

**BOROUGH OF INTERLAKEN
MINUTES- PLANNING BOARD
MARCH 19, 2021 7:30 P.M.
BOROUGH HALL, 100 GRASSMERE AVENUE**

A meeting of the PLANNING BOARD of the Borough of Interlaken, Monmouth County, New Jersey was held on March 15, 2021 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Chairman Papp opened the meeting and read the following Sunshine Statement: *“THE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT HAVE BEEN SATISFIED BY FORWARDING NOTICE TO THE ASBURY PARK PRESS AND THE COASTER THAT THERE WOULD BE A VENUE CHANGE TO THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING HELD ON MARCH 15, 2021 AT 7:30. THE MEETING WAS MOVED FROM THE BOROUGH HALL, 100 GRASSMERE AVENUE LOCATION TO BE HELD VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE UNDER THE GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER 107. A COPY OF THE NOTICE IS POSTED ON THE OFFICIAL BOROUGH WEBSITE WITH FULL DIRECTIONS ON HOW THE PUBLIC CAN ATTEND AND MAKE COMMENT AT THE MEETING. ALSO, A COPY WAS PLACED ON THE DOOR AT BOROUGH HALL AND IS ON FILE IN THE BOROUGH CLERK’S OFFICE.”*

IT IS DEEMED THAT THIS HEARING IS BEING HELD THROUGH ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION. SHOULD THERE BE ANY DISCONNECT OR FAILURE OF TECHNOLOGY, THE MEETING WILL BE CONSIDERED ADJOURNED. ALL AGENDA ITEMS WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE CARRIED TO THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED INTERLAKEN PLANNING BOARD MEETING, WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 19, 2021 AT 7:30PM. ADDITIONAL NOTICE WILL NOT BE REQUIRED.

These announcements were followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Papp, Councilman Butler, Vice Chairwoman Umfrid, Mr. Tilton, Mr. Wasilishen, Ms. Heinz, Mr. Weaver and Ms. Kapp

Also Present: Planning Board Attorney Representative Nicholas Falcone and Planning Board Secretary Gina Kneser

Late Arrival: Ms. Dalton 7:34pm

Absent: Ms. Kane and Mr. Wentz

UPON MOTION of Councilman Butler seconded by Mr. Wasilishen carried, the Board approved the minutes of February 22, 2021 meeting.

ROLL CALL:

In Favor: Chairman Papp, Councilman Butler, Vice Chairwoman Umfrid, Mr. Tilton, Mr. Wasilishen, Ms. Heinz, Mr. Weaver and Ms. Kapp

Opposed: None

Ineligible: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Ms. Dalton (for vote/late arrival to meeting), Ms. Kane and Mr. Wentz

Mr. Blasucci was sworn in as Class I member by Borough Attorney Representative Falcone.

APPLICATION

22 Wickapecko Drive
Block 12/Lots 19 & 20
Conway/Tragno

Barbara Birdsall of Birdsall & Laughlin, applicant's attorney, began by submitting evidence.

The following evidence was marked:

- A-1 Survey of property prepared by Ronald W. Post Surveying, Inc. dated 03/26/1999
- A-2 Denial letter from Frank DiRoma, Zoning Officer dated June 29, 2020
- A-3 Plans prepared by Passman & Ercolino dated 04/08/2020 revised to 01/27/2021
- A-4 Survey Affidavit prepared by William F. Smith, Attorney dated 12/06/2002
- A-5 Aerial photo of property
- A-6 Photo packet consisting of 11 additional photos
- B-1 Letter prepared by Peter Avakian, Board Engineer/Planner dated November 3, 2020
- B-2 Letter prepared by Peter Avakian, Board Engineer/Planner dated February 8, 2021
- A-7 Application checklist and supporting application documents

Ms. Birdsall stated that the proposed project is not extensive renovations will not change the overall character of the house, and the improvements will benefit the occupants with little impact on the adjacent neighbors.

The homeowners, Frank Tragno and Thomas Conway were sworn in by Board Attorney Representative Falcone.

Mr. Tragno stated that they have owned 22 Wickapecko Drive since December 6, 2002 and have made no changes to the property.

Mr. Tragno stated that the purpose of the project is to enable them to age in place. Mr. Conway recently turned 80 years old, and he and Mr. Tragno both have physical ailments that require living space on the first floor. Stairs are becoming more difficult.

