

BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE

Bergen County, New Jersey

ORDINANCE NO. 23-20

“AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A JOINT PLANNING BOARD/ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND AMENDING AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED “LAND USE” OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, that Chapter 37 entitled “Land Use” of the Code of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake, is hereby amended so as to consolidate all of the powers, duties, authority and jurisdiction of the Board of Adjustment of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake with those of the Planning Board of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake and granting the same to the latter pursuant to and in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-25 in order that it act as the sole municipal land use board of the Borough and further amending and supplementing related provisions of the code to effectuate the said transition and that those portions of the aforesaid set forth below are hereby amended as follows and that those portions of the Ordinance not set forth below shall remain unchanged:

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-25(c) authorizes municipalities having a population of 15,000 or less to establish by Ordinance, a single nine-member Planning Board to exercise all the powers of the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council find that the Borough of Woodcliff Lake has a population of less than 15,000 and that the adoption of an Ordinance establishing a joint Planning and Zoning Board is in the best interest of the Borough.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Woodcliff Lake in the County of Bergen and State of New Jersey, as follows:

Establishment and composition.

A. There is hereby established in the Borough of Woodcliff Lake pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-25c, as amended, a Land Use Board of nine members which Board shall have the combined powers and duties of a municipal planning board and zoning board of adjustment, and consisting of four classes of members as delineated below:

(1) Class I: the Mayor or the Mayor's designee in the absence of the Mayor.

(2) Class II: one of the officials of the Borough of the municipality other than a member of the governing body, to be appointed by the Mayor, provided that if there be an Environmental Commission, the member of the Environmental Commission who is also a member of the Land Use Board as required by Section 1 of P.L. 1968, c. 245 (N.J.S.A. 40:56A-1), shall be deemed to be the Class II Land Use Board member if there be among the Class IV or alternate members of the Land Use Board both a member of the Board of Education.

(3) Class III: a member of the governing body to be appointed by it.

(4) Class IV: six other citizens of the Borough, to be appointed by the Mayor. The members of Class IV shall hold no other municipal office, position or employment, except that in the case of nine-member boards, one such member may be a member of the Historic Commission. No member of the Board of Education may be a Class IV member of the Land Use Board, except that in the case of a nine-member board, one Class IV member may be a member of the Board of Education.

B. In addition to the foregoing, alternate members may be appointed to the Land Use Board as Class IV members, and such alternate members shall not exceed four. Alternate members shall be appointed by the Borough Committee for Class IV members and shall meet the qualifications of Class IV members of nine-member Land Use Boards. Alternate members shall be designated at the time of appointment by the Mayor as "Alternate No. 1," "Alternate No. 2," "Alternate No. 3" and "Alternate No. 4."

Terms of office.

A. The term of the member composing Class I shall correspond to the Mayor's official tenure, or, if the member is the Mayor's designee in the absence of the Mayor, the designee shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor during the Mayor's official term.

B. The terms of the members composing Class II and Class III shall be for one year or terminate at the completion of their respective terms of office, whichever occurs first, except for a Class II member who is also a member of the Environmental Commission. The term of a Class II or Class IV member who is also a member of the Environmental Commission shall be for three years or terminate at the completion of his term of office as a member of the Environmental Commission, whichever occurs first.

C. The term of a Class IV member who is also a member of the Board of Education shall terminate whenever he is no longer a member of such other body or at the completion of his Class IV term, whichever occurs first. The terms all Class IV members first appointed shall be so determined that to the greatest practicable extent the expiration of such terms shall be distributed evenly over the first four years after their appointments, provided that the initial Class IV term of no member shall exceed four years. Thereafter, the Class IV term of each such member shall be four years.

D. Alternate members.

(1) The terms of the alternate members shall be for two years, except that the terms of the alternate members shall be such that the term of not more than one alternate member shall expire in any one year; provided, however, that in no instance shall the terms of the alternate members first appointed exceed two years.

