

**MINUTES**  
**ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**  
**CITY OF CLIFTON**  
**April 1, 2026**  
**7:00 P.M. REGULAR MEETING**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

NOEL PEREZ (2A)  
GRACE ROBOL (1A)  
ALESSIA ERAMO  
MAUREEN O’CONNOR  
GEORGE FOUKAS  
VICE CHAIRMAN MOLNER  
CHAIRMAN ZECCHINO

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

AVRAHAM EISENMAN  
DAVID BRAID

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Liana Bolcato, Asst. Zoning Officer  
Joseph M. Wenzel, Esq., Counsel/Secretary

Chair 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 2026 regular meeting schedule was published in the Herald News on December 4, 2025. All notice requirements were satisfied. Chair 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.

**CONTINUED HEARINGS**

**1. Husam Ramadan, 249 Silleck Street, Bl. 22.19, Lots: 1, Zone RA3**

Applicant Counsel, Dominic Iannarella, Esq., reintroduced the matter. He noted that the Applicant made a few amendments as a result of the comments made at the last meeting.

Applicant’s architect, **Albert Dattoli, PE**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. Architect spoke to the layout of the home. He noted that is now scaled down to 4500 sq ft and reduced the size of some of the rooms. The decks were also reduced in size. They also undertook some other amendments internally to the layout. This resulted in a reduction in the lot coverage variance to 33.9% where 27% is required.

Applicant's engineer, **Jeff Egarian, PE**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of engineering. Engineer noted that the lot coverage reduction. The retaining wall was moved to increase the amount of usable rear yard space. He called out that the project still requires a front yard, rear yard, side yard and lot depth variances. All of these are related to the shape and size of the lot. These can be granted due to hardship as there is limited area to build a home under the c(1) standard. Lot coverage while not a c(1) hardship is an outgrowth of the topography and shape of the lot. The home must be situated in a way that matches with the lot shape. This means that there is only one viable access point to place the driveway. This is the most efficient design under the c(2) flexible standard.

Vice-Chair Molner questioned whether lot coverage can follow the ordinance despite the size and shape of the lot or its topography. Engineer advised that a lack of lot depth creates this lot coverage increase, although Vice-Chair Molner expressed his doubts.

Commissioner Eramo questioned whether stormwater was properly addressed. Engineer noted that the current runoff sheets to the lower side of the property. The increase in lot coverage is handled by redirecting the water flow. Upon questioning the Engineer stated that the stormwater calculations were based on an average two-year storm.

Chairman Zecchino opened to the public for questions. Members of the public questioned the integrity of the retaining wall and effects on neighboring properties.

Having no further witnesses, the Applicant rested.

Chairman Zecchino then invited public comment. Members of the public questioned the need for the variances when the lot is rather large. There was no reason not to comply with lot coverage. Concerns were raised about stormwater control and retaining wall strength. Before proceeding to a vote, the Applicant requested that the matter be postponed to the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chairman Zecchino announced this and advised the public that no further notice would be required.

## **NEW HEARINGS**

### **2. John Vessie, 30 Florence Drive, Bl. 16.01, Lot: 24, Zone RA3**

Applicant Counsel, Dominic Iannarella, Esq., introduced the matter.

Applicant's architect, **Albert Dattoli, PE**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. Architect spoke to the layout of the home. While he was not the architect of record, he reviewed the plans sufficiently to provide testimony. The purpose of the addition is to add space to the kitchen. The addition uses the existing footprint and follows the lines for the extension. Most of the variances listed are pre-existing and unchanged. The new variance is created only because of the small extension to one side. There is a landing already there and just enclosing that area. The current set of stairs to the landing will be removed.

No member of the public appeared.

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

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

3. **Ralph & Nancy Comito**, 65 Gourley Avenue, Bl. 14.10, Lot: 4, Zone RA3

Applicant, **Nancy Comito**, appeared and presented the application.

She explained that this is for an already built portico to her front steps. This creates a front yard setback variance. This is similar to other homes in the area. Applicant provided Exhibit A-1 which were a series of photos of homes in the area with similar porticos and setbacks. Applicant stated that her contractor did not advise her that the portico required variance. The portico is completely open.

Board members questioned how the Applicant could have been unaware of the variance requirement.

Members of the public spoke. One neighbor indicated that he had no issues with the portico and that it looked quite nice. Another neighbor stated that this was very bad. The Applicant should have followed the rules and now is getting away with something. The portico makes her house look small and affects her sunlight and air. The neighbor felt the whole process was unfair and that Applicant was not being truthful.

