TOWNSHIP OF VERONA
COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY

MINUTES OF THE VERONA BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING
OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025

Meeting held in the Ballroom of the Verona Community Center @ 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044 @ 7:30PM

PRESENT:

Chairman Daniel McGinley	Dr. Edith Ries
Vice Chair Weston	Mr. Michael Tully
Mrs. Christy DiBartolo	Mr. Gregory Mascera, Board Attorney
Dr. Bill Cuartas	Ms. Kathleen Miesch, Zoning Official
Mr. Paul Mathewson	Mrs. Dolores Carpinelli, Acting Board Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Chair McGinley calls the meeting to order at 7:32 pm;
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE;
OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT read by Mrs. Carpinelli, Acting Board Secretary.
ROLL CALL is taken by Mrs. Carpinelli, Acting Board Secretary.

Chairman McGinley reads a statement of general information of the Zoning Board of Adjustment's role and responsibilities.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Application #2025-10 – 546 Bloomfield Avenue, aka 10 Park Pl - Block 1703, Lot 68- Palmetto Venues, TCMU Zone**. Applicant is seeking approval to continue operation as an event rental space. Relief from the following is required: § 150-17.14A - Event rental venue is not a permitted use. **A Variance is required.**

Mr. Mascera states that case was properly noticed and ready to proceed.

Nicholas Palma, 1425 Broad St., Clifton, NJ - Attorney for Mr. & Mrs. Louis, Palmetto Venues,

Witnesses:
Samuel Bellamy, Planner for Dresner Robin, 30 Montgomery Street, Jersey City, NJ
Nancy Louis, West Orange, tenant of 546 Bloomfield Avenue, aka 10 Park Pl
Robert Louis, West Orange, tenant of 546 Bloomfield Avenue, aka 10 Park Pl

Mr. Bellamy submits Three Exhibits dated 10-16-2025 prepared by Dresner Robin
Exhibit A-1 – Site Conditions, Photo Log of site.
Exhibit A-2 – Ariel Photo of the Subject property
Exhibit A-3 - Ariel Photo of surrounding area of the property.

Departmental Reviews:
Police Chief – Christopher Kiernan – dated 9-19-2025
Fire Official -Matthew Gifford- dated 9-19-2025
Construction Official – Thomas Jacobsen- dated 9-19-2025

Nicholas Palma calls first witness Mr. Bellamy:
Mr. Bellamy is sworn in by Mr. Mascera.

Samuel Bellamy - Licensed Professional Planner, certified by AICP, Masters of city and regional planning from Rutgers University. Board accepts Mr. Bellamy as expert professional planner.

Mr. Bellamy introduces Exhibit A-1, A-2 & A-3. He reviews plot plan of 546 Bloomfield Avenue and diagram and layout of interior of space

- Front Ballroom-small kitchenette - Max occupancy 63- one bathroom- entrance off Bloomfield Ave.
- Back Ballroom- small kitchenette- Max occupancy 151- two bathrooms- Entrance at side rear of building.
- No food preparation or cooking on site.
- Tenants do not have liquor license- renters are required to provide their own licensed bar tender if alcohol is being served.
- Generally, only one ballroom is booked at a time
- One of the two owners is on premises during an event. Both are there at beginning of an event.
- Security cameras in each room that are monitored on their phones.
- Describes different businesses and uses in the TCMU Zone.

Board Questions:

