

**BOROUGH OF RARITAN**  
Planning Board Reorganization & Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
January 22, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Borough of Raritan Municipal Building. The Open Public Meetings statement was read into the record.

**REORGANIZATION MEETING**

**OATHS OF OFFICE**

The Mayor announced that the following members were being appointed/reappointed: Councilman Tozzi (Class 3); Mr. Cunningham (Class 4); Ms. Liptak (Alternate 1) and Mr. Jayaraj (Alternate 2) The Board Attorney swore them in.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

• **CHAIRPERSON**

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Councilman Tozzi and unanimously carried to nominate **Tony LoPresti** as Chairman. Seeing no further nominations, Mr. LoPresti was designated Chairperson.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

• **VICE CHAIRPERSON**

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Councilman Tozzi and unanimously carried to nominate **Denise Carra** as Vice Chairperson. Seeing no further nominations, Ms. Carra was designated Vice Chairperson.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

• **ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**ABSENT:** Mr. LoPresti, Mr. DeCicco, Mr. Brown

**ALSO PRESENT:** Matthew Flynn, Esq., Board Attorney; Joseph Brosnan, PE, PP, AICP, Board Engineer&Planner; Lou Gara, Construction Official, Zoning Officer, Board Secretary

**AD HOC COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

There was a discussion about whether the TRC should serve as the Redevelopment Advisory Committee. Mr. Gara suggested that the Redevelopment Advisory Committee could handle both. Reconstitution and role of the **Redevelopment Advisory Committee** was tabled for further consideration after extensive discussion.

Reconstitution and role of the **Technical Review Committee (TRC)** was also tabled. The need for the **Pedestrian Bike & Safety Committee** was also discussed. No formal appointments to any ad hoc were made.

**RESOLUTIONS**

• **PB-2025-01 (MEETING DATES)**

**Motion** by Mayor Carra, **seconded** by Mr. Murphy and unanimously carried to adopt the resolution memorializing meeting dates.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

• **PB-2025-02 (OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS)**

**Motion** by Mayor Carra, **seconded** by Ms. Windrem and unanimously carried to designate the Courier News of Bridgewater and the Star Ledger as the official newspapers of the Planning Board for 2025 and adopt the resolution, as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

• **PB-2025-03 (PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS)**

**Motion** by Councilman Tozzi, **seconded** by Mr. Cunningham and unanimously carried to adopt a resolution appointing Joe Brosnan of Van Cleef Engineering as Board Engineer and Matt Flynn of Savo Schalk Corsini Warner Gillespie O'Grodnick & Fisher as Board Attorney. The Board also appointed Mark Peck of Florio Perucci Steinhardt as Conflict Attorney.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

• **PB-2025-04 (BOARD SECRETARY)**

**Motion** by Mayor Carra, **seconded** by Ms. Windrem and unanimously carried to adopt a resolution appointing Lou Gara as Board Administrator/Secretary.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT & ADJOURNMENT TO REGULAR MEETING**

Seeing as there was no public comment, Mr. Cunningham made a **Motion** which was **seconded** by Mr. Murphy and unanimously carried by voice vote to adjourn the Reorganization Meeting and proceed to the Regular Meeting.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting was called to order.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj

**ABSENT:** Mr. LoPresti, Mr. DeCicco, Mr. Brown

**ALSO PRESENT:** Matthew Flynn, Esq., Board Attorney; Joseph Brosnan, PE, PP, AICP, Board Engineer&Planner; Lou Gara, Construction Official, Zoning Officer, Board Secretary

**MINUTES**

**Motion** by Mr. Murphy, **seconded** by Mayor Carra and unanimously carried to adopt the Minutes of **December 18, 2024**, as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Liptak

