

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
OFFICIAL MINUTES**
Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 12th, 2025 7:30pm

**Adopted on: 7/10/2025
ROLL CALL**

Chairman Cronheim read the Call to Order Open Meetings Act statement as required by law at 7:33pm. Then everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Mr. Daniel Cronheim, Chairman -Present	Mr. DJ Hunsinger – Present
Mr. PJ Panzarella – Present	Alex Xie – Present
Mr. Mitchell Taraschi- Absent	David A. Stires, PE, PP, Board Engineer – Present
Mr. Anthony Terrezza - Present	Alexander Fisher – Attorney Present
George Sopko - Absent	Graeme Birrell - Present
Mr. John Van De Castle – Present	Catherine Furlan, Board Clerk -Present

Mr. Hunsinger called for a motion to accept the Regular Session Minutes from May 15th, 2025, seconded by Mr. Terrezza.

Mr. Daniel Cronheim, Chairman -Aye	Mr. DJ Hunsinger – Aye
Mr. PJ Panzarella – Aye	Alex Xie – Aye
Mr. Mitchell Taraschi- P - Absent	Mr. John Van De Castle – Aye
Mr. Anthony Terrezza - Aye	Graeme Birrell - Aye
George Sopko - Absent	

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution BA25-R11

CASE No: BA 25-1 Betancourth

45 Dug Way

Block 40.06 Lot 35

ZONE: RR

Expiration: 07/30/2025

[Click Here](#) for Plans

Applicant is requesting approval to install an inground pool to the north and behind the dwelling and patio area. The allowable maximum lot coverage for the R-R District is 25% (section 28-404 d of the LDO). Due to the steep slopes, the developable lot area is reduced to 39,020 SF (net) from 60,996 SF (gross). The lot coverage proposed is 37.5% and requires a variance (section 23A-3.2 a (9) of the Municipal Code).

On motion to approve by Mr. Hunsinger and seconded by Mr. Terrezza.

Mr. Daniel Cronheim, Chairman -Aye	Mr. DJ Hunsinger – Aye
Mr. PJ Panzarella – Aye	Alex Xie – Aye
Mr. Mitchell Taraschi- Absent	Mr. John Van De Castle – Aye
Mr. Anthony Terrezza - Aye	Graeme Birrell - Aye
George Sopko - Absent	

CASE NO.: BA 24-03; CARVAJAL

10 Watchung Crest Drive

Block 4304 LOT 17.01

ZONE: RML3

To Access Plans [Click Here](#)

The subject property is located on the south side of Watchung Crest Drive and one lot west of the intersection of Watchung Crest Drive with Blue Wolf Trail. There is an existing two and a half-story brick house with a three-car garage, a driveway and rear patio on the property. The property is in the R-M-L III Residential zoning district, see section 28-414 of the Land Development ordinance.

The existing driveway area adjacent to the garage doors extends westerly into a 35-foot-wide conservation easement. The driveway extends to 16.06 feet from the property line where 35 feet is required, a variance is required. A basketball hoop, pillar, driveway and fence were constructed in an environmental conservation easement.

Erica Edwards Esq, Applicant’s council approached the podium to provide background on the case. Applicant, Mr. Carvajal, was called to the podium to testify and was sworn in from 10 Watchung Crest Drive. Mr. Carvajal explained why he expanded his driveway unintentionally into the environmental conservation easement. Ms. Edwards asked if any trees were removed when the driveway was expanded (no) and did he realize he was expanding the driveway into a protected area (no). Mr. Hunsinger asked how long Carvajal lived in the house before the driveway expansion (14 years).

Next, Mr. Mark Remsa approached the podium to provide testimony and his credentials. He was accepted as an expert in his field. Mr. Remsa provided background on the application from a

planning perspective. Mr. Remsa discussed the planting plan that was submitted to the board. Mr. Hunsinger asked about the basketball hoop and if it would be removed? Essentially, Mr. Remsa said it could be removed and does not belong in the conservation easement. Mr. Remsa proceeded to review items for a C2 variance and reviewed the Borough's Master Plan.

Mr. Hunsinger questioned Mr. Remsa's testimony about tree removal for the driveway expansion. Mr. Carvajal clarified that no trees were removed for the driveway expansion (in 2016). Then, Mr. Hunsinger asked how many trees were removed? Mr. Carvajal said about 10 trees in 2021 in the buffer zone, but there were other trees removed outside of the buffer zone. Mr. Terrezza asked how many trees were being proposed? Mr. Remsa said 6 deciduous and 7 evergreen trees. Mr. Hunsinger asked about invasive species growing and mentioned that happens when trees are removed. He also asked if he received a permit to remove those trees? Mr. Carvajal said yes, after the fact someone came out from the town and inspected it the next day.

Mr. Terrezza asked about the planting plan and the number of proposed plantings, which the board discussed. Then, Mr. Terrezza asked about the basketball hoop and its location. Mr. Panzarella asked about the shrub planting and sunlight (they would be shade tolerant). Mr. Hunsinger asked about the easement length and the board discussed along with the lot size. Mr. Panzarella asked about the tree replacement plan and if it is an open permit? Mr. Carvajal replied that trees would be replaced, but there is currently a work stop order so no trees can be replanted until it is lifted. Mr. Hunsinger asked how many trees would be required? The board discussed the number of trees. Mr. Carvajal pointed out the planting plan was just for the conservation easement. Mr. Remsa said three red oaks would qualify and additional trees would be added. Mr. Panzarella asked where the trees would go (in the back of the property). Mr. Terrezza asked if the board has a say in how many trees would the Applicant have to plant? Ms. Edwards explained the number of trees could be a condition of approval in the resolution.