- Mrs. DiBartolo asks if the registered architect will be testifying. **No.** As a mixed use building the Use classification according to the International Building Code, this space needed to be upgraded to assembly use as opposed to business use. This is not depicted on the plans.
- Questions from the Board concerning windows in the site and window tinting. **Windows are along Bloomfield Avenue with a protective film to provide shade from the sun. Windows along the rear of building in storage/ office room. None in the back ballroom. The film is semi-permanent. Can not be retracted**
- Does the space have sprinklers? **Mr. Bellamy is not aware. He states that as part of original submission, architectural plans were submitted and reviewed by the township and permits were issued for fire and building as well as a CO for the site.**
- Was there any soundproofing installed. **No, the client did not install any additional soundproofing.**
- Where is the loading zone? **On the side lot adjacent to the building. Not aware of an easement that allows for this. Also, on street loading zone on Park Place and municipal parking lot.**
- Mr. Bellamy is asked to address Ingress and Egress. **The front ballrooms' primary entrance is through Bloomfield Avenue. The municipal parking lot behind the building is accessed from Park Place off of Bloomfield Avenue. The Back ballroom has its own entrance at the side of the building with stairs. There is also a small corridor that leads to front ballroom. Anyone with ADA needs can use the front entrance and the shared corridor to access the back ballroom.**
- Was a traffic study done? **Mr. Bellamy states he is not a traffic engineer and ca not speak to that.**
- Several questions about requirements for principal permitted uses in the TCMU Zone and where this event space qualifies or if there is another appropriate zone where it would be permitted in Verona. **Mr. Bellamy explains that it does not fit squarely into any of the permitted uses.**
- Mr. Mascera puts on the record that the previous business in this space, a dance studio, was granted a use variance.
- Chair McGinley states that Verona is consistent with other towns where if not specifically stated as permitted then it is not permitted.
- Mrs. DiBartolo asks Mr. Mascera about ordinance for serving alcohol. It is not prohibited under the ordinance 133-12. There has to be a window to view those serving alcohol. It does not highly regulate the serving of alcohol.
- Mr. Bellamy makes statement that the client went through all of the proper channels when first applying for permits.

- Questions about parking requirements in TC Zone and how many spaces in municipal lot. There is a parking requirement for assembly hall; 1 space per 100 sq ft of gross floor area. Based on 3,000 sq ft of space that would necessitate 30 dedicated spaces.
- Mr. Mascera explains parking for a permitted use in TC and non-permitted use.

Public Questions:

Sharon O'Donnell, Park Place, Verona, NJ –

- Expand on Park Place loading zone. Are there timing restrictions for loading. **On street striped and signed loading zone, He is not aware of times or hours for loading.**
- Where would event attendees park and is there time when lot closes? **In the municipal lot. Hours of operation would be regulated by the township.**

Dex Polizzi, Verona, NJ –

- When was planner retained by applicant. **September 2025.**
- Was CO given for assembly use. **The CO doesn't specify use. The zoning approval was given use as an Event Space submitted March 2023.**
- What is rationale for seeking variance over a year operating without authorization. **This is not within his scope of testimony.**
- Who was licensed bartender on site on March 15, 2025. **Planner would not know this.**
- Was a professional noise study done – **Not that he is aware.**
- What about procedures to maintain compliance with Verona's noise ordinances. **Based on conversation with client, they did receive a few noise complaints. At that time the Police did come to the location spoke to the owners, but no citations were issued.**
- Were owners on site when noise complaints were issued. **He is not aware.**
- Who is responsible to monitor noise levels before a complaint is received. **One of two owners are always on-site during events and have cameras monitoring the ballrooms. They were trying to minimize noise impact.**
- Why does the Chief of Police review show persistent and willful neglect of noise ordinance. **Mr. Bellamy would not know. (Dept review from Chief Kiernan)**

Chair McGinley asks if any other questions from the public – seeing none.

Mr. Bellamy states that during a site-visit and walking Bloomfield Avenue, he noted other similar event spaces;

- The Richfield Regency, LaBella Princess Café, and Sabor restaurant advertised for events. In his opinion the space is suitable as an event space.
- Board asks Mr. Bellamy to describe the difference between Restaurant and Event Space. A restaurant is open to the public, anyone can come in, sit down and order food that is prepared on premises. An Event Space is a private space rented out, there is usually music, dancing or some type of entertainment where people gather in a social environment.
- Board questions occupancy and parking stating that the occupancy of this venue would double the amount of required parking needed and as opposed to other business and there is a large volume of people coming and going at the same time.
- Board asks if Mr. Bellamy is aware that Richfield Regency has an additional lott for parking and also utilizes valet parking. Also ask him the size of LaBella Princess Café. **About 1,000 sq ft.** Mr. Bellamy says that he brought up these sites as a comparison for the similar type of use in this corridor, not necessarily for size or parking.
- Further down in the ETC, a permitted use is on-site catering. These properties are larger and would be able to accommodate on-site parking than the more densely populated zone where this client's site is.
- Mr. Bellamy states the positive criteria of the variance:

- This use is consistent with the vision and intent of the Master Plan for TC Zone.
- Appropriate use and development based on size and location.
- Direct access to Municipal lot.
- No substantial detriment to general welfare
- Site is monitored with security cameras
- Recommends other local businesses
- They do not serve alcohol directly
- Bring in cleaning crews
- Events are Generally Friday evening – Sunday afternoon.

