

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman Salvadori who read the following statement: “Notice of this meeting was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act in the Annual Notice of Meetings on January 19, 2019. In addition, notice of this evening’s public hearings was sent in writing to the newspaper and published on October 5, 2019. Be advised, no new item of business will be started after 10:30 p.m. and the meeting shall terminate no later than 11:00 p.m.”

The Board saluted the flag.

Roll call: Present – Mr. Cossaboon, Ms. Fox, Mr. Fritz, Mr. Kozak, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Mercado, Mr. Rybicki, Mr. Salvadori. Absent – Mr. Sebastian, (excused), Mr. Sander, (excused). Also present – Mr. Coe, Solicitor, Ms. Pellegrini, Planner, Mr. O’Reilly, Council Liaison, Mrs. Farrell, Secretary, Mrs. Orbaczewski, Clerk Transcriber.

**Memorialization of Resolutions:**

1. #33-19 – App. #19-18 – Angie C. Chavarria Campos – Use Variance Approved

Motion by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Fritz to adopt resolution #33-19. Roll call vote: Ayes – Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Fritz, Mr. Cossaboon, Ms. Fox, Mr. Mercado, Mr. Salvadori. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero.

2. #34-19 -App. #19-19 -Poznek Family Holdings – Side & Rear Yard Variances Approved

Motion by Ms. Fox, seconded by Mr. Cossaboon to adopt resolution #34-19. Roll call vote: Ayes – Ms. Fox, Mr. Cossaboon, Mr. Fritz, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Mercado, Mr. Salvadori. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero.

**Public Hearings:**

1. App. #19-25 – Kurt & Danielle Casalunovo – Side Yard Variance

Present – Kurt & Danielle Casalunovo, applicants.

The applicants are proposing to construct an addition to their existing home to include stairs to the basement. Their proposal will require a side yard variance where 20 feet is required and the applicants are proposing 10 feet from the stairs to the property line. The property is located at 77 Eldridge Avenue, also known as Block 13401, Lot 29 in the R-2 Zoning District.

**Public Hearings: (continued)**

1. #19-25 Kurt & Danielle Casalunovo (continued)

Mr. and Mrs. Casalunovo were sworn in by Mr. Coe. Mrs. Casalunovo stated they were before the Board to request a side yard variance for their proposed addition that will have steps on the side of the house leading to the basement.

Mr. Salvadori asked Mrs. Farrell if the application can be deemed complete. Mrs. Farrell replied the application can be deemed complete. Motion by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Cossaboon to deem application #19-25 complete. Voice vote; all ayes, motion passed.

Mr. Coe asked the reason for the addition. Mrs. Casalunovo replied that they have three growing children in a three-bedroom house. They want to add on a master bedroom and also make the kitchen larger. Mr. Kozak asked the reason for the steps being proposed on the side as opposed to the rear of the house. Mrs. Casalunovo replied that they would like to have windows to the master bedroom in the rear of the house as opposed to the side next to the neighbor's property. Mr. Coe also commented on the fact that the addition was following the line of the existing home. Mr. McLaughlin commented on the slope along the side of the house and asked if there are any issues with water drainage. Mrs. Casalunovo replied they do not have any water drainage issues.

Motion passed to open the hearing to the public. There being none, motion passed to close the hearing to the public.

Mr. Coe reviewed the variance request for the Board. Motion by Mr. Kozak, seconded by Mr. Mercado to grant the side yard variance of 10 feet where 20 feet is required for the construction of a 16 x 30 addition to the existing home with stairs to the basement in the side yard, subject to the following conditions; the applicant must obtain the proper construction and zoning permits; the addition must be built in accordance with the plan submitted; and the applicant must maintain their escrow account. Roll call vote: Ayes – Mr. Kozak, Mr. Mercado, Mr. Cossaboon, Ms. Fox, Mr. Fritz, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Salvadori. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero.

2. #19-26 – Bruce Stewart, Jr. – Use Variance

Present – Bruce Stewart, Jr., applicant.

**Public Hearings: (continued)**

2. #19-26 – Bruce Stewart, Jr. (continued)

The applicant is requesting a use variance in order to be permitted to utilize an existing accessory building on his property as a training facility for service dogs. These service dogs will be given to veterans suffering from PTSD and other disabilities. The property in question is located at 3647 Old Black Horse Pike, also known as Block 7502, Lot 3 in the RD-C and RD-RR Zoning Districts.

Mr. Stewart was sworn in by Mr. Coe. Mr. Salvadori asked Mrs. Farrell if the application can be deemed complete. Mrs. Farrell stated the applicant is asking for a waiver from providing the Certificate of Filing and the filing fee. The filing fee waiver request is due to the non-profit status by the intended user; the applicant will be required to obtain a Certificate of Filing from the Pinelands if the use is approved. Motion by Mr. Kozak, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin to grant the waivers and deem application #19-26 complete. Voice vote; all ayes, motion passed.

