

**RAMSEY ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**  
**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**  
**September 20, 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	
Mr. Giancaspro	X	
Mr. Grissoni, Alt. 2	X	
Ms. Jarvis	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. Novak, Board Planner	X	
Ms. Lupo, Board Admin. Secretary	X	

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

**RESOLUTION(S)** - None

**BOARD COMMENTS** - None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None

**PUBLIC HEARING****David & Joy Hamilton, Block 2901, Lot 15; 189 South Central Ave.**

Mr. Rogers verified that the applicants had noticed properly and that the hearing could proceed.

Summary:

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing detached garage and construct a new 2-car garage attached to the existing home.

The following variances are required:

- a. Driveway Setback to Property Line (Chapter 34-15.2.c)
  - 5' required
  - 3' proposed
- b. Corner Lot Setback-Front Yard (Chapter 34-15.2.g)
  - 20' required
  - 16' existing
  - 10' proposed
- c. Maximum Building Coverage (Chapter 34-15.2.i)
  - 15% maximum permitted
  - 22.9% existing
  - 23.5% proposed
- d. Maximum Impervious Coverage (Chapter 34-15.2.k)
  - 35% maximum permitted
  - 48.4% existing
  - 48.7% proposed
- e. Number of Accessory Structures (Chapter 34-4.5.c)
  - 1 permitted
  - 2 existing & proposed

The existing and proposed driveway is 32' wide within the right-of-way of Orchard Place. The maximum permitted driveway width is 20' in accordance with Chapter 17-2.7.

David Hamilton was sworn in. Mr. Hamilton presented the following exhibits:

Exhibit A-1 Photos

Exhibit A-2 Architectural Plan last revised 07/21/23

Mr. Hamilton said that the current garage was built around 1900 and is in bad repair. Rather than replace the structure that's beginning to show its age, they decided to move the garage from its current location, taking it off the property line, to an existing corner of the house. Mr. Hamilton said that they're not really increasing the size of the garage. Mr. Hamilton said that in conjunction with that they will be removing the large picket fence that runs around the property.

**BOARD QUESTIONS**

Mr. Scuderi asked Mr. Hamilton if there are any other improvements proposed. Mr. Hamilton said that they will be grassing the current driveway three feet from the property line. Chairwoman Strollo asked Mr. Hamilton to describe the two framed sheds on the property. Mr. Hamilton did so. Mr. Hamilton said that he can dispose of the smaller storage shed that's roughly 8x3x3.

Kenneth Kaefer of 712 Summit Avenue, Franklin Lakes, N.J. was sworn in and deemed an expert in architecture. Mr. Kaefer said that the proposed plan was to attached the garage to the northwest corner of the existing home which would tie into the mudroom and serve as the access point to the inside of the garage. Mr. Kaefer said that this is the best way to locate the garage on the site. The addition would blend into the architecture of the house by having its form and rooflines compatible with the house. Mr. Kaefer said that they require a C-1 hardship variance because the lot is undersized. The lot is 12,355 sf where 14,000 sf is required. The present house and pool limit what construction can take place and as a result they can't conform to the bulk requirements of the Ordinance. Mr. Kaefer summarized the variances. Mr. Kaefer said that the second shed will be removed as testified by Mr. Hamilton so that variance will be eliminated.

**BOARD QUESTIONS**

Chairwoman Strollo inquired about the 32' wide driveway. Mr. Kaefer said that the width is to allow for three cars to park on that driveway and keep them off of Orchard Place. Mr. Hals continued that the 32' wide driveway is not a variance. It's actually in the Borough Code under Chapter 17 where this board can't grant the variance for. It would need to be approved by the Mayor & Council. Mr. Scuderi asked Mr. Kaefer if other alternatives were looked at. Mr. Kaefer said that there was no other place to locate the garage. Mr. Crimmins asked Mr. Kaefer if the concrete pad underneath the garage will be removed. Mr. Kaefer said yes. The driveway will be extended from there three feet off the property line. Mr. Hals said that the existing detached garage is nonconforming because it's in the front yard of the house and it's not permitted in the front yard. The relocating of the garage will eliminate that nonconformity as well as correct the front yard, side yard and separation from building requirements. Mr. Hals said that the biggest benefit is that they are adding an additional seven foot setback so the cars will be able to park in front of the garage and not overhang in the street. Mr. Hals said that this is a direct benefit to the community as a whole.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS** - None

**PUBIC COMMENTS** - None

A motion to approve the application subject to the conditions specified by Mr. Rogers was made by Ms. Jarvis, seconded by Mr. Crimmins.