Board Questions:

- Chair McGinley asks Mr. Bellamy if he saw in the Master Plan a goal where town is trying to increase residential by eliminating 50% rule for Mixed Use in TC. **Yes**
- **Mr. Weston-** Is it state regulation or a rule of the tenant to have a licensed bar tender on premises. **He does not know of any state regulations, this is a requirement of the tenant as part of their due diligence.**
- Mrs. DiBartolo states that she would have liked to have testimony on traffic and parking.
- Mr. Mascera clarifies that there is no parking requirement for TC Zone and this is not a conditional use. If the Board is concerned about parking they can certainly rely on local knowledge they have and that is a factor in the positive or negative criteria of the application.
- Mrs. DiBartolo questions the load of the building since the zoning approval was given in August 2023, but architectural plans were not drawn until October 2023. **The Board needs to take into account the positive and negative criteria of this use, cannot factor in historical aspect. It could be a condition of the Use, but they are here for a USE variance.**

Discussion of signage on the outside of building and the film on the front windows

Chair McGinley asks if there are any other questions from the Board- seeing none.
Chair McGinley asks if there are any questions from the Public.

Public Questions:

Emily Polizzi, Park Place, Verona –

- Asks what local business have been helped by Palmetto Venues. **Does not have specifics, but client has recommended local caters for events.**
- Do you know if licensed bartender has been at every party serving alcohol up through March 15th. **No, he does not, and is not relevant for a use variance.**
- Elaborate on why there is no detriment to the general welfare with respect to security. **The type of business fits within the corridor, cameras are monitored to provide a safety aspect, there is lighting on the entrances, the tenants do try to monitor clientele. It is in their best interest to provide a safe place to have a successful business.**
- Do you feel monitoring the security cameras was sufficient enough when they were in operation? **That is really not relevant to the use variance. Generally, the way the process works is to get a zoning denial and then apply for the use variance. When seeking these variances you don't know how a site will operate. From his perspective the measures that they have in place and plan to continue is the testimony for the Board to consider. His testimony is based on the application and not particular events.**

Sharon O'Donnell, Park Place, Verona

- You stated that this business is well suited for the area and consistent with other businesses in the area. Are you aware of the hours and peak times of the Bella Princess Café and Avenue Bistro? **No, I am not**

Dex Polizzi, Verona, NJ-

- The Richfield Regency was referenced; What type of oversight does a venue have that is licensed to serve alcohol. **Mr. Bellamy clarifies that the sites he referenced was to make comparisons to the type of business, the use in the corridor and reviewing from a planning and zoning perspective. It was not meant to be a comparison of how each business operates.**
- Would you agree that a condition of use for Richfield Regency to serve alcohol would be regulated by state ABC. **Those are business and state licensing requirements. Any business that uses this space has to comply with building codes and licensing requirements. From a pure use standpoint, I don't think this is relevant**
- Why should an event space that may or may not serve alcohol operate without the same level of oversight. **Mr. Palma states that any establishment that serves alcohol must be licensed by the ABC and also states that his client does not serve alcohol.**
- Vice Chair Weston advised Mr. Polizzi that he can ask the owner questions on how they operate the business when they testify.

