TOWNSHIP OF VERONA
COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY

MINUTES OF THE VERONA BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING
OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2026

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

PRESENT:

Chair McGinley	Mr. Raff
Vice Chair Weston	Mr. Tully
Mr. Ryan	Mr. Konrad-Parisi
Dr. Cuartas	
Dr. Ries	Mr. Gregory Mascera, Board Attorney
	Mrs. Carpinelli, Board Secretary
Absent: Mr. Mathewson, Mrs. Murphy-Bradacs	Ms. Miesch, Zoning Official

CALL TO ORDER: Chair McGinley calls the meeting to order at 7:35 pm;
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE;
OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT read by Mrs. Carpinelli, Board Secretary.
ROLL CALL is taken by Mrs. Carpinelli, Board Secretary;

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Chair McGinley asks for a motion to approve minutes from the Regular Meeting of September 10, 2026; **Dr. Ries** makes the motion, **Mr. Konrad-Parisi** seconds; Mr. Ryan and Vice Chair Weston Abstain. All remaining commissioners voted in favor. **Motion Passes.**

RESOLUTIONS-
1. Resolution 2026-20– Amending Resolution 2026-07– 56 Floyd Road, Block 801, Lot 6
The Board considered whether revisions made after the Board's prior approval of the Floyd Road application were material changes to the approved plans and variances. The matter had been discussed at the September 10, 2026 meeting, and the Board sought to determine whether the revised plans altered the substance of the application or could have affected the Board's original decisions.

Applicant's counsel, Jonathan Guldin of Clark Guldin Attorneys at Law, reviewed the procedural timeline. The Board approved the application on March 12, 2026, with conditions reflected in an April 2026 resolution. Revised permit drawings were submitted April 21 and again May 5, including changes to air-conditioning locations, replacement of the proposed deck with a patio, and removal of a basement bathroom and other items. The Town issued a construction permit on May 26, and construction began in July. After the permit was issued, the applicant submitted a further revision adding two attic dormers to provide the bedroom required for loan approval.

Counsel stated that the Board's outside professional reviewed a consolidated set of drawings submitted August 26 and considered the changes non-material and non-substantive, with certain variances reduced or eliminated. Counsel emphasized that the dormers did not change the building's height or width and were intended to provide additional attic space. He acknowledged the Board's question concerning the previously discussed deck-to-patio change and recognized that the record of the March meeting included a statement that the approved deck should be built. Counsel maintained that the applicant had openly submitted the revised plans to the Town and had not attempted to conceal the changes.

Board discussion and action

The Chair explained that the Board needed to decide whether the post-approval changes were material in the sense that they could have influenced the Board's original votes on the requested variances. Board members discussed the importance of adhering to approved plans and the concern that allowing changes after approval could affect the process, while also considering the professional review and the fact that several revisions reduced the relief needed.

Vice Chair Weston makes a motion to find that the changes were not material in nature; **Mr. Ryan** seconds,

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Konrad-Parisi	X				
Mr. Tully	X				
Mr. Raff			NE		
Dr. Ries	X				
Dr. Cuartas				X	
Mrs. Murphy-Bradacs					X
Mr. Mathewson					X
Mr, Ryan	X				
Vice-Chair Weston	X				
Chair McGinley			NE		

Motion passes.

Mr. Ryan makes a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-20; **Vice Chair Weston** seconds,

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Konrad-Parisi	X				
Mr. Tully	X				
Mr. Raff			NE		
Dr. Ries	X				
Dr. Cuartas				X	
Mrs. Murphy-Bradacs					X
Mr. Mathewson					X
Mr, Ryan	X				
Vice-Chair Weston	X				
Chair McGinley			NE		

Motion passes.

2. Memorialization of Resolution 2026-25– Application 2026-08– 5 Balston Road, Block 1801, Lot 53, R-70 (Low-Density Single-Family) Zone. Granting approval for a deck and fence previously constructed without permits with condition that the portion of fence along the deck be reduced to 4 feet.
Mr. Konrad-Parisi makes Motion to approve; **Dr. Ries** seconds.