Ms. Birdsall screen shared the photo of the house with the large tree in front.

Mr. Tragno stated that the tree is a Weeping Beech tree, and they are doing everything in their power to have nothing negatively effect the tree.

Mr. Tragno testified that the garage will be extended. The space that is currently occupied by the garage will become an entryway, laundry room and a powder room.

Mr. Weaver stated that he looked at the numbers and feels there is no real impact on the neighbors.

Mr. Ercolino was sworn in by Board Attorney Representative Falcone and presented his qualifications to the Board. Mr. Ercolino received his Architect education at Pratt Institute in 1987 and was licensed in 1992. He also has a Building Inspector's license. Mr. Ercolino does about 80% of his work on residential homes and residential homes and residential alterations. Mr. Ercolino was accepted by the Board as an expert.

Mr. Ercolino explained that the current conditions of the home have mobility issues. The porch is not in very good shape and it is dangerous getting outside. The homeowner also wanted a laundry on the first-floor level. To access the deck, you must go down to grade once outside.

Mr. Ercolino explained the improvements using A-3 and A-1 to provide details. Mr. Ercolino testified that the east side expansion would be about 7ft.

Mr. Tragno testified that the porch is not all season and it is an arduous task to winter proof. 30 windows must be removed and stored in the basement that is 13 steps down. Then the windows must be reinstalled in spring.

Mr. Tragno also testified that the house was not designed with a dining room. When the porch becomes a permanent structure some of that space will be used for a sunroom after the floor is raised. It is currently a hazardous 10 1/2-inch step down. Both he and Mr. Conway have fallen and tripped due to the hazard.

Mr. Ercolino testified that the proposed deck will and have access from the new dining area. Grade is fairly far down. The height of the deck would help access the exterior of the house without going down any stairs. The side yard setback is 5.6ft for the sunroom and 6ft to the deck. A variance is required due to the odd shape of the lot. It is not a perfect rectangle. This is the reason for the triangular shape of the deck. The front yard along Bendormere Avenue is 103 1/2ft. on the opposite end it is 65.185ft. The house is parallel to Wickapecko Drive. The buildable area would be extremely small. In the proposed plan for the garage, the laundry and mudroom were moved. The garage was moved to the south. Access was gained on the back stairs to go to the basement. Stairs go up to the mudroom. This improves the basement access and maintains a two-car garage.

Mr. Ercolino stated that the conditions at the property line to the east contains very lush foliage. Much of the neighbor's house to the east could not be seen. Photos from A-5 were used to illustrate the foliage.

Mr. Ercolino stated that the lot coverage and impervious coverage of the existing structures conform and even after the proposed changes will still conform.

Mr. Ercolino testified that the rear yard the requirement would be 30ft and proposed is 28.1 ft. The garage extension in the design is due to the number of stairs coming up to the first-floor level. It would be difficult to park in the garage without the extension.

Mr. Erolino stated that the 35ft from the rear was where the building is predominantly. Though no survey has been prepared of the neighboring properties, it looks as being similar distance back from the property line in the aerial photo. The aerial photo was shared on the screen. The distances are similar off of Bendermere Avenue, as well as Wickapecko Drive.

Vice Chairwoman Umfrid asked about the external finishes.

Mr. Ercolino used A-2 to describe that the existing stucco will be matched at the back and the gables will be matched. There will be siding on the upstairs back dormer and the porch would be siding. The material has not been decided for the deck but Mr. Ercolino suggests composite.

Chairman Papp opened the floor to questions by the Board of Mr. Ercolino.

Mr. Ercolino used the arial photo of A-5 to illustrate that the neighboring properties had similar distance off of Bendermere Avenue as well as Wickapecko Drive as the proposed project.

Mr. Tragno testified using photos of the back porch to note that the steps are awkward. You must stand on the second step to be able to open the door. The improper overhang drips water down onto the stairs.

Mr. Tragno stated that to currently access the house from the garage you have to go down 6 steps walk across the basement and go up 13 steps into the garage. The new design will greatly improve access with just six steps into the kitchen and mud room.

Mr. Tragno used photos from A-6 to describe the vegetation that runs the length of the space between the properties. The trees are deciduous and evergreen. The hedge row on the east and the hemlock trees were described. There is no intention to take any greenery down.

Mr. Tragno replied to Vice Chairwoman Umfrid's question stating that the vegetation was on both the homeowner's and neighbors' properties.

