

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING/ZONING BOARD  
MEETING JANUARY 25, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mancini at 7:35 p.m.

Members present were Councilwoman Fede, Tom Napolitano, Corrado Mancini, John Mitchell, D/Sgt. Hector Liriano. Members not present were Councilwoman Murphy, Ed Reiper, Frank Miranda, Daniel Schnipp, Jessie Frias and Jose Chavez.

A motion was made by John Mitchell to open the meeting to public comments. Tom Napolitano second. Motion passed. Ms. Mary LaPorta, 21 West End Avenue, Bogota, NJ expressed her concerns regarding Yakira Bella clothing store at 240 Leonia Avenue. Mr. Kelly advised Ms. LaPorta that she would have ample opportunity to discuss her concerns during the public comments section of the hearing. A motion was then made by John Mitchell with a second by Tom Napolitano to close public comments. Motion passed.

Kevin Kelly noted that Mr. Benjamin Wine, attorney for the applicant, Yakira Bella LLC, provided the Board with the original certification of service, newspaper publication, original green and white certified mail cards and receipts, copy of notice and a copy of the list of property owners for this hearing. This file was marked as A1.

Kevin Kelly advised Mr. Wine that there were only 5 Board members present and 7 votes would be needed for approval. Mr. Kelly offered to adjourn the meeting or to move forward with the 5 members present. Mr. Wine agreed to proceed with the hearing with the stipulation that the absent Board members review the recording of the meeting with a vote taking place at our next meeting, which is February 8, 2022.

Kevin Kelly informed the Board of the confusion regarding the documents downloaded to the Borough website. They were listed under the incorrect address. He did say that the application was on the opening page of the website. Mr. Wine accepted the explanation.

Mr. Wine stated that Yakira Bella, LLC will be using the VFW building for a retail/online women's clothing store. The building will be brought up to fire code. It was noted that the applicant had been working with Fire Official, Lou Kern.

Anthony Guzzo, the architect, for the applicant, provided his business address as 608 Ridge Road, Lyndhurst NJ and after briefly outlining his qualifications was sworn in by Kevin Kelly. The plans (marked A2) were dated 7/30/2021. The building fronts 2 sides, Leonia Avenue and West Shore Avenue with total square footage of 5507 square feet. The space will be broken up as follows: the stock area 2848 square feet and retail space of 1165 square feet with a maximum of 6 employees.

Mr. Guzzo noted that the mezzanine level has a closet area with a pull down staircase that is used as a storage area. No signage plans are proposed. He also indicated there will be no use of the kitchen.

The plans also included a description of space areas which will be brought up to fire code with fire rated walls, corridors and stairways.

There was much discussion regarding the parking situation. It was noted that traffic impact would be minimal due to the fact that the retail store operates on an appointment only basis. A motion was made by John Mitchell to open the hearing to public comments. Tom Napolitano second, motion passed. Mary LaPorta, 20 West End Avenue, Bogota, expressed her concerns about traffic and parking issues in the area. She was told that the impact on traffic and parking would be minimal due to the business operation by appointment only. And there would be no retail on weekends.

Seth Gerszberg owner of Yakira Bella provided the Board with additional information about his business. He stated the hours of operation for the retail store would be 11 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday with office hours 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday. He stated there would be a maximum of 5 employees in the store. All customers entering the retail store would be by appointment only with approximately 1-3 customers in the store at one time. It was also stated that from time to time employees would be present in the stock area on weekends to fill orders. However, there would be no retail on weekends. He stated that his employees would park 2 cars on the street with the maximum being 4.

Deliveries would be made by UPS, Fed Ex or the post office with pick ups daily. There would be no deliveries made by tractor trailers.

Mr. Gerszberg advised there would be security cameras, fire and burglar alarms protecting the business. He also invited the Board to visit his Teaneck store at 1381 Queen Anne Road, Teaneck.

Mr. Kelly asked how trash was going to be picked up. Mr. Gerszberg advised the VFW has an agreement with the owner of a dumpster in a fenced in area behind the building where they dispose of trash. The VFW and owner of this dumpster agreed to have the applicant use this area as well. It is picked up by a private hauler. Mr. Kelly asked if this was a written agreement or a handshake. He suggested that they provide us with a written agreement regarding trash storage and pick up.

Mr. Craig Peregoy, Traffic Engineer, gave his address at 245 Main Street, Chester NJ and gave a brief description of his qualifications. He was then sworn in by Mr. Kelly. He proceeded to state that based on his use of the Transportation Trip Manual there would be a 23 trip (maximum) reduction in traffic. He said there are 18 available on street parking spaces. It was noted there are 2 handicap parking spaces, one of West Shore and another on Leonia Avenue. A motion

was made John Mitchell to open for public comments, Tom Napolitano second. Motion passed. No comments. Motion to close by Tom Napolitano, second John Mitchell. Passed.

Due to time constraints Mr. Wine suggested that Kiersten Osterkorn, the applicant's Planner's testimony be postponed until our next meeting. It was agreed to since additional information needs to be presented to the Board.

Therefore, the Yakira Bella, LLC hearing will be continued on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 7:30 pm with no further public notice. The meeting will be held via Zoom.

It is also noted again that absent members of the Board listen to the recording of this meeting and certify in writing to Mrs. Morrone that they have done so.

A motion to approve Paul Grygiel's invoice was made by Tom Napolitano, seconded by John Mitchell with Councilwoman Fede abstaining. Motion passed. Mrs. Morrone will submit the invoice to the Finance Department for payment.

A motion was made by Tom Napolitano and seconded by Councilwoman Fede to adopt the minutes of the Board's Reorganization Meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Motion passed.

Tom Napolitano suggested that the Board review code ordinances and user zones for the downtown area of the Borough. Councilwoman Fede advised there is no line item on the budget for this type of project. When asked the fee for this type of project, Paul Grygiel estimated it would be \$2500. It was decided that the Board will discuss it at our work session on February 8<sup>th</sup> and choose a committee to work on it. Councilwoman Fede advised she would contact Greg Bock, the Borough CFO and determine if there are funds available.

A motion was made by John Mitchell with a second by Tom Napolitano to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Patricia Morrone  
Planning/Zoning Board  
Secretary