



Borough of Demarest
Joint Planning Board Regular Meeting
MINUTES

July 2, 2025**7:30 PM****DEMAREST BOROUGH HALL**

The Borough of Demarest Planning Board held a special meeting on WEDNESDAY, July 2, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. located at 118 Serpentine Road Demarest, NJ 07627.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Tim Woods.

FLAG SALUTE

The Board was led in a salute to the flag by Tim Woods.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Todd Adelman, Mayor Brian Bernstein, Jodi Brenner, Kiran Chin, Camille DiSclafani, Councilwoman Daryl Fox, Fatemah Mamdani, Timothy Woods

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: Theodore Alevrontas, Mary Hamilton

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Chelius – Engineer, Darlene Green – Planner, Danielle Federico – Attorney, Michael Greco – Secretary, Zoning Officer

NEW/OLD BUSINESS**JPB-25-006 - 30 Hardenburgh Avenue**

Chair Woods asks Mr. Capizzi about which dates work best to address the board. Mr. Capizzi states that July 23, 29, or 31 would work best. Mr. Greco explains that these dates would also accommodate the professionals required to come in for the application. Ms. Federico states she can't do July 23, and therefore the considerations are now for July 29 and July 31 only. All members present agreed on July 29, 2025. Chair Woods sets the hearing of 30 Hardenburgh Ave for a special meeting on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

JPB-25-001 - 44 Pine Terrace

Mr. Capizzi reminds the board that this is the second hearing about the application, with the first one on June 4, 2025. Mr. Capizzi summarizes that the lot is oversized in the R-D zone, with the proposal to split the lot into two (3.08 & 3.09). Lot 3.08 would be the existing dwelling with some improvements removed, while Lot 3.09 would contain the whole dwelling. All coverage and improvements would be conforming in terms of bulk conditions, with variances required in lot areas as they would both be slightly undersized. Mr. Capizzi explains that soil explorations have been done since the last meeting, and that the drainage system, as well as trench drain that the board required at the last meeting, will function. Mr. Capizzi calls Mr. Costa to speak to the drainage.

Ms. Federico confirms that Mr. Costa was previously sworn in, and that his credentials are still valid. Ms. Federico marks the pit testing sheet handed to the board as Exhibit A4. Ms. Federico marks the plan on the board as Exhibit A5.

Mr. Costa reviews the drainage plan for the property. Mr. Costa explains how the soil samples were taken as per instructions from last meeting, and seepage pits were added to both properties. Councilwoman Fox clarifies that 3.08 has two pits with 3.09 having two pits. Mr. Costa confirms this, stating seepage pits for 3.08 are in the rear, and stating the drainage rates for each seepage pit.

Mayor Bernstein clarifies that these drainage rates come from the trench train. Mr. Costa states that he does not use percolation in the drainage rate calculations, rather considers the ability for the drainage system to hold a “100-year storm”. Councilwoman Fox clarifies that one of the seepage pits in 3.09 is in the driveway, and therefore only drains what is piped in. Mr. Costa confirms this.

Mr. Capizzi clarifies that the pits meet all required standards, and Mr. Costa confirms this. Mr. Costa adds that if for any reason this plan does not comply, the applicant is happy to move the location of drainage to conform.

Mayor Bernstein asks what the 3rd column of soil core on the plan refers to, while Mr. Costa explains it refers to the diameter. Mayor Bernstein then asks whether the saturation of the area behind the house affects how quickly the water drains from the seepage pits. Mr. Costa explains it will not, because there is no evidence of groundwater. Mayor Bernstein states he did not see how quickly the seepage pits would empty. Mr. Costa points out the drain time calculation on the revised plan issued today, confirming it would take 72 hours.

Mr. Costa expands on the mayor’s concerns, stating that the neighboring houses are 180 ft apart from each other and therefore would be unaffected by the drainage. Mayor Bernstein asks to describe the purpose of putting the trench drain in on 3.08 for the record. Mr. Costa explains it is to collect water before it goes into the street. Mayor Bernstein questions the location of the seepage pits in 3.09, claiming there is nothing to divert water from the patio or rear of the house, and therefore nothing that protects the property to the east. Ms. Chin directs this question to the board engineer. Mr. Chelius states his previous comments on the location of the seepage pits concern a different issue. In response to the mayor’s question, Mr. Costa states a seepage pit can be put back there if needed. Councilwoman Fox asks about the location of the trench drain. Chair Woods and Mr. Costa clarify this.

