

RAMSEY ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
May 17, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

Chairwoman Strollo called the regular meeting of the Board of Adjustment of the Borough of Ramsey to order at or about 7:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairwoman Strollo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairwoman Strollo read the Open Public Meetings Law notice.

ATTENDANCE	PRESENT	ABSENT
Mr. Crimmins	X	
Mr. FitzPatrick	X	
Ms. Jarvis	X	
Mr. Giancaspro		X
Mr. Grissoni, Alt. 2	X	
Mr. Molinari, Alt 1	X	
Mr. Raspantini	X	
Mr. Scuderi	X	
Chairwoman Strollo	X	
Mr. Rogers Esq., Board Attorney	X	
Mr. Hals, Board Engineer	X	
Mr. Burgis, Board Planner	X	
Ms. Lupo, Board Admin. Secretary	X	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of April 19, 2023 was made by Mr. Crimmins, seconded by Mr. Molinari. All eligible members voted in favor. Carried.

RESOLUTION(S) - None

BOARD COMMENTS - None

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

PUBLIC HEARING

Ramsey Housing, Inc. - Continuation
Block 2308, Lot 1; 13 North Central Ave.
Site Plan with Variances and Soil Movement

Charles Sarlo, Esq. appeared on behalf the applicant filling in for Gerald Salerno, Esq.

Michael Vreeland of 111 Howard Boulevard, Suite 110, Mt. Arlington, N.J. was sworn in and deemed an expert in planning. Mr. Vreeland referred to the site plan and photograph exhibits to describe the existing conditions. Mr. Vreeland said that there are businesses to the south and east, the Ramsey Police Department to the north and a residence to the west across New Street. He further testified that the proposed use for a group home for supportive housing is an “inherently beneficial use” that meets the criteria for the granting of a d(1) use variance. Mr. Vreeland said that the proposed use inherently serves the public good and is recognized in the Borough’s Master Plan as an important goal for future development. His testimony also opined that there is a very limited negative impact on the neighborhood and the zoning plan in the area. The existing conditions earlier described should be seen as acceptable to the extent that the coverage of the building is 43%, but the improvements proposed of an enhanced drainage system, improved landscaping and architectural improvements will all enhance the property to positively impact the neighboring properties. He identified the numerous bulk variances that are needed and that they are subsumed by the use variance request, since the zoning was designed to address the planning and design needs of single family use and the inherently beneficial purpose of the group home for supportive housing outweighs any negative impact that could be caused by this use. In that regard, he sees limited impact on the zoning plan for the area of this application because of its limited physical impact and the proposed use is one sought by the Master Plan.

BOARD QUESTIONS - None

PUBLIC QUESTIONS - None

Thomas M. Toronto, President of Bergen County's United Way, was sworn in. Mr. Toronto said that in partnership with Madeline Corporation, they build affordable homes for working families, veterans, older adults and individuals with developmental disabilities. Mr. Toronto said that he’s been involved with about 39 projects throughout Bergen County. Mr. Toronto said that there is a need for supportive housing for folks with developmental disabilities to live independently. Mr. Toronto said that the proposed six (6) affordable units will provide credits towards the next round in affordable housing. When discussing the parking variances needed, Mr. Toronto said that in his experience that it’s rare and he couldn’t think of any residents in group homes for supportive housing who have driver’s licenses so there’s not a need for

parking spaces for their vehicles. Mr. Toronto said that the four (4) proposed parking spaces are adequate for staff and visitors. Mr. Toronto said that the site is centrally located and within walking distance to shopping, restaurants and jobs. Mr. Toronto said that this facility is equipped for long term stay for the residents. Mr. Sarlo mentioned and it was agreed that a deed restriction that maintains the use for supportive housing and qualification as affordable housing credits for the Borough is necessary to be executed by Ramsey Housing and the Borough.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Mr. Scuderi asked Mr. Toronto to describe the parking demand for the residents. Mr. Toronto replied that there's very little parking demand for the residents. Mr. Grissoni asked Mr. Toronto if many of the 39 projects he has been involved with are located by schools. Mr. Toronto said yes.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS - None

Joseph Burgis was sworn in. Mr. Burgis commented on his review dated April 11, 2023. He explained case law as it relates to D-1 variances and the prongs of balancing the positive and negative criteria. He stated that the application furthers the goals of the master plan and serves Ramsey in meeting COAH goals. He agreed that the parking variances will not create a problem with a 20 foot aisle and only four (4) on site spaces would be diminimus exceptions to the Residential Site Improvement Standards. He further confirmed the proposed use as Inherently beneficial and the Borough would receive credit towards the 4th round of Affordable Housing.

BOARD QUESTIONS

Ms. Jarvis asked Mr. Burgis to explain how the bulk variances are subsumed under the use variance request. Mr. Burgis did so.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS - None

David Hals was sworn in. Mr. Hals commented on his review dated February 24, 2023.

BOARD QUESTIONS - None

PUBLIC QUESTIONS – None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Councilwoman Woods commented that the Mayor & Council fully support the proposed plan.

Councilman Popolo commented from a personal perspective and stated that there's a dire need for housing like this and fully supports the application.

Lenny DiTomaso of Ramsey N.J. fully supports the application.