Thomas Monroe, Verona, NJ –

- Did you review the lease for this space? **Briefly**.
- Does it state hours of operation? **I don't think so**.
- Do you know the latest an event can last? **Around 12:00am.** Who controls that? **It would be Palmetto Venues and the contract of whoever is renting space.**
- Have you seen an Event Space defined in other municipal codes? **Yes – some towns have a term that broadly captures an event space- Banquet Hall. He thinks it fits Palmetto Venues. He recites definition for Banquet Space.**
- Are you aware of a recent application for a use variance at this same location. **No**
- Did you have conversation with or meet with the landlord of the property? **No, but usually in these cases, the owner is not involved except that they have to sign off on the application and the operator. They are aware and did sign a lease with client.**
- Does the landlord benefit from this use variance. **Yes – they would be able to rent the space.** Is the landlord here tonight. **He does not know the landlord.**
- Are you qualified to testify about security provided at an event space. **His testimony on the record would be the extent that he can testify to that.**
- What qualifications do you have to discuss or present to the Board about security at an event space. **This witness is an expert in planning not security**

Chair McGinley asks if there are any more questions from the Public – seeing none.

Witness: Nancy Louis, West Orange, tenant of 546 Bloomfield Avenue, aka 10 Park Pl Worked in healthcare for 25 years, has a PHD in Cancer research and has also been Event Planner for 25 years.
Sworn in by Mr. Mascera

Mr. Palma asks Mrs. Louis to describe her process of finding this space for her business and for receiving approvals from the township to operate an event space.

- This location had plenty of space for events, in a nice town, had a municipal parking lot, convenient to where she lives.
- She then consulted with the town to see what was needed. She submitted a zoning application for use as an Event Space
- Approved in March 2023
- She and her husband secured a $ 250,000 loan to make interior renovations on the property.
    - Renovations were done on 2 Ballrooms, bathrooms and a small kitchenette in each room. Kitchenette has sink, microwave and small refrigerator. No stove or oven.

  - A licensed contractor was used for the renovations. Appropriate permits were attained. Received final CO in March 2024.
  - During renovations no changes made to outside footprint, entrances or windows.
  - No change to use after approval as Event space
- Other restaurants and event spaces in the area – 340 Bloom is very similar to their space.
- About 80-100 events were held at the space during opening and February 2025.
- They require a licensed bartender to serve alcohol. This is not required by town or landlord, or anyone else. They have that to keep attendees, space and the owners protected.
- She also describes the window tinting, installed to keep the sun exposure to minimum and also for privacy of guests.
- Insulation installed based on building code. No additional soundproofing was installed. No one suggested they get an acoustical study of the property.
- Mrs. Louis testifies that either she or her husband are on-site during events at all times and both are there at the beginning when guests are arriving.
- She confirms that there are security cameras in both rooms and they are constantly monitored.
- She is not aware that there was ever a parking problem.
- Mrs. Louis states that events were scheduled to end no later than 12:00am, but they were then advised that town ordinance stipulates events must end at 11:00pm. They complied and they end the music at 11:00pm.

Mr. Palma asks her if the police were ever called for an incident or fight inside the venue or immediately outside, meaning on the sidewalk outside the space. **No, no issues at all and if so, they would have called the police.**

Mr. Palma asks about noise complaints. **There was an initial complaint filed by a neighbor and they made adjustments to reduce noise by moving speakers out of the front room. Police were called to the site a total of five times for noise complaints. Each time they walked outside with the Police and verified the noise was not heard outside. They did adjust the volume of the music. They never received a citation for noise.**

- Palmetto Venues had agreements with three restaurants on Bloomfield they recommended for catering.
- Alcohol is not stored or served by owners.
- When approval was originally granted, no specific number of parking spaces was required.
- If at the time of original approval if you were asked to go before the Board seeking a variance would you have done so? **Yes, we have some everything that was asked of us.**

Board Questions:

- Mr. McGinley asks for clarification on dates of application and zoning approval. **Application date was August 2, 2023, Approval from Mr. Epps was August 10, 2023.**
- Clarifying record – Affidavit of Service states address in Livingston. **That is a PO Box.** Is her name on the lease and business license. **Yes**
- Mr. Tulley asks for clarification about changes made to interior. **No changes were made after initial construction and opening of business. The bathrooms were there initially but the kitchenettes were added.**
- Mrs. DiBartolo asks if owners of Palmetto Venues have had conversation with residential tenants above their space and were they aware that their space neighbors other residential areas. **Yes. Received feedback that as long as music ended by a certain time there would not be negative impact to the residents. After first Police visit, they were told all music needed to end by 11:00pm**
- Letter dated 9-19-2025 from Construction Official review states that applicant must hire an independent architect. Mrs. DiBartolo states that the original drawings are lacking required and important safety features, such as emergency exits, travel distance to exits, sprinklers. **Mrs. Louis**

relied on the experts and did not change any of the entrances. But the change in use going from a B to an A is what kicks in these requirements.

