

MINUTES
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
CITY OF CLIFTON
October 29, 2025
7:00 P.M. REGULAR MEETING

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

NOEL PEREZ (2A)
GRACE ROBOL (1A)
AVRAHAM EISENMAN
DAVID BRAID
ALESSIA ERAMO
MAUREEN O'CONNOR
GEORGE FOUKAS
CHAIRMAN ZECCHINO

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

VICE CHAIRMAN MOLNER

ALSO PRESENT:

Liana Bolcato, Asst. Zoning Officer
Joseph M. Wenzel, Esq., Counsel/Secretary
Michael Goldstein, acting Board Planner
Anthony Kurus, Board Engineer

Chairman Zecchino called the Meeting to Order at 7:01 p.m.; he led the entire assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. Pursuant to the "Open Public Meeting Law" public notice of the Board's 2025 regular meeting schedule was published in the Herald News on December 11, 2024. All notice requirements were satisfied. Chairman Zecchino announced the time, place, and form of notice as well as advising all applications that formal action may be taken on the matters set forth on the Agenda. Said opening statement is incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof.

NEW HEARINGS

1. Tanya Ivanova, 90 Charles Street, Bl. 51.06, Lot: 46, Zone RA1

Applicant, Tanya Ivanova, was present with her architect.

Applicant's architect, **George Held**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. He explained that the purpose of the project was to make the current home into multi-generational residence. The only variance is a front yard setback of 29.24 feet where 35 feet is required which is pre-existing. The home is not expanding its footprint but only adding a second floor which creates the variance at that level. Otherwise, the architect noted that the variance is de minimis compared to the required setback. The other homes in the area have a

similar setback. The architect also introduced Exhibit A-1 which was depiction of the average front setbacks on either side of the subject property.

No interest parties appeared on this matter.

Commissioner Foukas moved to approve. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion.

Commissioners Robol, Eisenman, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chair Zecchino voted in favor. Motion passed 7-0 and the application was approved.

2. **Nathan and Rivka Bachrach**, 17 Loumar Place, Bl. 57.06, Lot: 12, Zone RA3

Counsel, **Dominic Iannarella, Esq.**, appeared and presented the application. He identified that this is simply a garage conversion for family needs.

Applicant's architect, **Douglas Battersby**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. He explained that the only changes are to the interior of the building. The garage door will be replaced with a window. There is no expansion of the building. The current driveway can accommodate two (2) cars and there is no need for on-street parking. There will be a retaining wall and landscape planter box to protect the house from cars accidentally driving into it.

No interest parties appeared on this matter.

Commissioner O'Connor moved to approve. Commissioner Eisenman seconded the motion.

Commissioners Robol, Eisenman, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chair Zecchino voted in favor. Motion passed 7-0 and the application was approved.

3. **Aaron Brody**, 361 South Parkway, Bl. 58.07, Lot: 5, Zone RA3

Counsel, **Dominic Iannarella, Esq.**, appeared and presented the application.

Applicant's architect, **Douglas Battersby**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. He explained that the variance is for a driveway in front of a home without a garage. This garage conversion is to make the garage smaller and use it as a bike storage area. The garage will now only be 12 feet deep. The garage door will be maintained. This will result in extra living space for the family. The driveway is wide and can accommodate the cars for off-street parking.

Applicant indicated that they would provide at the back of the garage either bollards or at least a 24" high concrete block wall to protect the home as a condition of approval.

No interest parties appeared on this matter.

Commissioner Eisenman moved to approve. Commissioner Robol seconded the motion.

Commissioners Robol, Eisenman, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chair Zecchino voted in favor. Motion passed 7-0 and the application was approved.

4. **136 Getty Ave Clifton Corp.**, 136 Getty Avenue, Bl. 11.06, Lot: 60, Zone M-2

Counsel, **Dominic Iannarella, Esq.**, appeared and presented the application.

Applicant's architect, **Michael Romanik**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. He explained this will be a new construction consisting of 23 one-bedroom units and office/storage area. The architect spoke to the existing conditions. The driveway had been moved from an earlier version to the side of the building to access parking area at the rear of the site. Architect provided an overview of layout of each floor, individual units, and common areas. Architect opined that this was a very innovative re-use of existing commercial building.