Roll Call:        AYES:        Mr. Crimmins, Mr. FitzPatrick, Mr. Giancaspro,  
                              Ms. Jarvis, Mr. Raspantini, Mr. Scuderi,  
                              Chairwoman Strollo

                              NAYES:

                              ABSTAIN:      Mr. Grissoni, Mr. Molinari

                              ABSENT:

Carried.

**Mechanic LLC - Continuation**  
**Block 4902, Lot 9; 26 Mechanic St.**  
**Site Plan with Variances and Soil Movement**

Brian M. Chewcaskie, Esq. of Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs LLC, 169 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland, N.J. appeared on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Rogers verified that the applicants had noticed properly and that the hearing could proceed.

Summary:

The applicant has reduced the size of the proposed 3 units eliminating the variances for the front yard setback from both Prospect Avenue and Mechanic Street, and the maximum living space of the middle unit.

The following variances have been identified with the proposal:

- a. d(5) Density Variance for the Proposed 3 Dwelling Units
  - 4,000 SF/DU required
  - 2,849 SF/DU proposed
- b. Maximum Building Height – Number of Stories (Chapter 34-19.2.a)
  - 2 ½ stories maximum
  - 3 stories proposed
- c. Rear Yard Setback – Deck (Chapter 34-19.2.d)
  - 20’ required
  - 12.5’ proposed
- d. Maximum Building Coverage (Chapter 34-19.2.i)
  - 20% maximum
  - 38.47% proposed
- e. Maximum Impervious Coverage (Chapter 34-19.2.j)
  - 40% maximum
  - 47.67% proposed
- f. Number of parking spaces – RSIS (de minimis exception)
  - 7 required
  - 6 provided

Mr. Chewcaskie provided the following exhibits:  
Exhibit A-8 Site Plan last revised August 2, 2023

John Jacob Gilchrist of 8 Coach Lane, Upper Saddle River, N.J. was previously sworn in and deemed an expert in architecture and engineering. Mr. Gilchrist provided a review of the revisions.

### **BOARD QUESTIONS**

Chairwoman Strollo asked Mr. Gilchrist if smaller units were considered. Mr. Gilchrist said that wasn't considered. Chairwoman Strollo asked Mr. Gilchrist if consideration was given to reduce the three stories since no other residential building in the area has a three story building. Mr. Gilchrist said they wanted a full three stories because the garage takes up much of the first floor then there's a full floor of living area and full floor of three bedrooms. Mr. Gilchrist said that this is a better product. Chairwoman Strollo had a concern with the proposed three stories and how it changes the streetscape. Chairwoman Strollo commented that she was expecting to review the details of the plan for the site next door which went to the Planning Board without any variances. Mr. FitzPatrick asked Mr. Gilchrist if they proposed a two bedroom townhouse would they need a third floor. Mr. Gilchrist said they could make the bedrooms smaller. Mr. Scuderi asked Mr. Gilchrist to explain the design differences between a two and a half story building vs. a three story building. Mr. Gilchrist did so. Mr. Hals replied that if they proposed two bedroom units, there wouldn't be a need for the parking variance because they would meet the RSIS requirement for parking. Mr. Hals asked Mr. Gilchrist if he looked at the size of the units of the approved plan that went to the Planning Board. Mr. Gilchrist said no. Mr. Hals continued that the units were 1900 sf of living space and they are proposing 2700 sf on a lot that is a third of the size of the other lot. Chairwoman Strollo asked Mr. Gilchrist to explain the hardship. Mr. Chewcaskie said that they are asking for a C-2 flexible. Mr. Chewcaskie said that this is better zoning alternative because there are mitigating factors based upon the design build.

### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Glen Minetti of 14 Mechanic Street asked Mr. Gilchrist if the decks were eliminated would you still require a variance. Mr. Gilchrist said no.

Avedis Caparyan of Brothers Realty asked Mr. Gilchrist if the property could be developed without any variances. Mr. Gilchrist said yes.

Tom Dooney of 35-37 Prospect Street asked Mr. Gilchrist if landscaping or any fences being proposed. Mr. Gilchrist said no.

Dennis of 14 Mechanic Street asked Mr. Gilchrist if they were to propose two units would that better comply with the impervious coverage. Mr. Gilchrist said yes.

After a five minute break Mr. Chewcaskie asked if the matter would be carried to the October meeting.

Mr. Rogers said that the application will be carried to October 18, 2023. No new notices are required.

**NEW BUSINESS** - None

**OLD BUSINESS** - None

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Ms. Jarvis, seconded by Mr. to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:00 pm. All voted in favor. Carried.