Mr. Tragno testified that there is a chain link fence indicated on the survey A-1 that was in place when the property was purchased and has never been changed. It will remain in place. The neighbor is in agreement to keep the fence. No one wants to touch it.

Mr. Tragno noted that the neighbor to the south has a single car garage and the view of the patio is completely blocked.

Ms. Birdsall commented that there was testimony that there will be on tree removal.

Mr. Ercolino stated that there may be minimal low shrubs removed to accommodate the deck.

Chairman Papp opened the floor to questions by the Board.

Chairman Papp front yard setback. Why is a variance necessary for front yard setback along Bendermere Avenue.

Mr. Ercolino stated that the variance was necessary because the corner of the new sunroom juts out to that dimension of 35 feet. Variance is requested because a survey was not done to establish the average of the neighboring properties, but the aerial photo shows it to be similar in alignment.

Borough Attorney Representative Falcone noted the dimension of 35 feet is existing. It is about a half a foot difference.

Chairman Papp the minimum side yard permitted is 15 ft the existing is 10ft applicant is requesting a side yard setback of 5.6ft.

Mr. Ercolino stated that the variance is required to make a usable width to the side porch, which is currently unusable. About four feet was added to accommodate this.

Chairman Papp side yard proposed is 6ft to the new deck.

Mr. Ercolino the deck is 6ft away and tapers farther away as it goes south.

Mr. Ercolino stated that the south west corner of the property line. The southwest corner of the garage is what is in violation. It was extended to have the easterly garage bay useful.

Ms. Birdsall stated that the applicant was asking the Board to consider this a C-1 variance because this is an unusually shaped property. The improvements are modest. They are not going to change the character. Given the foliage there is no impact to the neighbors. The project can be done without doing any substantial detriment to the public good and it really does not offend the zone plan of the zoning ordinance. On the other hand, it helps the applicants immensely. They intend to stay in the house. With modest improvements they will be in good shape.

Vice Chairwoman Umfrid asked if the existing A/C compressor will be removed.

Mr. Ercolino referred to one of the photos to review the location. Mr. Ercolino stated that the units will most likely be able to remain in the current location. They would surely remain on the current side of the house. It would not move closer to the neighbor.

Board Attorney Representative Falcone stated, as a reference, that the A/C unit was currently shown on the site plan as being 35.5 ft from the property line.

Chairman Papp opened the floor for public comment.

No comments were made. Chairman Papp closed the floor to public comment.

Chairman Papp stated that the application is we are talking about five variances for this particular application. For a C-1 application. The Borough has a lot of these odd-shaped lots. There are a few more variances than normal, but Mr. Papp does not see an issue with the plan.

Ms. Heinz stated that she approves of the plan and believes it is necessary. Mr. Tragno and Mr. Conway are great neighbors (not withing 200ft of Ms. Heinz).

The remaining members of the Board agreed with Ms. Heinz.

Chairman Papp asked the Board to submit their questions and comments regarding the Land Use Continuity review in advance to Gina. This request is not intended to stifle any part of the discussion, but to move the

conversion along in a timely manner.

Ms. Dalton stated that the review should be expedited because Spring and Summer are on the way. Ms. Dalton asked if applications can be postponed for the review to be completed.

Chairman Papp and Board Attorney Representative Falcone stated that legal are in place regarding applications.

Vice Chairwoman Umfrid asked if a special meeting can be scheduled as a workshop.

Board Attorney Falcone stated that he would investigate the possibility.

Mr. Weaver asked if the meeting is able happen in person at Borough Hall.

Chairman Papp asked whether the May meeting could happen at Borough Hall.

Board Secretary Kneser stated that Borough Hall remains closed to public at this time. Ms. Kneser could look into having the workshop meeting at Borough Hall, but she would not be attendance as she would not feel comfortable being in a room full of people at this time.

UPON MOTION of Vice Chairwoman Umfrid, seconded by Mr. Wasilishen, carried, the Board adjourned the meeting.

ROLL CALL:

In Favor: Chairman Papp, Councilman Butler, Vice Chairwoman Umfrid, Ms. Dalton, Mr. Tilton, Mr. Wasilishen, Ms. Heinz, Mr. Weaver, Mr. Blasucci, and Ms. Kapp

Opposed: None

Ineligible: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Ms. Kane and Mr. Wentz

Approved: _____
Mr. Papp, Chairman

Attest: _____
Gina Kneser, Secretary