(2) Alternate members may participate in discussions of the proceedings but may not vote except in the absence or disqualification of a regular member of any class. A vote shall not be delayed in order that a regular member may vote instead of an alternate member. In the event that a choice must be made as to which alternate member is to vote, Alternate No. 1 shall vote.

Vacancies and removal from office.

If a vacancy in any class shall occur otherwise than by expiration of the Land Use Board term, it shall be filled by appointment, as above provided, for the unexpired term. No member of the Land Use Board shall

be permitted to act on any matter in which he or she has, either directly or indirectly, any personal or financial interest. Any member other than a Class I member, after a public hearing if he or she request one, may be removed by the governing body for cause.

Officers of Land Use Board; Site Plan and Subdivision Review Committee appointment and duties.

A. The Land Use Board shall elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman from the members of Class IV, and select a Secretary, who may or may not be a member of the Land Use Board or a municipal employee.

B. The Chairman of the Land Use Board may appoint a Site Plan and Subdivision Review Committee for the purpose of reviewing all applications for preliminary subdivision and site plan approvals and all applications for approval of use variances submitted in relation to applications for preliminary subdivision and site plan approval, making reports and recommendations to the Land Use Board, and performing such other duties as may be conferred upon it by the Board. The Committee's membership shall be composed of members of the Land Use Board, designated professional employees of the Borough, Land Use Board consultants, and/or representatives of such other agencies as shall be designated by the Board.

Experts and staff.

The Land Use Board may employ or contract for and fix compensation of a Land Use Board Attorney, other than the Borough Attorney, and experts, staff personnel and other services as it may deem necessary, not exceeding, exclusive of gifts or grants, the amount appropriated by the governing body for its use.

Powers and duties generally.

The Land Use Board is authorized to adopt bylaws governing its procedural operation and in accordance with provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., it shall also have the following powers and duties of a Planning Board:

A. To prepare and, after public hearing, adopt or amend a Master Plan or component parts thereof, to guide the use lands within the Borough in a manner which protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.

B. To administer provisions of all development regulations of the municipality, including subdivision control and site plan review, in accordance with the provisions of said regulations and the Municipal Land Use Law of 1975, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., as amended.

C. When reviewing applications for approval of subdivision plats, site plans or conditional uses:

(1) To grant:

(a) Direction pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-34 for issuance of a permit for a building or structure in the bed of a mapped street or public drainageway, flood control basin or public area reserved pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-32.

(b) Direction pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-36 for issuance of permit for a building or structure not related to a street.

(2) Whenever relief is requested pursuant to this subsection, notice of a hearing on the application for development shall include reference to the request for a variance or direction for issuance of a permit, as the case may be.

D. To participate in the preparation and review of programs or plans required by state or federal law or regulation.

E. To assemble data on a continuing basis as part of a continuing planning process.

F. To annually prepare a program of municipal capital improvement projects projected over a term of six years, and amendments thereto, and recommend same to the governing body.

G. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-25(c), the Land Use Board shall exercise, to the same extent and subject to the same restriction, all powers of a Zoning Board of Adjustment, including but not limited to those powers and duties prescribed by law to a Board of Adjustment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70 and N.J.S.A. 40:55D-776. In exercising the powers of the Board of Adjustment, the Class I and Class III members of Land Use Board shall not participate in the consideration of applications for development which involve relief pursuant to Subsection d of Section 57 of P.L. 19775, c. 291 (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70, as amended), including:

(1) Hear and decide appeals where it is alleged by the appellant that there is error in any order, requirement, decision or refusal made by an administrative officer based on or made in the enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance;

(2) Hear and decide requests for interpretation of the zoning map or ordinance or for decision upon other special questions upon which such board is authorized to pass by any Zoning or Official Map Ordinance, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., as amended, or any other development regulation;

(3) Grant variance from regulations:

(a) Where by reason of exception narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or physical features uniquely affecting a specific piece of property, or by reason of an extraordinary and exceptional situation uniquely affecting a specific piece of property or the structures lawfully existing thereon, the strict application of any regulation would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardship upon the developer of such property, grant, upon application or an appeal relating to such property, a variance from such strict application of such regulation so as to relieve such difficulties and hardship;

