

**TOWNSHIP OF MAHWAH  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**JUNE 07, 2023**

The combined public/work session meeting of the Board of Adjustment of the Township of Mahwah was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Mr. Jackson, Vice Chairman, with the reading of the opening statement followed by the flag salute and a reminder that Board of Adjustment meetings are being videotaped and broadcast live. It was noted that adequate notice of the meeting was provided.

These minutes are a synopsis of the meeting. A verbatim audio tape recording is on file with the Board Secretary at the Board of Adjustment Office, 475 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, NJ. Copies of the tapes may be purchased for a fee.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Coplin  
Mr. Jackson  
Mr. Kearney  
Mr. Lockwood  
Mr. Sitar

**ABSENT:** Mr. Calijone  
Mr. Cannava  
Mr. Martin  
Mr. Rabolli

**ATTORNEY:** Mr. Ben R. Cascio, Esq.

**PROFESSIONALS:** Ms. Kristin Russell, PP, Colliers Engineering & Design  
Mr. Michael J. Kelly, PE, Township Engineer  
Ms. Geraldine Entrup, Administrative Officer

**I. APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

Colliers Engineering & Design	May 16, 2023	General Board Matters	\$87.50
Ben Cascio, Esq.	May 22, 2023	Meeting Attendance	\$500.00

A motion to approve the bill for Colliers Engineering & Design was made by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Coplin.

A roll call vote revealed 4 aye votes by Mr. Coplin, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kearney, and Mr. Sitar. One nay vote was given by Mr. Lockwood.

A motion to approve the bills for Mr. Ben Cascio, Esq was made by Mr. Kearney and seconded by Mr. Coplin.

A roll call vote revealed 4 aye votes by Mr. Coplin, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kearney, and Mr. Sitar. One nay vote was given by Mr. Lockwood.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**1. MINUTES OF MAY 17, 2023**

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Sitar, seconded by Mr. Coplin. All eligible Members voted in favor.

**III. MEMORIALIZING RESOLUTIONS:**

**1. DOCKET #1536-23 – THE PLANT CHURCH  
125 GLASGOW TERRACE, BLOCK 135, LOTS 1 &2**

Resolution granting a “C” variance to build two minor additions to the existing structure.

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Coplin, seconded by Mr. Sitar. A roll call vote revealed 2 aye votes by Mr. Coplin and Mr. Sitar.

**IV. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Mr. Jackson opened the meeting to the Public for general questions or statements. No members of the Public participated.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING(S):**

**1. DOCKET #1530-22 – RAMSEY BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS, BOROUGH  
OF RAMSEY & MCKAY BROTHERS, LLC AS CO-APPLICANTS  
NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE, BLOCK 139, LOT 5**

Preliminary & Final Conditional Use, Site Plan and Variance Application to construct a communications facility consisting of a 180-foot-tall monopole and equipment compound at base of pole for Borough of Ramsey EMS, Ramsey Water Co. and McKay Brothers, LLC.

Mr. Jackson read into record that the hearing of this Application is adjourned to August 2, 2023. No further Notice is required.

**2. DOCKET #1543-23 – CAMP ACORN, INC.  
10 LEIGHTON PLACE, BLOCK 173, LOT 138**

Application for a non-profit enrichment program servicing children and adults with developmental disabilities for a Conditional Use Variance that does not meet all the conditions.

Mr. Cascio stated that the Notice was in order.

**Mr. James Jaworski, Esq. of Wells, Jaworski & Liebman, 12 Route 17 North Paramus, NJ 07653** representing the Applicant approached. Mr. Jaworski gave a background of the application being heard including the Variances and relief needed. He reviewed Camp Acorn and the service it provides.

Mr. Jaworski presented three exhibits to the Board Members. The following is a list outlining the exhibits formally marked into the record:

1. A1 – Conditional Use Variance Plan dated April 17, 2023, prepared by Stonefield Engineering. (This plan has 2 pages)
2. A2 – Site Plan Rendering dated June 5, 2023, prepared by Stonefield Engineering.
3. A3 – Aerial Exhibit dated June 5, 2023, prepared by Stonefield Engineering.

