

Housing, Property Maintenance and Zoning Compliance Advisory Committee

Borough of Bernardsville, New Jersey

Minutes of a Virtual On-line Meeting

January 22, 2022

1. **OPMA Statement:** A statement of adequate meeting notice and adherence to the state mandated emergency remote meetings protocols was read by Chair Jeff Horowitz and the meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm.
2. **Attendance:** The following members of the Committee were present: Mayor Mary Jane Canose, Council Member Diane Greenfield, Chairman Jeff Horowitz and the following at large members Claudia Diaz, Sam Maddaluna, Nancy Negri, Maureen Sciarretta and Peg Trinter. Mr. Horowitz reported that Michael Poreda had informed him that due to a change in his employment he would no longer be able to continue as a member of the Committee. Also attending were Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk, Mr. Geoff Price, Borough Zoning Department Head and Zoning Officer and Caroline Blanchard, Inspector and Administrative Officer
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2021 were approved.
4. **Review of Charter of the Committee:** Mr. Horowitz reviewed with the Committee the responsibilities and duties of the Committee as set forth in Borough of Bernardsville NJ, Municipal Code § 2-45.
5. **Introduction of Committee Members:** Mr. Horowitz asked each member to introduce her or himself to the other members of the Committee and to briefly describe their interest in being on the Committee.
6. **Covid-related issues in enforcing Housing, Maintenance and Zoning Codes.** Mr. Price reported on enforcement issues that arise from Covid. He said that since the fall, in the interests of protecting his staff and the public's health, the Zoning and Housing officials had not been conducting in person compliance inspections. Further hampering inspections has been the parental leave of Renee Apuzzos Borough Zoning Compliance Officer, which has left the Zoning Department shorthanded. As a result zoning compliance inspections have been conducted by means of video inspections and compliance affidavits submitted by the property owner. Those present noted the limitations of these methods, especially the use of affidavits. Ms. Blanchard reported that when on premises inspections are done, the Borough employees have been wearing masks. Mr. Price stated that Ms. Blanchard and Ms. Apuzzo do the housing inspections; that with 450 rental properties in the Borough his staff must do about 8 or 9 inspections a week; and that on this basis he felt the Zoning Department had sufficient staffing to fulfill its inspection duties.
7. **Air B&B's.** The Committee discussed whether Air B&B's, Stash Houses and the like were prohibited by the Borough's ordinances. Mr. Price undertook to provide samples of other municipalities' ordinances in that regard.

8. **Reporting Forms.** The Committee then discussed how residents could report to the Borough observations regarding possible ordinance violations, including the use of report forms. Mr. Horowitz said he would look into the use of the on-line form for reporting violations.

9. **Top 10 List.**

Property	Nature of Issue	Update	Notes
160 Mt. Airy -- Alwood	Claimed existing non-conforming use as construction storage	Proceeding pending scheduled for February 7 in Board of Adjustment to certify non-conforming use	BoA action condition to sale of property
21 Center Street	Failure to maintain; possible illegal parking of commercial vehicles	None	Bank owned property. Mr. Price said he would check the property with respect to the parking issues
45 Mine Mount	Noisy roosters	Rooster are gone	Remove from Top 10
16 Dayton	Failure to maintain grounds, possible construction without permits	No update	
63 to 73 Bernards Ave	Maintenance issues, possible exceedance of maximum occupancy	Mr. Price reported these issues have been resolved	Borough condemnation under consideration. Remove from Top 10
Former Audi dealer, Route 202	Property has been designated as a site in need of redevelopment; possible condemnation; poor maintenance in the meanwhile.	No update	
Former Griffin and Howe premises, Claremont Ave.	Long term vacancy of former gun shop; pending residential redevelopment.	No update	
Former Bernardsville News building, Route 202	Long term vacancy; poor upkeep	No update	Building sold
Fortis Fitness, Olcott Square	Long term vacancy	No update	
99 Minebrook (Former Wells Fargo Drive Through)	Long term vacancy, poor maintenance	No update	
Bernardsville Print Shop	Print shop vacating north side of 202 for space directly across on the south side of 202	No update	Portion of south side property leased to Wine Store in operation. Print shop has not moved.

Former Carlisle Design, Route 202	Vacancy	No update	
Former Kings Supermarket, Bernardsville Center	Vacancy	Pop up store using space before Christmas has closed.	
Former Colonial Cleaners, Route 202	Vacancy, problems with paint color	Heart Cleaners has opened in space. Store repainted	Remove from the Top 10.
Pet Shop Bernardsville Center	Vacancy. Sign needs to be removed.	Request for sign removal has been made, response expected.	
Tanning Salon	Vacancy, possible redevelopment	No update	
Train Station	Vacancy	No conforming response to RFP issued by the Borough. A new RFP may be issued.	

10. Zoning Department Reports

Property	Nature of Issue	Update	Notes
211 Finley	Housing violations, multiple issues including infestation, sewer smells, possible installation of bathroom w/o permits.	Since date of report, most issues have been resolved,	Will be re-inspected in February. Mr. Price will confirm whether landlord is a repeat offender.
34 Anderson	Various housing violations	Issues resolved.	
1 Dawnleigh Lane	Possible zoning violation; 2 family home in zone for 1 family homes.	Application before BoA for certification. No date set for hearing. Landlord had promised to be in front of Board by year end 2021.	Notice of violation issued. Will proceed to summons if not before BoA by March.
450 Minebrook	Violations for poor maintenance	No response to notice of violation	Mr. Price to issue summons.

In addition to the discussion of individual properties, the Committee discussed tracking violations to identify repeat offending landlords and property owners.

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5 PM.