

**MINUTES**  
**ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**  
**CITY OF CLIFTON**  
**December 3, 2025**  
**7:00 P.M. REGULAR MEETING**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

NOEL PEREZ (2A)  
GRACE ROBOL (1A)  
AVRAHAM EISENMAN (*left at 7:45 P.M.*)  
DAVID BRAID  
ALESSIA ERAMO  
MAUREEN O’CONNOR  
GEORGE FOUKAS  
VICE CHAIRMAN MOLNER  
CHAIRMAN ZECCHINO

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

None

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Liana Bolcato, Asst. Zoning Officer  
Joseph M. Wenzel, Esq., Counsel/Secretary  
Nicholas Graviano, Board Planner  
Anthony Kurus, Board Engineer

Chairman Zecchino called the Meeting to Order at 7:02 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. Jody and Steven Colucci, 28 Grant Avenue, Bl. 17.05, Lot 24, Zone RA3**

Applicant, Jody Colucci, was present.

Applicant **Jody Colucci** was called forward and sworn in. She explained that this is a request for extension of variance approvals. There were a number of delays due to financial conditions and scheduling with the general contractor. At this time, the general contractor believes that the project will commence in Spring 2026. The prior variance approvals will expire in December 2025. There are no changes to the plans or any other documents submitted to the Board as part of the prior

application.

**Asst. Zoning Officer Liana Bolcato** explained that under City Ordinance if the request is approved, the applicant would have an additional 90 days to file for permits. The applicant can request more time if needed.

No interest parties appeared on this matter.

Vice-Chair Molner moved to approve. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion.

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

2. **Angel Montes de Oca**, 135 Clinton Avenue, Bl. 12.21, Lots: 7, Zone RB-1

Applicant, **Angel Montes de Oca**, was present along with his daughter-in-law, **Diana Arato**.

Applicant **Diana Arato** was called forward and sworn in. She explained that this is for a new gazebo. It would increase the lot coverage from 27% to 33% which is greater than allowed under ordinance. There are no other bulk variances requested. The gazebo would be used by family members to enjoy the outdoors. The lot is smaller than others in the area which is creating the variance lot coverage percentage.

**Vice-Chair Molner** asked about the placement of a barbeque in the rear yard. He asked for applicant to move the barbeque to the rear of the property for a better visual setup and there is enough room to the rear property line. Applicant agreed to do this as a condition of approval.

**Commissioner Eisenman** questioned if the gazebo is electrified. Applicant indicated that it would not be and also agreed to that as a condition of approval.

No interest parties appeared on this matter.

Commissioner Eisenman moved to approve. Vice-Chair Molner seconded the motion.

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

3. **New York SMSA Limited Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless**, 10 Kingsland Road , Bl. 82.06, Lot 62, Zone M-2

Counsel, **Richard Schneider, Esq.**, appeared and presented the application and gave an opening statement about the intent of the project. He noted that this will be a placement of cell phone transponders on the roof of a storage facility building. He outlined the variance relief as well.

Applicant's radio frequency engineer, **Andrew Petersohn**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of radio frequency (RF) engineering. RF engineer explained the

need for Verizon to increase its coverage. There is a lack of consistent coverage in the area. He noted that the applicant would comply with the conditions in the Board professional reports. RF engineer stated that Verizon is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a carrier and is provided with specific frequency bands. Exhibit A-1 was introduced which was a cell service coverage map. RF engineer pointed out to the gaps in coverage and that this site would be in the best location to enhance those services. Coverage is for use in all areas (on street/in car/at home/in buildings). This is a betterment to the community so that calls are not dropped. Exhibit A-2 was introduced which demonstrated the result of the placement of the new antennae. RF engineer clarified that the antennae height must be well above the structure to accomplish the coverage and avoid blockage from nearby buildings. There is a capacity concern in the area because there are more users as a result of the increased number of commercial enterprises. The transmitted can only operate on approved frequency and that the strength of the signal is less than allowed by the FCC. There is no concern of harm to any person on ground level.