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Konrad-Parisi	X				
Mr. Tully			NE		
Mr. Raff			NE		

Dr. Ries	**X**				
Dr. Cuartas	**X**				
Mrs. Murphy-Bradacs					**X**
Mr. Mathewson					**X**
Mr, Ryan			**X**		
Vice-Chair Weston			**X**		
Chair McGinley			**NE**		

Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Application 2026-22- 66 Linden Avenue, Block 905, Lot 28, R-50 Zone. Applicant is seeking approval to construct a 391 sq ft patio, wall and install a 4-foot fence.

- Per Section 150-17.5 F (4) Maximum aggregate area covered by accessory structures in the yard it is located in: 15% where the rear yard is 4,092 square feet with 15% being 562.50 square feet; existing is 380.6 square feet or 9.3%; proposed is 18.9% or 772 square feet - **A Variance is required**

WITNESS: Kevin Wittig owner, 66 Linden Avenue, Verona
WITNESS: Julie Anne Cecere, NJ Licensed Architect and Professional Engineer, 24 years' experience.
The Board accepts her as an expert witness
Attorney Mascera confirms that proper noticing was served and case is ready to proceed.

EXHIBIT: A-1 - Revised plan and elevations dated October 8, 2026. Includes additional details responsive to Engineer's review comments.

The existing detached garage and patio contribute to the coverage calculation. The architect stated that the garage could not reasonably be relocated and that the lot's narrow shape and sloping topography limited the practical use of the backyard. The applicant proposed enlarging the existing patio to create a more functional outdoor area, with room to pass the rear-door landing and stairs, access the driveway, and accommodate seating and a table.

Ms. Cecere relied on both the C-1 hardship and C-2 benefits-of-the-zoning-plan variance criteria. She stated that the proposal would improve use of the property without creating adverse impacts on neighboring properties. She noted that the adjacent properties had additions extending farther into their yards than the proposed patio, and asserted that the patio would not block neighboring light, air, or sight lines.

Drainage, retaining/knee wall, and fence testimony

In response to the Board engineer's comments, the revised plans included top- and bottom-of-wall elevations and a construction detail for a small concrete-block knee wall with rebar and footing. The architect explained that the wall was intended to improve safety because of the grade change and could also provide a place for potted plants. She stated that the detail addressed the engineer's concern about the wall's construction.

The architect also described changes to two existing roof leaders that currently discharge toward the driveway. The front leader would be redirected toward the lawn; the rear leader would run beneath the new patio and discharge to daylight onto absorbent grass. The applicant testified that the family had lived at the property for five years and had not experienced flooding or drainage problems. The applicant said the neighbors on either side had been supportive; and the applicant stated there was no drainage toward the rear of the property.

The proposed fence would enclose the backyard, connect near the rear of the house and garage, and include a gate. Board members clarified the fence's location on the plan and discussed that the fence itself did not count toward lot coverage and was understood to comply with applicable requirements without requiring a variance.

Board members asked whether reducing the patio's projection beyond the rear wall of the dwelling by approximately three feet would eliminate the need for relief. The architect responded that it would reduce coverage slightly but would not eliminate the need for a variance. She explained that the projection accommodated the knee-wall footing and provided a consistent alignment.

Chair McGinley opened the hearing to public questions - Seeing none.

Chair McGinley opened the hearing to public comments - Seeing none. Public participation closed.

Board Deliberation

- Concern that the knee wall, described as approximately three to four feet high, would be visible from the street and could change the appearance from a patio to a bunker-like structure.
- Other discussion considered the requested coverage increase is minimal and side-yard setbacks are in compliance.
- Board likes that there is still a large amount of green space in the back yard.

Dr. Cuartas makes Motion to approve application 2026-22; **Vice Chair Weston** seconds.

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Konrad-Parisi			NE		
Mr. Tully		X			
Mr. Raff	X				
Dr. Ries	X				
Dr. Cuartas	X				
Mrs. Murphy-Bradacs					X
Mr. Mathewson					X
Mr, Ryan	X				
Vice-Chair Weston	X				
Chair McGinley		X			

Motion passes.

2. Application 2026-23- 340 Bloomfield Avenue, Block 703, Lot 8, TC Zone District. Applicant is appealing the Zoning Officer's letter dated May 6, 2026 rescinding zoning permit #2021-194.
The appeal was described as a review of the zoning officer's decision, rather than a rehearing of an original land-use application. The Board's task was to determine whether the current zoning officer's interpretation was correct under the ordinance and record before it.

