applicants that formal action may be taken on the matters on the agenda.

Those present: Comrs. Binaso, Korbanics, Gurkov, Lataro, Fragapane, Welsh, Brian Rodgers, Mayor Grabowski, Vice Chair Withers, Chair Susan Kolodziej

Those absent: Councilman D'Amato

The Board approved the minutes of March 27, 2025, regular meeting

A. Miscellaneous
   1. Meridia Regency on Valley, Clifton LLC
      1091-1175 Valley Road
      Request for extension of approvals

      At the request of the applicant the request for an extension of approvals was withdrawn and the Board took no further action.

B. Resolutions:

   1. Stacey Costa
      21-27 Thomas Street
      Block 14.01 Lot 63
      Minor subdivision and bulk variances

      Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution approving the application was adopted.

   2. Julio Rodriguez
      119-121 Penobscot Street
      Block 36.09 Lot 29
      Minor subdivision, bulk variances

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution approving the application was adopted.

3. Miba 1595 LLC
   1595 Main Avenue
   Block 9.12 Lot 15
   Preliminary and final site plan approval; variances; variance for sign

   Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution approving the application was adopted.

C. Ordinance review:

   1. Clifton HLR Phase IV Redevelopment Plan.

The Board Attorney recused himself from the matter and Joseph Wenzel appeared as conflict attorney for the Board. Joseph Baumann, the City's redevelopment attorney, appeared to present the plan. Mr. Baumann stated that the plan evolved over several months. Mr. Baumann stated that traffic studies are typically not done at this time. He stated that a redevelopment agreement will need to be entered into. He stated that the proposed zoning change is a significant benefit for the developer, and that there is a provision for a reciprocal benefit for the City. Comr. Binaso stated that the County has done relatively little regarding traffic. He asked about school impacts. Mr. Baumann stated that the City will be able to negotiate for consideration to address community impacts, such as schools, police, and fire. Vice Chair Withers has comments he believes should be included, such as impacts on police, fire, and schools. He stated that we need appropriate escrows to review all submissions from the developer. He stated that building setbacks need to be considered given the fact that there are going to be residences in the zone. He questioned whether the green roof was going to be occupied or not. He stated that they might need a sprinkler system there. He stated that fire lanes need to be included, and that roadway dimensions based on projected traffic should be considered. Vice Chair also asked whether we want on street parking. Regarding parking standards, Vice Chair stated that we need to be sure the parking standards are proper. He stated that stormwater management needs to be maximized. He stated that whatever gets built has proper irrigation/sprinkler system. Site signage should be consistent within the development and must be recognizable to people unfamiliar with the area. Vice Chair discussed site signage. He mentioned liquor license approval. He stated the City must have the authority to approve or disapprove. He mentioned that the City is in the process of eliminating the M2 and M3 zones and the new expected I zone. He says that we need to consider transportation access that is not off Route 3 to help emergency services to get in and out.

Mr. Baumann advised that an escrow has been put in place. He stated that a number of items raised by the Vice Chair will be incorporated in the plan or will be covered by Code. Mr. Baumann stated that the Board needs to advise the Mayor and Council if the Plan is consistent with the Master Plan, and that all comments will be provided to the Mayor and Council for consideration.

Comr Binaso believes that the density proposed is too high. He also questioned the height of the building. His main concern is traffic, and that the County has not done anything. He also asked about the planting of trees.

The planner, Kristin Russell, of Colliers Engineering, was sworn. She has been a licensed professional planner for over 30 years. Ms. Russell stated that the plan is consistent with the master plan. She said that the plan encourages the rehabilitation of older non-residential areas that have been vacated. The City encourages adaptive reuse of vacant commercial and industrial structures. She says that the master plan encourages diversified land use to provide jobs and strengthen the tax base, to encourage good design and to provide to the best possible use of the few remaining tracts. A diversified land use is encouraged. She says that this plan is consistent with those goals. Vice Chair Withers says that his concern is with the details but believes that the plan is compliant with the master plan. She says that bulk standards can be discussed and negotiated in the process.