- Mr. Weston- who has authority to change the contract. **Mr. or Mrs. Louis.** Concerned that they could at any time change the requirement of a renter to provide a licensed bartender if they are serving alcohol. **We would not change that. It protects us and the renter. Renter informs us at the time they sign the contract if serving alcohol and who the bartender is. If we don't receive this info, they are not permitted to bring in alcohol.**
- Mrs. Louis describes their procedure for putting out garbage and cans. Initially they would leave the empty cans out until the evening. They were informed by the landlord that they need to be brought in earlier, which they now do.
- Comments relating to the incident in the parking lot on March 15, 2025. Mr. Palma describes it as anomaly and out of his client's control.
- Mr. Mascera states that this would fall towards negative criteria of the business. That in most cases the Board does not have history to consider, but by only including testimony through February 2025, not presenting the whole picture and although they cannot penalize the applicant, they can weigh nuisance and past practice in their determination. Asks Mr. Palma to offer more to Board about relevant history.

- **Mr. Palma states that his client was given approval for this business. They did everything asked of them and by the book. They addressed issues when presented to them, making adjustments as needed to comply. This was not a pattern of practice of problems. There was an incident in March 2025, and within a month of the incident, their approval was rescinded and they received violations for signage, fire. And now we are before the Board again. It is not proper to deny this application over an incident that was out of their control.**

Discussion of the past Zoning official's approval was an ultra vires approval, and current Departmental reviews, as well as the timing in which the review of this case was triggered, and should the history of this case bear weight on the Board's determination.

Mr. Palma says it is not fair to judge his client with what has happened since opening. If they were seen by the Board initially, this would not be part of the discussion. They relied, to their detriment, on an official of this town.

The Board can't ignore the departmental reviews and the history, it is relevant. This Board would not be fulling their duty if they did not.

Mrs. Louis questions the timing of the recission of their approval, it seems very coincidental when they had been in operation for 12 months.

Chair McGinley explains that the zoning officer made a decision that is inconsistent with zoning regulations. Noone looks over the shoulder of the zoning official. It took an incident like this to trigger a need to review the decision.

Mrs. Louis wonders if there were previous complaints, why that didn't trigger a review then. And look then at the process to see if there is an
Mrs. Di Bartolo disagrees saying that it is contingent on the type of incident that causes notice. A small violation may not trigger attention, but if there is a major incident and 300 people run out of a venue that has max capacity at 151, that is a red flag. It is their responsibility to put safety first. It doesn't matter when its caught, but that it is.

- Mr. Weston asks if guests using front ballroom have to use front exit onto Bloomfield Avenue. **Not always, they can use the back entrance when the back ballroom is not being used and vice-a versa**
- Mr. Mathewson asks how they regulate the occupancy. **They have a guest list and they set up tables and chairs based on the number of guests stated in the contract. They only have 120 chairs for large ballroom and only 50 chairs for small ballroom.**
- Mrs. DiBartolo says major flaw on the drawings- there has to be two exits and you cannot go through a room to reach an exit. The change in use kicks in these requirements.
- Dr. Cuartas asks who takes the responsibility for running the event- **Their sole purpose is to rent the space. They go over what the renters can and can't do. They do not get involved in any way with food service. They only recommend caterers if asked.** So it is different than a large caterer or restaurant where there are servers. **Yes**
- On the night of the incident, who was there. **My husband.** You stated earlier that you were both there. **In the beginning of an event we are both there until the party is underway, then one if us will leave.** So if anything got unruly there is only one person. **Yes this is typical of how event spaces work.**
- Chair McGinley asks how many parties have required a bartender- **less than half**. How many of your renters are Verona residents – **There have been a few.**

Chair McGinley asks for Break until 10:00pm. Officially resuming at 10:04pm

Chair McGinley refers to Council Palma's letter and asks about the status of an application for HVAC. Ms. Miesch, Zoning Official confirms it was approved in July, 2025.