At this time Mr. Jaworski called his first witness, **Ms. Cathy Carisi, Executive Director and Founder of Camp Acorn, Inc, 47 Avenue A, Lodi, NJ 07644.** Ms. Carisi described the operations of Camp Acorn explaining that during the week there are about 30 campers; during the summer weeks there is a maximum of 50 campers. An estimate of 10 campers get bused in and the rest of them are dropped off. The facility has 3-4 vans in operation that are comparable size to a large SUV, which are used to transport the estimated 10 campers that need special accommodations. Currently there are 11 employees, of those employees 3 employees are tasked with operating the buses.

Ms. Carisi detailed the purpose of the proposed shed; this shed will hold any props needed for special events and equipment storage. It is easier for them to use the storage sheds instead of storing the items inside as they are able to load the buses when needed from the shed instead of carrying items through the facility. Additionally, picnic areas will help the campers get out in the nice weather for lunch and other activities.

Mr. Kearney asked if there was anything additional needed for the record for this testimony, for example further definitions or details. Mr. Cascio confirmed the testimony provided is acceptable and thorough. Further information needed is the hours of

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operation. Ms. Carisi explained the hours of operation are typically 9:00am-3:00pm, Tuesday-Thursday there is an additional service running from 3:00pm-6:00pm, Saturday hours are 1:00pm-4:00pm and summer hours are 9:30am-3:30pm. Campers are staggered with their arrival times, usually there is a ½ hour window where time is staggered.

Mr. Lockwood asked about traffic patterns, how will the flow work to not create a backup. Will there be a back up as there is with school drop offs? Mr. Kearney added, can spots be assigned to be only for the use of Camp Acorn? Ms. Carisi explained there should not be back up as with a school; they have spoken to the landlord about the designated spots and he is open to helping. Mr. Jaworski suggested perhaps the employees can park in the back of the building, leaving any spots in front for the visitors to Camp Acorn. To which Ms. Carisi agreed that employees will be in fact parking in the back.

Mr. Jaworski asked Mr. Cascio if language can be added to the Resolution stating employees and bus parking is to be in the back. Mr. Cascio confirmed it will be included within the Resolution. Mr. Kelly agrees with having the front spots be for Camp Acorn patrons and employees and vans parking in the back.

Ms. Carisi explained 90-95% of the individuals need help getting out of their vehicles and into the buildings, they can not be just let out of the car as if in a school drop off line. Majority of the people need to park in a spot to help the individual in and out of the car. Mr. Sitar asked if everyone escorts the individuals in when dropping off, does everyone need to park? Ms. Carisi confirmed they do need to park as she explained they need help getting into the building.

Mr. Jackson asked if there was a sense the owner will rent out any other space and ultimately need more parking spaces which would get removed from Camp Acorn to be given to a new tenant? Mr. Kelly explained if a new tenant was to come in, there needs to be a Tenant Application filled out where the property owner must honor parking spots previously given and cannot just remove spots from another tenant. It is the property owner's responsibility to have the proper spots for each tenant.

At this time there were no further questions from the Board and opened to the public.

**Mr. William Vitti of 170 Powell Road, Allendale, NJ 07401**, approached and was sworn in by Mr. Cascio. Mr. Vitti began to express his concerns but it was ultimately realized he had the wrong address and there were no concerns with Camp Acorn. Nothing further was discussed.

**Mr. Aaron Chan with Stonefield Engineering, located at 92 Park Avenue Rutherford, NJ 07070**, approached and was sworn in by Mr. Cascio. Mr. Chan provided

his professional and educational background and was accepted as a licensed Professional Engineer. Mr. Chan reviewed the plans and how traffic will flow in and out of the parking lot; additionally analyzed the remaining parking spaces at the building. In his opinion it is very functional to split up the parking spots as previously suggested. He sees no negative impacts to the parking and traffic patterns as presented. Mr. Jaworski asked if there was any detriment to the shed that is being proposed. Mr. Chan stated he saw no detriment to having the shed on the side of the property as it would be tucked away. Mr. Kearney asked what is directly across from the shed currently to which Mr. Chan stated a chain link fence.