**ENGINEERING/PLANNING REPORT**

Mr. Brosnan provided status updates on the Richard Street drainage project and construction of the new municipal building. He also spoke about the resolution compliance process with respect to Raritan Crossing in particular. Mr. Brosnan advised that the Housing Element/Fair Share Plan would be done by Jim Kyle and that there would be a presentation coming up before the Planning Board. He spoke about the status of any Master Plan Re-exam. Mr. Brosnan explained the purpose of the re-exam and presented options. He was directed to provide an estimate for working on same to Eric.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**Louis & Ana Mayen (#24-006)**  
**1034 Helene Place (Block 65, Lot 29)**  
**Bulk Variance/s**

**Motion** by Mayor Carra, **seconded** by Councilman Tozzi and unanimously carried to adopt the memorializing resolution, as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Liptak

**Aman Handa (#23-007)**  
**10&10b John F. Goellner Drive (Block 32, Lot 15)**  
**Extension of Time to File Deeds**

The Board Attorney provided an overview/confirmed that he received a letter request for an extension to file deeds.

**Motion** by Ms. Windrem, **seconded** by Mr. Murphy and unanimously carried to grant an extension to file deeds/adopt a memorializing resolution with respect to same.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Liptak

At 7:02, new Board member Mr. Gussman arrived and was sworn in by the Board Attorney.

**Adoption of Annual Report on Variance Applications (2024)**

Adoption of the annual report was tabled in order to allow for a full complement of the Board.

**APPLICATIONS/HEARINGS**

**Joseph Naser (#24-007)**

**57&59 LaGrange Street (Block 93, Lot 1&2)**

**Site Plan (Completeness Only)**

Mr. Brosnan explained that this is LaGrange St. redevelopment and confirmed that the documentation submitted was sufficient for purposes of completeness. The applicant's attorney, Christopher D. Ferrara, commented on the status of completeness.

**Motion** by Councilman Tozzi, **seconded** by Mr. Cunningham and unanimously carried to deem the application complete for hearing.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj  
Mr. Gussman

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mayor Carra, Ms. Carra

**Laura Munoz Galindo (#24-008)**

**80 East Somerset Street (Block 111, Lot 12)**

**Use Variance (Completeness Only)**

Mr. Brosnan provided an overview of the proposal to convert the first floor of an office building into additional apartments and confirmed that the documentation submitted was sufficient for purposes of completeness.

**Motion** by Ms. Windrem, **seconded** by Mr. Jayaraj and unanimously carried to deem the application complete for hearing.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj, Mr. Gussman

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi

**Gregory Natale (#24-005)**

**63 Thompson St. (Block 84, Lot 4)**

**Use Variance**

Mayor Carra and Councilman Tozzi recused at 7:11 and left the dais.

**Gregory Natale** was sworn in and provided an overview of the proposal to add on to the existing structure at 63 Thompson Street. Mr. Natale presented his witness, Joseph Vince, PE, PP, engineer and planner, Mr. Vince was also sworn in (and qualified).

Mr. Vince explained that the existing, non-conforming 1130 square foot structure is a two-family home on an undersized lot with substandard width owned by the applicant's family since 1974 and likely built in the 20's. He explained that the proposal is to expand the 2<sup>nd</sup> story by way of adding a 340 square foot addition which would cover the existing footprint. He testified that the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor currently has 2 bedrooms while the first-floor unit has three. He clarified that the 2<sup>nd</sup> story does not currently take up the entire footprint and that there would be no increase in the number of bedrooms. Mr. Vince explained that the proposal also includes plans to renovate/modernize the first floor.

Mr. Vince referred to the survey that was submitted with the application. He reviewed existing conditions, including the front covered porch and asphalt drive leading to a detached garage. He testified that the existing coverage is 76.1%.

Switching to the architectural plans which he indicated were as shown on the Borough website, he reviewed the existing first floor plan, describing proposed interior renovations. He spoke about the porch towards the rear which would be covered with a new second story and provided details about a possible bump out which would have no impact on variances. He discussed the area of expansion and confirmed that no site work would take place. He confirmed that there would be no change in coverage.