Chair McGinley asks if there are any other questions from the Board- seeing none.
Chair McGinley asks if there are any questions from the Public.

Public Questions:

Dex Polizzi, Verona –

- Asks about pictures on social media showing no seated guests. **We do have a dance floor, but we have never had an event without tables and chairs**
- How do you explain advertising on Instagram and Snapchat that reference paid events, door charges and alcohol available to guests. **We do not have snapchat – we do not advertise events, we do not hold events. People may tag us**
- How do you control your patrons and what they advertise. **We can't control their advertising. We are not involved in any advertising. We don't give out flyers.** So it is permissible for your patrons to advertise these things. **It is not permissible, but I can't control what I am not aware of.**
- Are you aware of other events that had noise complaints that did not escalate to citations as well as fights and threats to the neighbors. **We did not receive citations for noise. I have not heard of fights with patrons or neighbors being threatened.** Were you present at all the events to see what was happening. **No, I was not at every event**. What about after hours. Who is regulating violence. **Council objects to question.**
- What is the accountability as owners to monitor noise, fights. **Accountability extends to the space they are leasing. They should do due diligence to mitigate issues outside the space.** Have you done your due diligence to make sure no safety concerns, noise violations and serving excess alcohol with no crowd control measures. **Yes – we have done so to make sure we remain safe, as well as clients and the community.**
- Why over course of the year were there number of garbage violations, noise violations, parking issues, violent attendees. **Everything brought to our attention we addressed. We never received a citation or even a letter from the town about garbage, we never**

received a citation for noise. The police did come out and asked us to lower the volume which we did.

- Are you aware of DEP complaint for disposing of balloons in the Peckman River. **We did not dispose of balloons in the river and not aware that that happened.**
- Your biggest concern is limiting your exposure to liability rather than protecting the residents. **No, otherwise we would not have taken the precautions of having a lease, lowering the music, stick to time ordinance. Everything we were asked to do – we did.**
- What precautions did you take to prevent use of weapons. **We are an event space not a club – we are not required to have security. There was no reason to think of having a metal detector or security personnel because we have never had any issues before that day.**
- Was it possible that there were violations and complaints that you were not made aware by the Police. **If there were we welcome the Police chief or anyone else to provide proof that we made aware and did not address it.**

- Mr. Tulley asks if some of the patrons charge a fee to attend their event. **She does know of a couple of renters who charged a fee, but not sure if they served alcohol. It is not against our policy for guests to charge a fee. One in particular charged in advance to the people on the guest list. No event is ever open to the public.**
- Mr. Weston asks if an event ends at 11:00pm what is the latest you are at the space. **Most guests leave 30-45 minutes after the end time. Then it can take another 60 minutes for cleanup. Events are usually 6-hour rentals. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is rare to have a weekday event.** There is a possibility of having some overlap of your patrons arriving when Middle school letting out. **That hasn't happened. Our weekday events start in the evening.**
- Dr. Cuartas questions how they verify the number of guests if paying at the door. **Through the contract.** But contract now seems flexible. **No.** No events where an unknown quantity of people attended. **No, any fees were collected ahead of time, not at the door.**
- Dr. Ries asks if fire code violations cited in a letter dated March 19, have been addressed. **She is not aware of fire violations that came to them. In January a fire inspector came and asked for an exit sign to be installed. The landlord did install an exit sign.** Reads dept review from Construction Official.