WITNESS: Jason Steinberg, Steinberg Law Firm, LLC, Parsippany, NJ
WITNESS: Shaheen Unzari, Council, unidentified - name and spelling cannot be verified.
WITNESS/APPLICANT: Cynthia Bynes, 352 Yale Avenue, Hillside, NJ- sworn in by Board attorney Mascera.

Attorney Mascera confirmed that proper noticing was served and case is ready to proceed.

Mr. Steinberg provided a history of the business. Ms. Bynes then described her business as an event space to have meetings and parties, saying her business had been good for the community because her clients purchase food and beverages for their parties from neighboring businesses. Ms. Bynes described her role as providing or arranging for food and service, as well as table settings and other event-related assistance.

The applicant's representatives argued that the business had originally been approved under the category of on-site catering because the zoning ordinance did not then contain a specific definition of "event space." They maintained that the business had consistently provided food service at its events and that the prior zoning officer had treated the use as generally fitting the definition of an on-site caterer. Counsel argued that the approval should continue as a previously permitted use even though the ordinance and terminology had subsequently changed.

Witness: Dorothy Campbell Bass, Irvington, New Jersey- is sworn in by attorney Mascera.

Ms. Bass testified that she hired the venue to host an 80th Birthday party. She provided the food and brought it in from the outside. Ms. Bynes provided and charged for the waiter/waitress service and provisions for the hot food buffet style service. No food was prepared on-site. This was a one-time event.

Witness: Tara Jurro, Oakridge, New Jersey- is sworn in by attorney Mascera.

Ms, Jurro testified that she contracted the services of Ms. Bynes to host a Birthday/ Empowerment party at her venue. The contract included that Ms, Bynes provid brunch food and the waitress/waiter service. This was a one-time event.

For the Record there was no one present from the public to ask questions.

The current zoning officer's interpretation, as discussed by the Board, was that the business's use was an event space rather than an on-site caterer and did not fall within a permitted use under the current ordinance.

Board members reviewed the application materials, including a zoning permit application describing the business as an event space and meeting room for private events, and discussed the ordinance definition of event space as a commercial venue rented or retained for a planned activity at a specific time, such as a birthday party, wedding, or business conference.

The Board discussed the difference between on-site and off-site catering and whether the business's food service was its primary use or ancillary to renting the venue. Testimony indicated that food had been served at events held at the premises, including a one-time birthday event for which food was brought in and served on site. Members considered whether customers could rent the space without the business's catering or staff services, and whether that made the operation a hybrid of event space and catering.

Counsel further argued that the event-space definition had been added after the original approval and that the prior use should be evaluated under the ordinance and interpretation in effect at that time.

Board members discussed whether the former zoning officer had authority to approve the use under the catering category, whether the current use met the definition of a permitted caterer, and whether a later ordinance change could invalidate a previously lawful use. The Board was advised that if the appeal were denied, the applicant could return to seek a variance under the current rules.

Board Deliberation

Several members concluded that the business functioned as an event space and that its operation did not fit the ordinance's definition of an on-site caterer. Members noted that the original application expressly described the business as an event space/meeting room and that the prior zoning officer's statement that the use "generally" fit the caterer definition suggested the classification was not definitive. Other discussion acknowledged that the definition of event space was not in place when the original application was submitted and considered the applicant's reliance on prior Town guidance. The Board's discussion focused on the proper interpretation of the ordinance and did not question the applicant's sincerity

Vice Chair Weston makes a motion to deny the appeal. **Dr. Ries** seconds.

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Konrad-Parisi			NE		
Mr. Tully		X			
Mr. Raff	X				
Dr. Ries	X				
Dr. Cuartas	X				
Mrs. Murphy-Bradacs					X
Mr. Mathewson					X
Mr, Ryan		X			
Vice-Chair Weston	X				
Chair McGinley	X				

Motion passes.

Chair McGinley reiterated to the applicant that they have the option to apply for a variance under the current rules.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - not necessary

Motion to Adjourn: Vice Chair Weston
Meeting Adjourned at 9:41 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dolores Carpinelli

Dolores Carpinelli
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.