**Chairman Zecchino** noted that this application today is fundamentally different than the cell towers of 20 years ago. He asked if Verizon would need to adjust the antennae after installation. RF engineer noted that the adjustments could be made but unlikely necessary. There would be signage at the antennae area to warn service people of the potential of frequency waves. No member of the general public at ground level would be exposed in any way. The antennae is checked semi-annually to very frequency levels and adjust accordingly.

**Commissioner Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner and Commissioner Perez** asked questions about the FCC oversight, the area of potential exposure on the roof, and whether the antennae could be moved further away from residences. RF engineer agreed that FCC has final oversight of the antennae, the exposure limitation would be about 10 to 15 feet from the antennae, and that the area chosen for the installation is the best for coverage but is also significantly distant from residential areas.

Applicant's architect, **Frank Colasurdo**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. Architect explained the design of the antennae. He noted that the project meets all other bulk standards except for the height of the unit and its placement on the roof. There are no permanent employees on site and utilities serving the area are sufficient. This will not be unsightly and indeed will likely blend in with the area. The generator used for power will have minimal noise due to its housing and location on the roof. The antennae will be bolted down securely and will be on the side furthest from homes in the area. The antennae will be 48 feet above average grade level and 10 feet above the roof line. Lighting for the area will be minimal and will not spill over. Roof drainage will be unaffected by the installation.

**Vice-Chair Molner** suggested that the antennae be painted so as to blend in with the building. Architect agreed to that as a condition of approval.

Applicant's planner, **Matthew Kronk**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of planning. Planner presented Exhibit A-3, an aerial of vicinity. Planner explained the overall site condition, the surrounding land uses and the equipment location. Planner noted that the site was chosen as furthest away from residents. The M2 zone allow wireless communication devices. However, the only reason for the variance request is related to the location of the

equipment (roof) and height. Planner then shared Exhibit A-4 which were a set of visual plans. These were photos from various locations. The equipment was then superimposed on the photos to show visual effect. The photos showed limited sight of equipment from various locations.

Planner spoke to the need for the height variance. The equipment must be placed at a height to overcome blockage from other buildings. There is no negative impact on the area. The site is suitable for the use. The M2 zone allows it. The height is what is required and not overtly noticeable. Antennae placed elsewhere in compliance with the ordinance (on ground or wall) would work less efficiently and be unsightly. This advances the general welfare of the community by providing reliable wireless communications. Planner opined that using the height of the building itself to increase the height of the equipment is better than alternative designs. The overall objectives of the ordinance minimizing visual impact is met. Planner noted that the equipment (generator) can be screened in, but that it needed to remain accessible. Planner also explained that this is not two uses on one lot as the ordinance allows the co-use. Planner acknowledged that additional carriers could be added to the antennae but that will require regulatory approval. The increase in carriers will not increase any potential danger to public.

Chairman Zecchino then opened the floor for comments from public. One person appeared to raise concerns about microwave radiation and that he resided nearby.

Vice-Chair Molner moved to approve with the additional condition of approval that all underlying site plan conditions from the original approval of the building on site will remain in full force and effect. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion.

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

4. **Hookah Paradise**, 1219-1231 Main Avenue, Bl. 11.16, Lots 5, 6 & 7, Zone B-C

Counsel, **Gary Cohen, Esq.**, appeared and presented the application.

Applicant presented its engineer, **Thomas Donohue**, who was sworn in, qualified in the field of engineering, and testified as to the revisions to the project. There will now be a truck enclosure in the loading area to reduce visual impact of loading. Two egress points to Putnam Avenue will be eliminated and the one remaining is a shared driveway with neighboring property. Landscape planters will be added to the rear of the site to reduce visual impact on residences. The parking lot has been redesigned to assist deliveries with egress and exit to Main Avenue. There are 45 spaces. The landscape meets the ordinance requirements now. The removal of egress points adds two on-street parking spaces on Putnam. The buffer consists of evergreens to ensure year round screening. The stormwater system has been updated so that it is channeled properly. Parking lot is now appropriate to allow truck to maneuver to loading space and leave onto Main Avenue. There are parallel spaces added to parking. Truck traffic as a condition of approval will not access or leave site from Putnam. Containers on site will be removed. Engineer agreed as a condition of approval to install irrigation system to ensure health of landscape. The building will be sprinklered per fire code.

