



BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

LAND USE DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
DANIEL CRONHEIM, CHAIRMAN
15 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, NJ 07069
Phone: 908-756-0080 x238

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Section 40:55D-70.1 entitled "Report on variance applications, amendment recommendations" of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) Chapter 201, Laws of N.J. 1975 with amendments through the 1993 Legislative Session states:

"The Board of Adjustment shall, at least once a year, review its decisions on applications and appeals for variances and prepare and adopt by resolution a report of its findings on zoning ordinance provisions which were the subject of variance requests and its recommendations for zoning ordinance amendment or revision, if any. The Board of Adjustment shall send copies of the report and resolution to the Governing Body and Planning Board." Adopted. L. 1985, c.516, Section 16.

The Borough of Watchung Board of Adjustment has used the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 as the reporting period.

A total of 7 variance applications were heard and approved.

APPLICATIONS

The following applications were heard and decided on during the 2023 year by the Board of Adjustment.

1. Case No.: BA 22-02; THAKUR
990 Somerset Street
BLOCK: 4401 LOT: 13
BB ZONE
Approved: 6/8/23

Summary: The Applicant was approved to convert an existing structure into three (3) apartments which are not permitted in the BB Zone, along with height variances and other bulk variances.

2. Case No.: BA 23-02; BJ's Wholesale Club
1601 US Hwy 22
BLOCK: 5801 LOT: 3; BLOCK 5901 LOT 3
BLOCK6001 LOT 1, 2 AND 3 BLOCK 6401 LOT 1.02 and
BLOCK 6402 LOT 2.01, 2.03, 2.04, and 2.05
Represented By: Stephen F. Hehl, Esq.
HD ZONE
Approved: 5/11/23

Summary: The Applicant was approved for the installation of external fuel dispensers (12 bays) for automobiles with attendant kiosk, lighted canopies, and re-configured parking and drive aisles.

3. Case No.: BA 23-03; Quiceno
109 Wildwood Terrace
Block: 202 Lot: 1
RR Zone
Approved: 7/11/23

Summary: The Applicant was approved for permitting an accessory structure outside of the building envelope.

4. Case No.: BA 23-04; Viera
976 Johnston Drive
BLOCK: 6402 LOT: 18
RR ZONE
Pending

Summary: The Applicant is requesting a second driveway to the property to allow for circular circulation on-site.

5. Case No.: BA 23-08; Khan
325 Bonnie Burn
BLOCK: 7402 LOT: 17/18
RR ZONE
Pending

Summary: The Applicant is seeking variance relief to permit an estate fence in the front yard.

6. Case No.: BA 22-06; Patel
55 Jared Court
Block: 6802 Lot: 14
RR ZONE
Approved: 6/8/23

Summary: The Applicant was approved for variance relief for the recently constructed walkway, pool deck extension, pergola, steps and permeable turf.

7. Case No. BA23-09; Palmer
133 Skyline Drive
BLOCK: 6908 LOT: 16
RR Zone
Approved: 7/11/23

Summary: The applicant was approved for variance relief for front yard setback.

8. Case No. BA23-10; Crown Cadillac
1584 US Hwy 22 East
BLOCK: 6101 LOT: 1
BC Zone
Approved: 8/8/23

Summary: The applicant was approved for an amendment to previously approved site plans, minor site plan. 88.9% impervious coverage proposed where 80% is required.

9. Case No. BA22-02A; Kleinberg
404 Johnston Drive
BLOCK: 5402 LOT: 12
BC Zone
Approved: 11/9/23

Summary: The applicant was approved for an amendment to a condition in Resolution BA10-R3 in order to keep an existing garage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The board did not make any recommendations; however, they did highlight the top three cases of the year as the following;

1. Case No.: BA 22-02; THAKUR
990 Somerset Street
BLOCK: 4401 LOT: 13
BB ZONE
Approved: 6/8/23

This application was requesting a variance to permit three (3) one-bedroom apartments at this site and resulting in adding a 3rd story to the existing structure and creating an additional variance for the height of the structure.

2. Case No. BA23-10; Crown Cadillac
1584 US Hwy 22 East
BLOCK: 6101 LOT: 1
BC Zone
Approved: 8/8/23

This application consisted of the following reliefs being sought; requesting Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval along with a list of variances as follows:

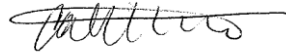
- Variance for impervious coverage, 80% allowed and 88.9% proposed, this is pre-existing as there is a reduction from 89.2% that exists.
- Maximum height of free-standing sign, 18 feet allowed, 35 feet proposed. Existing sign previously approved at 42 feet.
- Maximum area of free-standing sign where 50 SF is permitted, and 176.1 SF is proposed. Prior approval was granted for 225 SF.
- Directional sign along Route 22 where 2 SF is permitted, and 15 SF is proposed. The existing directional sign is 20 SF.
- Directional sign along Raymond Avenue where 2 SF is permitted, and 15 SF is proposed. The existing directional sign is 18 SF.
- Maximum sign height for façade sign is 5 feet and 6.72 feet is proposed.
- Sign area for façade sign facing Route 22 where 100 SF is permitted and 106.31 feet is proposed. The existing sign is 120 SF.
- The building coverage is increasing from 29.2% to 30.1% where 30% is permitted. The applicant indicates that previous application approved 31.3% coverage, but this was never constructed. The application is to include a request for an expansion of a non-conforming use and the increased coverage over what is permitted.

The applicant also requested checklist waivers from the “Minor Site Plan Checklist” and including items 41, 42, 46, 47 and 48.

3. Case No.: BA 23-02; BJ’s Wholesale Club
1601 US Hwy 22
BLOCK: 5801 LOT: 3; BLOCK 5901 LOT 3
BLOCK 6001 LOT 1, 2 AND 3 BLOCK 6401 LOT 1.02 and
BLOCK 6402 LOT 2.01, 2.03, 2.04, and 2.05
Represented By: Stephen F. Hehl, Esq.
HD ZONE
Approved: 5/11/23

This application was requesting Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval along with a height variance for the canopy over the dispensers where 15 feet is allowed, 17 feet is proposed, a d(3) variance for a service station that does not meet all conditions of the conditional use requirements that requires 1000 LF from distance from firehouse, school, playground, Church, hospital, public building or institution is required and 415 feet is provided. There were also several pre-existing variances that the applicant requested continuation and are not related to the BJ’s application.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Furlan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Catherine Furlan
Board Clerk