

**METUCHEN ZONING BOARD
MINUTES**

November 9, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm by Daniel Topping, Chairman, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Daniel Topping, Chairman	Iris Delgado
Brian Tobin	Tom DiMartino, Zoning Officer
Angela Sielski	Robert Renaud, Board Attorney
Jonathan Rabinowitz, Vice Chairman	Adam Colicchio, Board Attorney
Byron Sondergard	Kim Kirk, Board Secretary

Absent:

Jonathan Capp, Alt. I	Robert Mannix, Board Engineer
Ehrin Ziccardi, Alt. II	Christopher Cosenza, Board Planner

RESOLUTION:

23-1360 Saint Joseph High School – *Preliminary and final major site plan and “d(3)” variance approval, exception, request for waiver of submission requirements and request to modify a prior condition of approval to permit temporary lights on the athletic field and allow use of the athletic field by third parties.* (approved 10-12-23)

145 Plainfield Avenue, Block 2 Lot 1

Motion to approve the resolution was made by Brian Tobin and seconded by Byron Sondergard. Iris Delgado recused herself from voting on the application. Angela Sielski, Byron Sondergard, Brian Tobin, Jonathan Rabinowitz, and Daniel Topping all voted yes. Motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

22-1318 Frank Kuo-Fang Shen – Applicant is seeking “c” variances to reconstruct the detached single-family dwelling, and construct a two-story addition, second-floor addition, one-story addition including attached two-car garage, and a wrap-around porch.

303 Grove Avenue, Block 107 Lot 5

Mr. Topping stated this application was briefly in front of the board and withdrawn.

Mr. Wiley, Applicant's Attorney stated that he has two witnesses that were not yet present. He asked the Board for a few minutes.

Mr. Topping agreed.

Mr. Wiley stated that his architect would arrive shortly and that his engineer Paul Fletcher could not be reached. He gave background on the application. The general contractor discovered substantial parts of the existing building were impaired. He noted that more than 50 % needed to be renovated, now becoming a new home. Now coming in for two bulk variances: two front yard setbacks, one facing Grove Avenue and one facing East Chestnut Avenue.

Mr. John Riggio, Applicant's Architect, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud and accepted as an expert witness by the Board.

Mr. Wiley asked Mr. Riggio to describe what was on the property prior to construction.

Mr. Riggio stated there was an existing one story one family house. Construct a simple 2nd floor addition and adding two car garage to the house. He continued to describe the variance requested.

Mr. Wiley showed a set of architectural drawings.

Mr. Riggio verified the drawings of the new plans are correct.

Mr. Wiley stated that the garage puts the facade at over 40 feet.

Mr. Riggio reviewed the items in Mr. Cosenza's review memo, under section 7.6 Architectural Design, agreeing he can comply with all items addressed in the memo.

Mr. Topping asked about finished walls in attic and basement.

Mr. Riggio explained that they are short walls, 7 feet high. Yes, there will be finished walls. They will have windows in the attic space. The basement is unfinished with a toilet room, sink, washer, and dryer as on original plans.

Mr. Topping asked if there was a washer and dryer on the second floor, confused as they are seen in the basement as well.

Mr. Riggio confirmed yes there is a washer and dryer on the second floor as well.

Mr. Renaud asked if Mr. Riggio drew the original plans and if they are the same as the plans submitted for the variance application.

Mr. Riggio stated that he did draw them and that they are not the same as the original plans. They adjusted plans to meet the new house requirements. That would be moving the one-story addition on the side, adding two covered porches. The revised plans are dated 8/17/23.

Mr. Renaud asked why the project stopped, they did not have the covered porches on the plans?

Mr. Riggio answered yes.

Mr. Topping stated that Mr. Riggio will have additional testimony when returning to the Board. The meeting will be carried due to absence of the engineer and planner.

Mr. Topping opened the floor to the public for questions.

Gwen Torry and Carlyle Owen, residing at 301 Grove Avenue, needing clarification on a 2, 2 ½, 3 story.

Mr. Topping explained the zoning term and confirmed the maximum height of 35 feet, the neighbor's concerns are because of the considerable changes being made.

Ms. Sielski stated that the initial plans were not seen before the Board.

Mr. Topping clarified that the only option is to see what is now being proposed.

Mr. Topping advised Mr. Riggio to do some homework, making well with the neighbors. Stating a need for fence mending and other items. There is a lack of general maintenance. Expressing neighbors having an overall concern of getting some resolution, then construction can continue.

Mr. Topping asked for a motion to close the public portion. Motion to was made by Mr. Sondergard and seconded by Ms. Delgado. Voice vote taken. All members voted yes. Motion carried.

In closing, Mr. Topping stated that it has been many months with this application. He advised Mr. Wiley to inspire more orderliness, expressed frustration and the need for clarity for the Board.

Mr. Renaud announced that the application would be carried to Thursday December 14, 2023, at 7:30 in same room. No additional notice will be provided.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Rabinowitz and seconded by Mr. Sondergard. Roll call taken. All Board Members voted yes. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Kirk

Board Secretary