Mr. Baumann stated that he will go to the Council with the Board's comments which they may accept or reject. Motion that the plan is consistent with the Clifton Master plan, was made by and seconded and approved unanimously, except Comr. Binaso voted "no" as he did not believe there is enough in the plan to satisfy health, welfare and safety.

D. New Matters:

1. Giovanni & Tina Caggia
   75 Luisser Steet & 506 Mt. Prospect Avenue
   Block 65.05 Lots 30.01 & 32
   Minor subdivision/lot line adjustment between 2 adjoining properties in common ownership.

   The applicant's engineer, Thomas G. Stearns III, was sworn and qualified. This involves two properties under common ownership. There is a 2 1/2 story single family dwelling on Mt. Prospect Avenue with a driveway. The existing conditions were described. The property on Luisser Street is at the end of the street. There are two driveways coming off the road. The proposal is to move the lot line for Lot 30.01 to the southwest 25 feet. Lot 32 would give up that amount. One existing shed on lot 30.01 will then have a conforming side yard. There are no variances created. There was a prior application to split lot 32 which was denied but this application is different and res judicata does not apply. No construction is being proposed. It is just a transfer of land. The houses that exist will remain single family dwellings. The meeting was opened to the public and members of the public appeared. Gary Perrino of 491 Mt. Prospect Avenue appeared, and he asked if any of the trees in the rear are being taken down or destroyed. The applicant said "no." He asked if there is any impervious increase related to the application. The applicant stated "no." There is no change to the dwellings or the impervious surface. Mr. Perrino brought up a drop-off on the rear of the property. He asked if it will be leveled off. Mr. Stearns stated that it is not the applicant's property and will not be affected by this application. He asked where the 25 feet located that is the subject of the application, and Mr. Stearns showed Mr. Perrino the plan

which identifies the 25 feet in question which is being transferred. Mr. Perrino asked if the applicant would be willing to stipulate that there would be no further subdivision of the property. Counsel advised that there is no restriction on a future application and every application will be judged on its merits when made. Daniel Barlekamp of 512 Mt. Prospect Avenue asked about the concrete wall shown on the plan. He mentioned a approximately 3-4 foot drop on the property. He does not understand why the application is being made. He wanted to know if the drop area would be filled. He says that if the intention is to fill that property that it will cause a problem for the property to the rear. Mr. Stearns stated that there is no intention to fill the area. The applicant's intention is to make his property bigger and then to sell Lot 32. Another member came forward who is the last house on Luisser Street. He stated that his house is on a downgrade and that he gets water in his garage. Mr. Stearns stated that there are no changes to the site other than to move the lot line, and this application will have no effect on drainage. The public portion of the meeting was closed. Mr. Stearns stated that this is a basic subdivision. No changes to the property are proposed. No trees are being removed. Applicant will comply with the Neglia report of April 22, 2025 but the Board granted a waiver of item 2.9 of the Neglia report. Comr. Lataro asked what variances are being requested. Mr. Stearns stated that only the existing violations are requested to remain. Comr. Binaso brought up item 2.3 of the Neglia report regarding any intent to provide an easement. Mr. Stearn stated that no easement is proposed.
Comr. Binaso moved to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. No trees are to be taken down. If a tree dies within the next two years, the applicant wil replace them.
2. There will be no increase in the impervious surface.
3. If the property is sold, no trees shall be removed, unless approved by the City.
4. The applicant will comply with the report of Neglia dated April 22, 2025, with the exception that
5. If the property gets further developed, Neglia will monitor the project, as the planning board shall retain jurisdiction.

Second by Mayor Grabowski,

Those in favor: Comr. Binaso, Korbanics, Lataro, Welsh, Gurkov, Brian Rodgers, Mayor Grabowski, Vice Chair Withers, Chairwoman Kolodziej.

Those opposed: None

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Ferraro, Esq. Secretary/Counsel