(b) Where in an application or appeal relating to a specific piece of property the purposes of this chapter would be advanced by a deviation from the Zoning Ordinance requirements and the benefits of the deviation would substantially outweigh any detriment, grant a variance to allow departure from said regulations; provided, however, that no variance from those departures enumerated in Subsection D of this section shall be granted under this subsection; and

(4) In particular cases for special reasons, grant variance to allow departure from this chapter to permit:

(a) A use or principal structure in a district restricted against such use or principal structure;

(b) An expansion of a nonconforming use;

(c) Deviation from a specification or standard pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-67 pertaining solely to a conditional use;

(d) An increase in the permitted floor area ratio as defined in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-4;

(e) An increase in the permitted density as defined in this chapter, except as applied to the required lot area for a lot or lots for detached one- or two-dwelling-unit buildings, which lot or lots are either an isolated undersized lot or lots resulting from a minor subdivision; or

(f) A height of a principal structure which exceeds by 10 feet or 10% the maximum height permitted in the district for a principal structure.

(5) A variance under this subsection shall be granted only by affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the full authorized membership of this board.

(6) In exercising the above mentioned powers the Land Use Board, as the Board of Adjustment, may, in conformity with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., or amendments thereto or subsequent statutes applying, reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the order, requirement, decision or determination appealed from and make sure other requirements, decisions or determination as ought to be made, and to that end have all the powers of the administrative officer from whom the appeal was taken.

H. To consider and make report to the governing body within 35 days after referral as to any proposed development regulation submitted to it pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-26a, and also pass upon other matters specifically referred to the Land Use Board by the governing body pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-26b.

I. To carry out the provisions set forth in this chapter for the preservation of historic resources.

J. To perform such other advisory duties as are assigned to it by ordinance or resolution of the governing body for the aid and assistance of the governing body or other agencies and officers of the municipality.

Rules and regulations.

The Board shall adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions and purposes of this chapter. In the issuance of subpoenas, administration of oaths and taking of testimony, the provisions of the County and Municipal Investigation Law (N.J.S.A. 2A:67A-1 et seq.) shall apply.

Conflicts of interest.

No member of the Land Use Board shall act on any matter in which he or she has, either directly or indirectly, any personal or financial interest. Whenever any such member shall disqualify himself or herself from acting on a particular matter, he or she shall not continue to sit with the Board on the hearing of such matter nor participate in any discussion or decision relating thereto. This would include voting on a memorializing resolution relating to the such matter and the decision thereon.

Meetings.

A. Meetings of the Land Use Board shall be scheduled no less often than once a month and any meeting so scheduled shall be held as scheduled unless canceled for lack of applications for development to process or appeals to be heard and decided.

B. Special meetings may be provided for at the call of the Chairman or on the request of any two Board members, which shall be held on notice to the Board's members and the public in accordance with all applicable legal requirements.

C. No action shall be taken at any meeting without a quorum present.

D. All actions shall be taken by majority vote of the members present at the meeting except as otherwise required by any provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq. Failure of a motion to receive the number of votes required to approve an application for development or appeal pursuant to the exceptional vote requirements of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-34 and 40:55D-67d shall be deemed an action denying the application.

E. All regular meetings and all special meetings shall be open to the public. Notice of all such meetings shall be given in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 40:4-6 et seq.). An executive session for the purpose of discussion and studying matters to come before the Board shall not be deemed regular or special meetings in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-9.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Article II entitled Zoning Board of Adjustment, is hereby deleted in its entirety.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, if any section, paragraph, subsection, clause or provision of this Ordinance shall be adjudged by the courts to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause or provision so adjudicated, and the remainder of the Ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, any ordinances or parts thereof in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are repealed to the extent of such conflict.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this Ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication in accordance with applicable law.

Severability All provisions of this Ordinance are severable. If for any reason, any provision of this Ordinance is held to be invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Ordinance shall not be affected.

Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become effective upon final approval and publication, pursuant to law, and upon completion of all outstanding cases.