The parking lot's current state was mentioned, specifically needing to restripe and attending to spots that need repair. Mr. Jaworski stated the parking lot will be restriped and issues will be addressed to accommodate wheel chairs and handicap patrons. Mr. Kelly asked if striping would all be within the ADA requirement; it was confirmed yes.

Mr. Kearney asked about the 2 loading docks; if there are 2 trucks present, would it make the flow of traffic slow down or back up if there are 2 trucks present. Ms. Carisi explained one of the loading docks is on the Camp Acorn side and the other is for the use of the landlord. In the past year there has been minimal to no trucks utilizing those spots.

Mr. Coplin asked about the 2 exit doors located in the rear of the building; Ms. Carisi explained one door is for Camp Acorn and the other is for the landlord's use.

At this time there were no further questions from the Board and opened to the public.

**Ms. Spach Trahan a Planner with Phillips Preiss located at 70 Hudson Street, Hoboken NJ 07030**, approached and was sworn in by Mr. Cascio. Ms. Trahan gave her professional and educational background and was deemed a licensed Professional Planner by the Board Members. Ms. Trahan confirmed she reviewed all information regarding the application and also visited the site and general area. She further gave a background on the application and the occupants in the general area. Ms. Trahan reviewed in detail the variances needed, along with the definitions of each variance and category Camp Acorn falls into.

She stated in her opinion there is definitely a need for this service in the area; it would be very beneficial to the public. Additionally, the shed is not offensive in appearance, the location of the shed from the primary building does not pose as a detriment. She stated there is a 259-parking space requirement which is a bit much given the current purpose of the building.

After reviewing the 2013 Master Plan she believes Camp Acorn falls into the definition of Place of Assembly. Mr. Lockwood asked for the definition of Place of Assembly, and

wanted to know if Camp Acorn truly fit in that category. Ms. Trahan reviewed the definition and stated based on the definition in the ordinance, that yes Camp Acorn best fits into that category.

Mr. Kelly stated based on the current Tenant Application process if a new tenant comes in with the same needs as Camp Acorn, then it could be administratively approved, however if a different use would come in, for example a church, then that application would need to be sent to the Board for review and determination.

At this time there were no further questions for Ms. Trahan. Mr. Jaworski provided his closing statements.

A motion to move into Work Session was made by Mr. Coplin and seconded by Mr. Kearney. All voted in favor to move into Work Session.

## **VI. WORK SESSION:**

### **1. DOCKET #1543-23 – CAMP ACORN, INC 10 LEIGHTON PLACE, BLOCK 173, LOT 138**

Application for a non-profit enrichment program servicing children and adults with developmental disabilities for a Conditional Use Variance that does not meet all the conditions.

Mr. Jackson provided a summary of the application and information heard.

Mr. Kearney is in favor to conditionally approve the application provided there is language in the Resolution to support the discussion of parking spaces being allocated for Camp Acorn.

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Lockwood. A roll call vote revealed 5 aye votes by Mr. Coplin, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kearney, Mr. Lockwood and Mr. Sitar.

### **2. NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Kelly addressed the Board to emphasize the importance of communication, specifically confirming attendance for meetings and answering emails being sent to them. This helps to avoid a situation where the applicant is ready to be heard but there are not enough Board Members to proceed or the Applicant gets delayed in the presenting their application.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Coplin, seconded by Mr. Lockwood. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by Michelle Sheydwasser, Board of Adjustment Recording Secretary. The minutes were provided to the Board of Adjustment on June 16, 2023 for approval at the Regular Meeting to be held on June 21, 2023.