

**BASS RIVER TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 20, 2023**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE**

Chairwoman Ruffo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the flag salute.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT STATEMENT**

Chairwoman Ruffo read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement into the record.

**RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

	PRESENT	ABSENT
Deborah Buzby-Cope	x	
Nicholas Capriglione	Absent	x
Russell Bien, Chairman	x	
Arthur Neuweiler	x	
Richard Steele	x	
Mary Delois	x	
Winfield G. Allen, Jr.	x	
Abigail C. Spagnola	x	
Bonnie J. Adams	x	
Carrie Crowley	Oath of Office/Sworn in	

**ALSO PRESENT**

Solicitor	Christopher J. Norman, Esquire - The Platt Law Group
Engineer	Robert Romano, P.E. – Owen, Little and Associates
Secretary	Laura Moyer

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes	August 16, 2023	Tabled.
Minutes	September 20, 2023	Meeting cancelled due to no agenda items.
Minutes	October 18, 2023	Meeting cancelled due to no agenda items.
Minutes	November 15, 2023	Meeting cancelled due to no agenda items.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Viking Yacht - Building Expansions - PB Application # 2023-05.**
- William Highland, Esquire appearing with the applicant.
- Jeff Staub, CEO of Viking Yacht, Mr. Morrisey, Engineer for the applicant were sworn in by Mr. Norman. Both testified in support of the application, by describing the scope of the project.
- Robert Romano, Township Engineer was also sworn in by Mr. Norman.
- Outstanding items which were outlined by the Township Engineer will be addressed by Viking Yacht.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **Viking Yacht - Building Expansions - PB Application 2023-05**

Ms. Ruffo opened the meeting to public comment at 7:39 p.m.

#### **Rick Adams - Loveland Lane / Mr. Adams was sworn in by Mr. Norman.**

- Mr. Adams asked if Viking Yacht has any open permits at this time for work being done.
- Mr. Staub stated there are no other building permits open; yes, for plumbing permits.

#### **Pearl Koteles – 5 Plymouth Road / Ms. Koteles was sworn in by Mr. Norman.**

- Is in favor of all Viking Yacht improvements.
- The business is an asset to the Township.

With no further comments from the public the Public Hearing was closed.

#### **Motion to close public comment.**

Moved by: **Steele** Second by: **Neuweiler.**

Ayes: Buzby-Cope, Ruffo, Neuweiler, Delois, Allen, Spagnola, Steele, Adams, Crowley

Nays: None

Absent: Capriglione.

Motion: Carried.

## **BOARD COMMENTS**      Reminder for a complete full key graph and spelling corrections.

### **Motion to approve Viking Yacht-Building Expansions - PB Application # 2023-05**

Moved by: **Neuweiler** Second by: **Delois.**

Ayes: Buzby-Cope, Ruffo, Neuweiler, Delois, Allen, Spagnola, Steele, Adams, Crowley

Nays: None

Absent: Capriglione.

Motion: Carried.

## **INFORMAL BUSINESS**

### **Kevin Turlish on behalf of Paul and Virginia Taylor**

#### **East Greenbush Road, Block 38 Lot 3 – Vacant land – 10.08 acres**

- Asking for guidance on having cows and pigs.
- **It was determined that the property is:**
- Class 1 – Residential.
- Present zoning does not allow for farming.
- Not in Pinelands.
- Piggeries are not allowed in any zone of the township.
- Advised to make formal application for variance.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Maple River LLC – School Renovations, PB Application 2023-04 11 North Maple Avenue – Block 56, Lot 36 and 37**

- Ms. Buzby-Cope recused herself from this portion of the meeting.
- The Board will decide what is the best course for it to take to make an informed decision on the pending use variance application. Per the Pinelands Commission's guidance, the Board may elect to schedule the application for the next hearing date in January or wait for issuance of a Certificate of Filing from the Pinelands Commission.
- The Board made a procedural determination to hear the use variance application at its January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, based upon the supplemental site plan related information provided by Mr. Blech.
- Given the significant public turnout at the first meeting at the Fire Hall in which the application was continued, the venue should remain the same to ensure due process to the public. The venue location should be reflected in the public notice.
- The application for use variance relief that the Yeshiva would provide dorm room accommodations for 35 students, attendance by 7 day-time students, under the oversight of 3 staff members, and that no students would be permitted to have motor vehicles on the premises (as indicated by Mr. Blech in his email). This may provide some context to the public in their decision whether to attend the public hearing.
- Maple Rivers, LLC should consider that the Pinelands Commission has determined that the proposed conversion of the public elementary school to a private school with boarding of students constitutes a “change of use”, thereby meeting its definition of “development” and triggering the Pinelands Commission jurisdiction. In this setting, the use variance may be subject to submission of a subsequent application for site plan approval.
- Of course, if Maple Rivers, LLC decides to wait for a Certificate of Filing and amends its application for use variance and site plan approval, there may only be a need for one land use application, rather than two separate ones. However, given Mr. Blech’s insistence to have the use variance application scheduled earlier for the January hearing date, a bifurcated hearing process will be required. Of course, Maple Rivers, LLC still has the option to wait for the Certificate of Filing and go through a public hearing process with only one application.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **Motion was made to opened the meeting to public comment.**

Moved by: **Delois**                      Second by: **Neuweiler**

Ayes:                      Buzby-Cope, Ruffo, Neuweiler, Delois, Allen, Spagnola, Steele, Adams, Crowley

Nays:                      None.

Absent:                      Capriglione.

Motion:                      Carried.

### **Pearl Koteles – 5 Plymouth Road**

- Concerned that there would be more occupants than allowed.
  - Concerns were addressed.

**Mr. Spagnola - Stage Road**

- Asked if there were property rateables.
  - The applicant is subject to whatever laws for nonprofits with tax exemptions.
  - Tax assessment information cannot be considered by the Land Use Board in the review of any Development Application, including those requested. The Land Use Board may only render decisions based on land use considerations.

No further comments from the public the Public Hearing was closed.

**Motion was made to close the Public Hearing.**

Moved by: **Steele** Second by: **Delois.**  
Ayes: Buzby-Cope, Ruffo, Neuweiler, Delois, Allen, Spagnola, Steele, Adams, Crowley  
Nays: None  
Absent: Capriglione.  
Motion: Carried.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** - It was announced the next Planning Board Meeting will be held on:  
January 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.  
Bass River Municipal Building  
c/o New Gretna Volunteer Fire Co. / STA 421  
3 North Maple Avenue  
Bass River, New Jersey 08087

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.**

Moved by: **Neuweiler** Second by: **Allen.**  
Ayes: Buzby-Cope, Ruffo, Neuweiler, Delois, Allen, Spagnola, Steele, Adams, Crowley  
Nays: None  
Absent: Capriglione.  
Motion: Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Laura Moyer*

Laura Moyer  
Planning/Zoning Board Secretary