Mr. Stewart stated that he is a board member for Paul's Healing Hero's which is a veteran based organization. They provide service dogs to veterans with traumatic brain injuries and PTSD. He commented that Gloucester County is becoming a hub for veteran services with Operation Safe Haven and Camp Salute in Clayton. Paul's Healing Hero's is a non-profit organization with 100% of the money raised going back into the training and maintenance of the dogs. The dogs being trained are primarily rescue dogs from shelters.

Mr. Stewart stated he purchased this property on the Old Black Horse Pike and has donated his existing back building to Paul's Healing Hero's. There are three buildings on the property; the main residence, a large garage, and the building that was used as the horse barn. They are asking for the use variance so they can bring the veterans and dogs into the facility to train together. The training is all done during the day, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the week and 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. There will not be any overnight boarding of the dogs; however, during the training hours the dogs may go into a kennel during a break. With regard to bathroom facilities; the veterans and the trainer will have access to the facilities in the residential home. Mr. Stewart testified that there will not be any increase in traffic and that there is a large stoned parking area. They want to retrofit the building for the use as a dog training facility.

Mr. Coe asked how many participants will be onsite at one time. Mr. Stewart replied that there will be a maximum of three veterans and the trainer a day but not all there at the same time. It's usually a one on one with the dog and the veteran so that they can create a bond and not have distractions with other people or dogs around at the same time.

**Public Hearings: (continued)**

2. #19-26 – Bruce Stewart, Jr. (continued)

Mr. Kozak asked if the training area is fenced. Mr. Stewart replied that the back field is semi-fenced now; however, the dog is never off leash unless its with the trainer. The whole idea is to train the dogs so they do not wander and to stay with the veteran. The dogs are already trained to a certain point by the time they come to the facility so they are not dogs that will just run away. The trainer will also use a training e collar if necessary.

Mr. Coe asked Mr. Stewart to briefly explain why this use is a benefit to the public good. Mr. Stewart replied that Gloucester County is becoming a hub for veterans and veteran services. There is Safe Haven in Franklinville and Camp Salute in Clayton. This use will give Monroe Township recognition as having a veteran based organization. Paul's Healing Hero's does tours in elementary schools, they have done a tour at a school in Monroe Township already, and they are open to other possibilities such as the boy scouts, or any other group that would like to tour the training facility to see how the dogs are trained or get involved in a veteran's program, so this is a great opportunity. Mr. Stewart stated they were on the Rachel Ray show two months ago and that this organization is a nationally recognized organization as a service provider for veterans. Mr. Coe asked if there would be any detriment to the neighboring properties with this use. Mr. Stewart replied that he does not see any detriment. He believes it is a positive use for the area, there will not be any significant increase in traffic, the building sits far enough back on the property that it will not have an impact on the neighbors.

Mr. Kozak asked how many dogs Mr. Stewart owns. Mr. Stewart replied that he has two family dogs and both of them are service dog qualified. Mr. Fritz asked if they foresee the use growing in the future. Mr. Stewart stated that if it does get that big, they will have to find property and build a training facility. Right now, for the number of dogs and veterans they have, this facility is large enough; however, there has been talk of this program becoming a multi-state program and if that happens, they will have to find an alternative facility or build one. Mr. Fritz asked how many dogs are trained in a year. Mr. Stewart replied approximately twenty to twenty-five dogs a year.

Ms. Pellegrini reviewed her report for the Board. She noted a correction on page three of her report which listed the use as a roofing contractor business. The reason for the use variance is because there are two uses on the property; the residential use and the proposed dog training facility. Since there aren't any proposed changes to the building and no new construction proposed, she did see any issue with not having a site plan. There is adequate parking on the site and minimal traffic is expected.

Motion passed to open the hearing to the public. There being none, motion passed to close the hearing to the public.

**Public Hearings: (continued)**

2. #19-26 – Bruce Stewart, Jr. (continued)

Mr. Coe reviewed the use variance request for the Board. Motion by Mr. Fritz, seconded by Mr. Cossaboon to grant the use variance subject to the following conditions: the applicant must obtain any outside agency approvals deemed necessary, including the Certificate of Filing from the Pinelands and a zoning permit from the Township, the applicant must maintain his escrow account, and there is to be no boarding of the dogs on site. Roll call vote: Ayes – Mr. Fritz, Mr. Cossaboon, Ms. Fox, Mr. Kozak, Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Mercado, Mr. Salvadori. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero. Mr. Coe commented that this use qualifies as an inherently beneficial use to the community. Mr. Stewart thanked the Board and stated when the facility is ready to open, he will extend an invitation for the Board members to attend the grand opening.

**Public Portion:**

Motion passed to open the meeting to the public. There being none, motion passed to close the meeting to the public.

**Reports:**

1. Mrs. Farrell reminded the Board of the special meeting on Tuesday, October 29, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

1. 10/1/19 regular meeting.

Motion by Mr. Fritz, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2019 regular meeting.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

These minutes are an extract from the meeting that was held on the above date and are not a verbatim account or to be construed as an official transcript of the proceedings.

Respectfully submitted by: Ninette Orbaczewski, Clerk Transcriber