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

*Commissioners Perez, Robol, Vice-Chair Molner, and Chairman Zecchino voted in favor. Commissioners Eramo, O'Connor, and Foukas voted against. Motion passed 4-3 and the application was approved.*

4. **Helen Linarez & Carlos Camacho Franco**, 288 De Mott Avenue, Bl. 20.20, Lot: 25, Zone RB1

Applicant's builder, Thomas Donaldson, appeared and presented the application. After being sworn in, Builder explained that the property had a fire which destroyed the home. It will be demolished and a new home built in its place. They are using the existing footprint of the home and expanding to the rear of the property.

Board members questioned the need for the height variance and the number of stories as this structure is being entirely rebuilt. Builder noted that this would be similar to the prior home which had 2 ½ stories and exceeded the height allowed in the zone.

Members of the public raised similar questions and also asked about the need for the lot coverage variance.

Applicant's architect, **Tomasz Bona, RA**, was called forward, sworn in and qualified as an expert in the field of architecture. Architect spoke about the fire damage and need for the rebuild. He submitted Exhibit A-1 which were photos of the fire damaged building. He noted that the lot is undersized for the zone. There are many pre-existing nonconformities which are unchanged by this redevelopment. This was originally a very small home and now trying to make it more livable. Architect discovered that the average front yard setback along the street is 10.8 feet. While this application calls for a variance from the front yard setback, it is near the average of other homes. They are preserving the garage and the driveway in their current locations. This new home will be similar in size to others. The height is also similar to others. The addition to the rear follows the current side yard setbacks and not making them any worse. Overall, the revitalizing of the fire damaged home is an overall positive to granting any variances.

Chairman Zecchino asked about removing the dormer to reduce the height and the number of stories. If the dormer were removed, then these variances would be unnecessary. Applicant agreed to same and to submit revised plans as a condition of approval.

Members of the public who were adjacent neighbors spoke to their safety concerns. Their home was severely damaged. They felt that the home's proximity to their home could lead to another fire. They were informed that all new construction needs to meet 2026 standards for fire safety. They also questioned the front yard calculations.

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

*Commissioners Perez, Robol, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner, and Chairman 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 application by 1061-1065 Main Ave LLC, 1061 Main Avenue, Bl. 12.23 Lot:15 Zone B-C, for a D(1) use variance to expand the existing nonconforming use of a mechanic shop to permit towing and storage of towed vehicles as well as allow for two principal uses on one lot.

*Commissioner Foukas made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Vice-Chair Molner seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Perez, Robol, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 7-0.*

2. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Ethan & Michal Gold, 653 Passaic Avenue, Bl. 71.02, Lot: 1, Zone RA3 for a two-story addition to the existing single-family home which requires the following bulk variance; front yard setback proposed at 18.48' where 25' required.

*Vice-Chair Molner made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Perez, Robol, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 7-0.*

3. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Ernesto Soto, 23-25 Milton Avenue, Bl. 37.02, Lot: 7, Zone RB-1 to expand the existing 2-family residence within the same footprint having existing variances for lot area, lot width, front set-back, side set-back and lot coverage.

*Commissioner Foukas made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Vice-Chair Molner seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Perez, Robol, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 7-0.*

4. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Eric Colon, 174 Getty Avenue, Bl. 11.03, Lot: 49, Zone M-2 for a use variance for an automotive window tinting business in an existing commercial space that doesn't permit on site auto repair or retail.

*Commissioner Perez made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Perez, Robol, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 7-0.*

5. Resolution memorializing the approval of the application by Adam Al-Sijaya, 1030-1050 Rte-46, Bl. 39.01, Lots: 24 & 25, Zone B-D for a use variance to utilize a vacant retail space with a proposal for a quick-serving taco restaurant & a bakery/café within an existing shopping center.

*Commissioner O'Connor made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Vice-Chair Molner seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Perez, Robol, O'Connor, Eramo, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 7-0.*

6. Minutes of the March 18, 2026 Regular Meeting

*Vice-Chair Molner made a motion to memorialize the Resolution. Commissioner Eramo seconded the motion; voting in favor are Commissioners Perez, Robol, Eramo, O'Connor, Foukas, Vice-Chair Molner, and Chairman Zecchino. Motion passed 7-0.*

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board went into executive session to discuss matters in litigation: *Rader v. Clifton Board of Adjustment & Geeland v. Clifton Board of Adjustment*. Board gave guidance to counsel.

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Foukas moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eramo, with the unanimous approval of all Board members present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH M. WENZEL, ESQ.,  
COUNSEL SECRETARY