Mr. Costa states the changes on the new revised plan, which includes the location of the seepage pits on 3.09, the inclusion of the trench drain, and the drainage time calculations. Mayor Bernstein stated that a conditional should be the seepage pits in the wetland areas of the back of 3.09, if a review of the land requires one.

Chair Woods asks for the board engineers’ opinion on this plan. Mr. Chelius has no issues. Chair Woods specifies if this opinion extends to Mayor Bernstein’s concerns. Mr. Chelius states that since the math makes sense on the plan, there is most likely no need for an additional seepage pit. Ms. Brenner asks whether there is a grade issue in the wetlands area. Mr. Chelius states that it is inherent to a wetland area but still shouldn’t cause an issue.

Chair Woods asks if there are any further witnesses. Mr. Capizzi states there aren’t. Chair Woods asks if there are any further questions. Ms. Chin asks what the purpose of the application is. Mr. Capizzi states the variances are for lot area and width on each property.

Ms. Green states there are a few things that need to be clarified in the application. Ms. Green states that there is no plan for tree removal, although the applicant stated they would comply. Ms. Green also adds that a waiver is needed in addition to the variances. Councilwoman Fox states that it is in the application. Ms. Green states it is in the application but not in the site plans. Mr. Capizzi states this would be rectified.

A motion was made to open to the public for questions of the professionals by Mayor Bernstein. Mr. Adelman seconds. All in favor – Motion Passes

No member of the public wishes to ask a question.

A motion was made to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman. Mayor Bernstein seconds. All in favor – Motion Passes

Mr. Capizzi makes a closing statement.

A motion was made to open to the public for comments on the application by Mayor Bernstein. Councilwoman Fox seconds.

All in favor – Motion Passes

No member of the public wishes to make a comment.

A motion was made to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Fox. Mayor Bernstein seconds.

All in favor – Motion Passes

Chair Woods asks for any comment from the board. Mayor Bernstein reminds about the possibility of adding seepage pits on 3.09 if needed.

A motion was made to approve the application with conditions by Vice Chair Brenner. Mayor Bernstein seconds.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote
Mr. Adelman	Yes	Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Yes
Vice Chair Brenner:	Yes	Ms. Chin:	Yes	Ms. DiSclafani:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Yes	Ms. Mamdani:	-	Chair Woods:	Yes
Mrs. Hamilton:	Absent				

Motion passed

JPB-25-002 - 7 Christie Street

Mayor Bernstein and Councilwoman Fox step down from the board and exit the chamber as required due to the inclusion of a F.A.R. D Variance in the application, bringing the board back to a 7 member board for the consideration of this variance.

Mr. Capizzi explains that this applicant lives in the R-D zone with an undersized lot of 8,000 sq ft versus the normal 10,000 sq ft. The variances being sought after would not need to exist had the lot been the normal size. However, variances in building coverage, Livable Floor Area, improved lot coverage, and the combined residential and parking coverage are required. These are directly related to the width and length of the property being 20% smaller. Mr. Capizzi introduces the witnesses. Chair Woods clarifies that this applicant would still require variances if on a normal sized lot, due to Mr. Capizzi’s calculations not including the patio/pergola. The board and Mr. Capizzi discuss if a pergola counts as building or improved lot coverage.

Mr. Capizzi invites Michael Dipple to the stand. Ms. Federico swears in Michael Dipple as a civil engineer with a current license. Mr. Dipple summarizes the description of the land. Mr. Dipple states that the lot is now vacant because the owner tore down the dwelling. Mr. Dipple also states that Christie St is a dead-end street. Mr. Dipple then describes the new dwelling plan, including a 20ft wide driveway, a two-car garage, a small walkway, a pergola over a deck or patio, and an additional patio. Mr. Dipple states that the impervious coverage calculation has already accounted for any additional AC units or generators, and the building coverage calculation is also within conforming standards. Mr. Dipple then reviews the variances as Mr. Capizzi stated earlier.

Mr. Chelius clarifies a discrepancy on the improved lot coverage calculation versus the net change calculation. Mr. Dipple clarifies this discrepancy.