Objector counsel, **Nicholas Sekas, Esq.**, then asked questions of the engineer regarding screening materials, effectiveness of screening, effect of parking lot change on adjacent users (Classical Academy and St. Mary Church), loading area, exit on Putnam, and drainage calculations. Specifically, as to the movement of vehicles on and off the site, the question was raised about restricting access to the shared driveway. Applicant agreed as a condition of approval to place signage at the site to discourage truck usage.

Other interested parties (**Sara Damiano, David Ross, and Iyad Khowaja**) raised questions about the landscaping, drainage, truck traffic patterns, pedestrian safety, loading operations, and general overuse of the site.

Applicant then presented its architect, **Michael Romanik**, who was sworn in, qualified in the field in architecture, and testified as to the revisions. He presented Exhibit A-5 which were updated architectural plans with revisions noted. The truck loading shelter was explained. The overall footprint remained the same as last presented. The building will have a brick veneer in line with Board Planner recommendation. On questioning from the Board, architect noted that the entire addition would be dedicated to storage.

Objector counsel, **Nicholas Sekas, Esq.**, then asked questions of the architect regarding the square footage of each floor and basement, amount of storage space, and how trucks use the loading shelter area.

Interested party, **Thomas Cook**, asked questions about the loading door height, the area of loading, length of the shelter and method of use. Applicant agreed as a condition of approval to increase the loading door height to 16 feet to match truck height.

Board members then asked questions about the nature of the use of the addition.

Applicant then called **Mousa Sheikh**, its representative to speak on the use of the site. He explained that the business is a retail establishment and that it has grown significantly over the past few years. Most of the sales of hookah is online so there is a need for more storage and less in-person retail. There are some sales to businesses (wholesale) but this is less common. The business currently uses two off-site storage facilities to house their inventory. Applicant wants to bring all operations under one roof. Right now there are many small trips being made between the two storage sites and the principal site. The new addition will eliminate that need and deliveries can come less frequently in larger trucks. They have a dedicated overnight shipping van that arrives daily. The addition will also allow a more efficient layout of storage to allow easier and quicker movement of merchandise. The loading will not occur in late hours to disturb neighbors. He will instruct trucks to only come onto site from Main Avenue. The number of employees will not increase so the parking needs are actually quite low. He also noted that other businesses in the area are forced to have trucks park on Main Avenue while deliveries occur. He has the ability to bring the truck off the road to help traffic. There are no current parking problems and believes that this improvement will be efficient.

Objector counsel, **Nicholas Sekas, Esq.**, then asked questions regarding the operation, the loading experience, how items are transferred, and wholesale business.

Interested parties (**Cook & Khowaja**) asked about the church parking lot, towing of vehicles, overnight parking by trucks, and planters.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Applicant agreed to adjourn the matter to January 21, 2026 to present its traffic engineer and any other witness on the project.

### **ADOPTION OF MEMORIALIZING RESOLUTIONS/MINUTES**

1. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Samuel Rijo, 84 East 7th Street, Bl. 1.29, Lots: 29, Zone RB1 to keep an already constructed gazebo that requires the following bulk variance; lot coverage proposed at 39.7% where 25% is permitted.

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

2. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Rainbow Montessori School, 21 Varettoni Place, Bl. 4.03, Lot: 14.01, Zone RB2, for a use variance, an amended site plan for the expansion of an existing private school into the first floor of an existing two-family accessory structure.

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

3. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by David & Devra Markowitz, 29 Edgewood Avenue, Bl. 58.13, Lots: 20, Zone RA3, for a one-story addition and deck which require the following bulk variances; combined side yard setback proposed at 12.7' where 16' required, and lot coverage proposed at 33% where 27% required.

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

4. Minutes of the November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting.

*Commissioner Braid made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner Robol seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Robol, Braid, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, and Vice-Chair Molner 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 Braid, with the unanimous approval of all Board members present, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH M. WENZEL, ESQ.,  
COUNSEL SECRETARY