Chairman Zecchino asked if Romanik saw the Board Planner report. The architect responded that he had and that applicant would work with Board professionals to align with their report recommendations. Parking spaces exceed the number required. There is no need for an elevator as the first floor units are ADA accessible along with the lobby area. Each unit has its own washer and dryer. Security features are present throughout the building.

Applicant's surveyor, **Thomas Sterns**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of surveying. He explained the need to realign the lot lines to conform with the new building usage. The new lots will make it easier to discern this project's boundaries. The subdivision will be by deed, and the applicant agreed as a condition of approval to transmit a proposed deed for review by Board professionals before recordation. Surveyor also consented as a condition of approval to amend the subdivision plan in accordance with the recommendations of the Board Engineer. Counsel added that the adjacent lots while under different corporate names are owned by the same individual as the applicant for this matter.

Applicant's engineer, **Thomas Donohue**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of engineering. He explained the existing conditions. As Getty Avenue is a County roadway, the applicant will have to obtain County Planning Board approval. There are a few variances requested by the applicant. The front yard, side yard and parking space setback variances are all pre-existing and will continue with this application. There is sufficient parking and ADA parking stalls are included. The property will be bounded by a chain link fence. The sidewalk along Getty Avenue will be replaced. Parking and lighting are sufficient for the area. Some landscaping was changed in response to the Board Planner report to provide more green area by way of landscape islands in the parking lot. Board Planner noted that more islands could be added as the site was overparked. These will also be placed at the lot line in the parking lot to delineate between this project and the adjacent building. In response to a request of **Commissioner Eramo**, the applicant agreed as a condition of approval to plant only native trees.

Truck traffic will be required to traverse over the boundary line in the parking lot to the other side to enter/exit the site. A cross-access agreement will be entered into between the adjacent properties

and that as a condition of approval the agreement will be submitted for review of Board professionals before execution and/or recordation. Signage will also be added to instruct vehicles not to park on the adjacent parking lot area.

Applicant's planner, **Matthew Flynn**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of planning. He provide the Board with Exhibit A-2 which was a series of drone photographs of the area. Planner noted that this site used to be along railroad. This is now a good adaptive re-use of a property now that the railroad is no longer present. This fills a void in the area for more housing. Residential properties exist across the street. The mixed use nature of this site is preferable to maintaining an outdated commercial or industrial use. The bulk variance relief is triggered because another floor is being added not because it is being made worse.

Flynn noted that d(1) use variance relief is required as residential and mixed uses are not permitted in the zone. This project should be granted a use variance as it is a good re-use of a facility. It meets the positive criteria by satisfying the goals of the MLUL under section (a), (g), (i) and (m). Also the site provides more than necessary setback to the rear, limits the number of stories it would be allowed to go up, and limits its lot coverage to the betterment of stormwater management and visual aesthetics. Likewise, the bulk variances can be granted the same relief under c(2) flexible criteria.

No interest parties appeared on this matter.

Commissioner Eisenman moved to approve. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion.

Commissioners Robol, Eisenman, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chair Zecchino voted in favor. Motion passed 7-0 and the application was approved.

ADOPTION OF MEMORIALIZING RESOLUTIONS/MINUTES

1. Resolution memorializing the approval of the withdrawal with prejudice by Felix Acosta, 77 Union Avenue, Bl. 11.20, Lot: 9, Zone RB1 for multi-family home.

Commissioner Foukas made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Robol, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 6-0.

2. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Polanco & Sons LLC, 85 Center Street, Bl. 4.16, Lot: 2, Zone RB3 for conversion of an existing mixed use residential/commercial property to a multiunit residential building only.

Commissioner Eramo made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Robol, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 6-0.

3. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by JLM Chestnut Street LLC, 22 & 36 Chestnut Street, Bl. 15.12, Lots: 14 & 16, Zone RB1 & M-1 for a minor subdivision of lot

16, a use variance, and bulk variances, to construct a single-family home on what is proposed as lot 1.

Commissioner O'Connor made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner Braid seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Robol, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 6-0.

4. Minutes of the October 22, 2025 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Eramo made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner Braid seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Robol, Eisenman, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Chair Zecchino voted in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Foukas moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Connor, with the unanimous approval of all Board members present, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH M. WENZEL, ESQ.,
COUNSEL SECRETARY