Paul Petrangeli, Martin Road, Verona-

- With charged events, how do you regulate the number of guests if it is pay at door and would that change the land use? **We have not had any events that were pay at the door.**

Dex Polizzi, Verona-

- Aware that there was an event advertised on January 25th as a pay at the door event. How do you enforce occupancy if they are showing up at the door. **Again we go by the contract and tell them what is acceptable and not.** How do you vet you is on the guest list? **I can't control who they invite. I do not get a guest list.** Who is responsible for controlling the guests? **I don't know any event space where they get a guest list and can control who is invited and who is not.** Then I should assume there is no control over occupancy. Who was enforcing the occupancy during these events. **There is control as to how many people are in the facility based on how many of the tables and chairs are being used. We have never had an issue where we were above capacity and had to ask people to leave.** What about non-seated events. **We do not have non-seated events.**

Emily Polizzi, Verona –

- You stated that you did not think about soundproofing. **Yes**. Were you unconcerned about noise being generated. **It's not that I am not concerned, I was not aware. I was focusing on the space, determining if soundproofing is needed is beyond me.** The landlord said the residents would not be bothered by the noise. **I won't say they would not be bothered, but that we needed to stopthe music turned down by a certain time.**
- You said you made adjustments after the first complaint. **They moved speakers from the front room to the back room. The speakers in the front are smaller and don't produce as loud of music. They have had DJ turn down music. They also exchanged numbers with a neighbor in case any more issues.**
- How about the speakers in the back room. **We do not have tenants above us in the back**. But you do have neighbors. **I won't debate whether that is true or not. However, when the Police came they went outside and with the doors closed the music could not be heard.**
- What about violating the noise ordinance. Music playing after 11:00pm regardless of volume. My understanding is that past 11:00pm the music had to be reduced. I believe the music has to end by 11:00pm. **If that's correct, I welcome the feedback.**

Sharon O'Donnell, Verona-

- Is there anyone counting attendees at the door. No, however we monitor to make sure there is no one standing around. Our capacity is 151, but we only have 120 chairs
- Do you require a list or documentation for attendees. No
- What type of security do you have. **The only security we have is cameras, which is standard for an event space. We do not have security guards or metal detectors.** Does this account for who is coming in and out. In the instance tickets are being sold at the door. **It is not uncommon for tickets to be sold for an event.**
- What type of oversight do you have to prevent complaints. **If music is loud we speak to the DJ and if it persists we will talk to the renter.**
- Do you consider loitering a detriment to quiet enjoyment. **I would say so**. and are you aware of considerable loitering after every evening event? **If we notice it we address it. It is a reflection of our business and character.**
- In your planning career how have you addressed loitering situations. **As a planner that is not really something that I am dealing with.**

Where are security cameras located? **Inside the event space, two in the front room, two in the back room; none are on the outside**.

Thomas Monroe, Verona-

- Was a copy of the customer contract submitted with the application. **No, it was not asked.** The contract controls the relationship between you and the client. **Yes.** Is the landlord involved in the contract. **No**
- Do you require the renters to have their own insurance. **No, it's a recommendation.** Do you have insurance to cover Pametto Venues. **Yes.** Does it cover alcohol. **I don't recall.**
- Are you on the $ 250,000 loan. **No.** Who took the loan. **Her husband and Investors**. Do the investors have an interest in Palmetto Venues. **No.** Who is the loan with. **I'm not sure, a bank**. Did you submit details about the loan to the board. **That is not relevant to this Use variance.**
- If the are seeking a variance they need to demonstrate a hardship, implication that they will undergo a financial hardship. **A hardship involves a D2 variance, this is a D1 variance**.
- Did you submit the lease. **I submitted to my attorney**. Does the landlord make representations as to the condition of the property. What is the monthly rent. **Not relevant**. It is part of the application, says they are still paying rent. **That they are paying is relevant, not how much**. If landlord makes representations to them that the property is supposed to be in a certain condition and the town shuts down the business, why are they paying rent. **That becomes a legal issue with the landlord**. The

Board has no interest in knowing the relationship between the applicant and the landlord. **The Landlord signed off on the lease.**

- **Mr. Mascera remarks that there was testimony on the outstanding loan, so the public has the right to question it. Mr. McGinley does not agree. As far as Zoning application, we are aware that there is an outstanding loan, that they are still paying rent, that the owner is not involved in land use with any of his tenants. It is a line of questioning that does not move this application in any direction.**
- Any other hardships Palmetto Venues is facing other than financial. **Emotional**. Can you provide manifestations of those hardships.
- After a remark from attorney Palma, Mr. Monroe asks that it be put on the record that Mr. Palma exhibited unprofessional conduct.

Chair McGinley asks if there are any other questions from the Public- seeing none.