Mr. Remsa entered into evidence two colorized photos of the back of Mr. Carvajal's property. [Exhibit A1 and A2](#). The board discussed the location of the photos and the buffer zone along with the neighboring property. Mr. Hunsinger asked about the photo which displays garbage and recycling bins which appear to be in the conservation easement. He also asked if cars would be parked or anything else in the paved area that is in the conservation area? Mr. Carvajal confirmed that nothing would be stored or put on the paved section in the easement and that he would agree to removing (and relocated to a different area not in the easement) the basketball hoop as a condition of approval.

Mr. Fisher opened it up to the public for questions and comments. Mr. Gerasimos Kitsopoulos from 98 Crestwood Drive approached the podium and was sworn in. Mr. Kitsopoulos provided background on where his property is located while objecting to the application. He reviewed the exhibits he previously submitted. He clarified that he is an attorney, but he is present as a property owner and neighbor. Mr. Kitsopoulos continued to review the exhibits he previously submitted.

Mr. Terrezza asked what Mr. Kitsopoulos would like to see? The driveway removed, and illegal structures removed and restored back to the way it was. Mr. Hunsinger asked if a permit is required for paving? Mr. Stires said zoning is definitely required. Mr. Terrezza asked how many trees would Mr. Kitsopoulos like planted? The board discussed the number of trees to be planted. Mr. Kitsopoulos said he would not permit Mr. Carvajal on his property. Ms. Edwards objected to Mr. Kitsopoulos testimony. The board allowed it as it was relevant and discussed the number of trees that were removed on Mr. Kostopoulos's parent's property. The issue at hand is after the trees were removed from the buffer the homes were more visible. [Exhibit 014](#) was entered in to evidence, proof that Mr. Carvajal knew he needed a permit to cut trees down. Mr. Hunsinger pointed out that the receipt does not show where the trees were cut. [Exhibit 014](#) also showed text messages between the tree company and Mr. Carvajal, illustrating he knew permits were required. Ms. Edwards pointed out that the tree company applied for the tree removal permit in 2022, so the Applicant was unaware the trees were in the conservation easement. [Exhibit 015](#) dated 7/12/2022 was entered into evidence showing a signed liability waiver from the Applicant and Monkey Tree Service, further proof said Mr. Kitsopoulos that the Applicant knew he needed permits. Mr. Terrezza asked what Mr. Kitsopoulos would like to see as a resolution.

Mr. Kitsopoulos entered into evidence [Exhibit 016](#) a letter from Mr. Carvajal to Michael Kitsopoulos dated April 26th, 2023. Ms. Edwards asked Mr. Kitsopoulos if he has a Planning Degree (no). Mr. Kitsopoulos entered into evidence colorized photos [Exhibit 017](#) and [018 taken](#) 06.12.2025 from Michael Kitsopoulos' backyard. The board asked if anyone else wanted to come forward and speak.

Nicholas Kitsopoulos approached and was sworn in from 4236 Creek Road, Allentown PA. Mr. Kitsopoulos approached and provided testimony against the application and personal knowledge of the property as he grew up at 88 Crestwood Drive. Ms. Edwards asked Mr. Kitsopoulos what is his professional career (a physician).

Katherine Kitsopoulos from 88 Crestwood Drive in Watchung approached and was sworn in. She provided testimony against the application. Next, Dawn Wright from 77 Crestwood Drive approached and was sworn in. She provided testimony about the character of the Kitsopoulos Family. Mr. Hunsinger closed the public section, seconded by Mr. Terrezza and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Edwards provided closing testimony. Mr. Hunsinger asked for clarification on what the Applicant is asking for approval wise. Mr. Edwards outlined that nothing would be left, parked or constructed in the easement. The basketball hoop would be relocated. The pillars would also remain and the board discussed the pillars which were not part of the original application, but was in the notice. Mr. Remsa added closing remarks regarding the planting plan and additional tree plantings.

The board deliberated over the application and shared opinions. Mr. Hunsinger made a motion to deny the application, seconded by Mr. Panzarella. The board voted to deny the application 7 to 0.

Mr. Daniel Cronheim, Chairman -Aye	Mr. DJ Hunsinger – Aye
Mr. PJ Panzarella – Aye	Alex Xie – Aye
Mr. Mitchell Taraschi- Absent	Mr. John Van De Castle – Aye
Mr. Anthony Terrezza - Aye	Graeme Birrell - Aye
George Sopko - Absent	

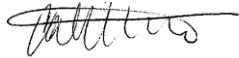
Executive Session BA25-R13

Board went into Executive session at 9:43 and resumed the regular session at 10:03pm and adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03pm on motion by Mr. Hunsinger and seconded by Mr. Terrezza and unanimously accepted. The next Regular Meeting will be Thursday, June 10th, 2025.

ADJOURN

Respectfully Submitted,



Catherine Furlan
Board Clerk