Mr. Vince reviewed the elevations at length and testified that the proposal would be consistent with other homes in the neighborhood. He confirmed that there would be no change in footprint and clarified in response to a question from the Board that the home would remain a two family, occupied by his own extended family.

Moving on to Planning Testimony, Mr. Vince testified that the non-conformities existed prior to the zone change, including the use. He reviewed the extent of relief needed given the substandard lot area of 4400 square feet (no change proposed); substandard lot width of 40' where 75' is required (no change proposed); Front yard of 13' where 25' is required (not exacerbating but included as variance); rear yard of 44' where 35' is required (conforming); side yard of 1.8' where 8' is required (along northerly side) not being exacerbated but acknowledged since the mass of the 2<sup>nd</sup> story there is changing; Combined Side yard of 13'7" where 20' is required; existing coverage of 76.1% where 30% is permitted (pre-existing, non-conforming not subject to change and d(2) variance relief for expansion of a non-conforming structure.

Mr. Vince testified that the property is well suited for two families because it exists in this manner and is permitted by ordinance to remain as such. Calling the proposal "modest," he explained that the intent was to modernize the structure.

An aerial photo from google earth was marked as **Exhibit A-1** and discussed.

A "Property Use Exhibit" prepared today by him was marked as **Exhibit A-2** and discussed.

A collection of photos taken by him (12 pages) were marked as **Exhibit A-3** and discussed.

The impacts on parking were discussed. Mr. Vince testified that there would be no change in parking requirements as the bedroom count, which dictates the number of parking spaces required would not be changing.

Other structures in the neighborhood were discussed. Mr. Vince testified that there would be no adverse impacts to the neighborhood or open spaces and that the proposal was in character with neighboring homes.

As to the positive criteria, Mr. Vince testified that the proposal would advance the purposes of the MLUL.

As to the negative criteria, he testified that there would be no substantial detriment to the public good, to the ordinance or the Master Plan. He testified that it would advance the goals of the Master Plan (#1 and #2 specifically).

Ms. Carra asked about aesthetics. Mr. Natale testified that the goal would be to remove the chain link fence and install something more residential. He then explained that he plans to wrap the first story in stone and cover the second story in board and batten. He discussed concept plans for a walkout.

Mr. Vince addressed comments in Mr. Brosnan's review memo. He explained that they were requesting a waiver for topography within 200'. Mr. Brosnan explained that the request for this information was made in an effort to

understand the neighboring runoff. Drainage was discussed. Mr. Brosnan asked that a modest stormwater measure be considered to offset the existing coverage numbers. Mr. Natale offered that the side asphalt walkway could be covered to grass. Potential landscaping upon removal of the fence was discussed. The applicant consented to working with Mr. Brosnan on mitigation measures as a condition of approval.

Questions from the Board were solicited. Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Windrem spoke in favor of the application. The applicant confirmed that there would be no addition to the attic.

**Public Question/Comment Period**

Speaking from the audience, **Nick Carra of 20 Elmer St.** suggested that the proposal would be beneficial to the rehabilitation designation. **Don Tozzi** (also speaking from the audience) spoke in favor of the application as well.

**The Vote:**

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Ms. Liptak and unanimously carried to approve the application with conditions as enumerated by the Board Attorney.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Jayaraj, Mr. Gussman

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Mr. Flynn reviewed the requirements for New Board Member training. Mr. Brosnan spoke about mandatory stormwater training. Mr. Gara advised that he would be sending out information and would continue their membership in the NJPO.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

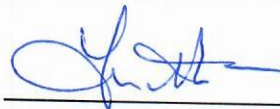
Ms. Carra opened the floor to public comment.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** by Mayor Carra, **seconded** by Councilman Tozzi and unanimously carried to adjourn at 7:52.

Respectfully submitted,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Lou Gara  
Board Administrator/Secretary

Approved: 2/26/2025