Witness: Robert Louis, West Orange, tenant of 546 Bloomfield Avenue, aka 10 Park Pl

Mr. Louis is sworn in by Mr. Mascera.

- Mr. Louis is married to Mrs. Louis.
- Mr. Louis gives details about the party on the night of March 15th, 2025.
  - He and his wife were both present at the beginning and he was there for the remainder.
  - Party was for a 40th Birthday. There were 80 guests
  - There was music and alcohol was served. There was a licensed bartender
  - The party hours were 6pm- 10pm. They came at 5pm to set up
  - No problems during the party
  - Music ended at 10pm and the guests trickled out. The last guest left about 10:45pm
  - Once all guests leave, the door is locked and clean up begins. Putting away tables and chairs, taking out trash
- Mr. Louis states that he heard banging on the door about 5 minutes after it was locked. He opened the door and heard shooting. He let 8 people in who had left the party earlier. They went into the big room and Mr. Louis called the Police.
- Palmetto Venues is an LLC. Mr. & Mrs. Louis are only members
- Adds to the statement of Mrs. Louis that there were two events where tickets were sold, the tickets were sold in advance; one a birthday party and one a networking event. They knew how many were in attendance at both events
- There was never a party with tickets sold at the door.
- They do screen their clients; they prefer more mature clients, with a dress code.

Board Questions:

- Do you have any other staff to help with clean up. Sometimes **one other but mostly myself.**

Chair McGinley asks if there are any questions from the Board – seeing none.
Chair McGinley asks if there are any questions from the Public.

Public Questions:

Dex Polizzi, Verona –

- Asks about additional event on February 22nd posted on social media- dress to impress- advertising pay at the door, buffet served 8:30pm- 1:00am. **Mr. Louis is unaware of that event.** Was Peaches your contact for this party. **He states that Peaches had one party in February.** I mentioned 2 events advertising paid events, were you unaware that there were parties advertised as paid events. **Mr. Louis is not aware of any other paid events.**

Mr. Louis makes statement that he has spoken to Mr. Polizzi once when Mr. Polizzi approached him about not leaving garbage out of the cans. Mr. Louis purchased more garbage cans and said to Mr. Polizzi to let him know if he has any other issues, but never heard from him after that day about noise, loitering, garbage.

Chair McGinley asks if there are any questions from the pubic – seeing none.

Public Statements:

Dan Kaufmann, Verona – statement about safety surrounding the incident. Was there negligence, ignoring unruly patrons. The rounds were fired but gun casings were not recovered.

Emily Polizzi, Verona- read statement detailing how the operations of Palmetto Venues negatively affects the safety of her family and the enjoyment of her property.

Meejn Carspia, Verona- comments about the validity of the application.

Dex Polizzi, Verona -reads statement about safety, noise and disruption complaints and how the neighborhood should be protected.

Chair McGinley asks if any other public statements- seeing none.

Mr. Palma gives closing statement.

Board Deliberation: - Chair McGinley describes this as unique situation. There is a lot of history on this case that they normally would not have to consider. Zoning usually focuses on building and the site.

- Board expresses concern about lack of windows, noise, trash, traffic, parking, loitering and altercations. Even though local caterers are recommended, this business does not really support vendors in the TC Zone because their patrons come for the party and leave. Also concerns about what this approval could open the door to, that it is a mixed-use space and is this the right space for this type of business being so close to a residential zone.

Motion to Deny application 2025-10: Vice Chair Weston, **Second:** Mrs. DiBartolo

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTION	RECUSED
Mr. Tully	X			
Dr. Ries	X			
Dr. Cuartas	X			
Mr. Mathewson		X		
Mrs. DiBartolo	X			
Vice-Chair Weston	X			
Chair McGinley	X			

Motion passes.

Executive Session – Not necessary;

Motion to Adjourn: Dr. Ries
Meeting Adjourned at 11:32 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dolores Carpinelli

Dolores Carpinelli
Acting Board of Adjustment Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: Meeting minutes are a summation of the hearing. If you are interested in a verbatim transcript from this or any proceeding, please contact the Board of Adjustment Secretary at 973-857-4773.