Mr. Dipple continues by describing the grade change on the property, as it slopes down towards the Demarest Nature Center. Mr. Dipple states that the grading will be kept consistent, and a drywell will be moved to the backyard as it is too close to the property line. Mr. Dipple details the shade tree removal plan, replacing 11 trees.

Mr. Capizzi asks whether the vegetation on the rear property line exists or is added to the plan. Mr. Dipple states some exist, but a total of 5 more trees will be added as well. Mr. Capizzi asks if the trees would provide privacy for the pergola area. Mr. Dipple states that it would.

Ms. Chin asks where the rear yard setback line is. Mr. Dipple points it out. Ms. Chin asks to consult the board engineer. Mr. Chelius asks about the pergola on top of the deck, and whether the 12 ft height requirement would be exceeded as both are elevated structures. Mr. Dipple states that it is possible and will be addressed later in the application for detail. However, it is possible that the deck might turn into a patio, and therefore not exceed the 12 ft height maximum.

Ms. Green asks to clarify minor discrepancies in the plan. Mr. Dipple clarifies them. Mr. Chelius clarifies that the seepage pit will be moved further from the property line, which Mr. Dipple confirms.

Chair Woods asks if a variance for the rear yard would be needed due to the pergola, which Mr. Capizzi states it was his understanding there wouldn't be one, due to a pergola being an accessory structure.

Mr. Capizzi asks whether a pergola will be defined as an accessory or principal structure of the building. Chair Woods states it will be called a principal structure as per the ordinance. Ms. Chin asks for the direct language of the ordinance to confirm or deny this, asking for a discussion on this issue.

The Board, Ms. Federico and Mr. Greco discuss the nature of a pergola and what type of coverage it should count as.

Mr. Capizzi suggests a 2-minute recess for the board to discuss. The board takes a 2-minute recess.

The board continues its discussion on pergolas.

Chair Woods summarizes that the pergola has been determined as being part of building coverage, and the patio is in question – asking the opinion of the zoning officer. Mr. Greco states that a pergola can be deemed building coverage due to the Boroughs' definition of building as a structure with a roof. Mr. Greco states a patio should not be deemed building coverage because it is not a building.

Chair Woods suggests that the pergola should be determined by building coverage, and the patio should be improved lot coverage. Ms. Chin asks that at the next board meeting they can discuss the definition of pergola.

Mr. Capizzi asks if the board has any further questions for Mr. Dipple. Chair Woods asks if the board has any questions. The board has nothing further, so Mr. Capizzi calls the next witness.

Ms. Federico swears Anthony Zampolin, the plan's architect. Mr. Zampolin begins to describe the site plan. He describes how the homes are single family homes on Christie St. The architect describes the interior plan design, consisting of two floors and a basement with an open living space on the first floor, a raised deck/pergola next to the second floor and a patio in the rear. On the basement level, the patio sits raised on top, which is a safer build for the basement ceiling. Mr. Zampolin continues to describe the interior design plan on each floor. Mr. Zampolin explains that to keep the home relatively open despite the undersized nature of the lot, a living floor area variance will be needed. Per the definition of living floor area (LFA), the basement and garage are not included in the calculation. On the first floor and second floor, there will be livable floor area variances, including the grand staircase into the calculation for the first floor. Mr. Zampolin discusses the elevation of the house as well, explaining how the average grade and elevation calculations fall just under the maximum requirements, therefore not requiring a variance.

Chair Woods asks for a further explanation of the elevation of the pergola. Mr. Zampolin describes how the pergola is not attached to the house. Mr. Zampolin also describes how the measurement of the pergola is taken from the first floor to the top of the structure. Chair Woods asks to confirm this with Mr. Chelius. Mr. Chelius states the calculation is taken from the average grade to the top of the pergola. Mr. Zampolin corrects his initial statement, stating that the pergola's elevation taken from the average grade is 11ft 9in. Chair Woods asks for any questions from the board. Ms. Chin commends the witness on the plan, having no further questions. Mr. Chelius agrees.

Chair Woods asks if there are any further witnesses. Mr. Capizzi calls Mr. Pessolano, the city planner, to the stand. Ms. Federico swears Mr. Pessolano in. Mr. Pessolano begins to describe the property from a planning perspective. Chair Woods asks for any questions from the board. Ms. Green asks for clarification on the new building coverage due to the interpretation of the patio and pergola as building. Mr. Capizzi responds that the pergola was deemed building coverage

and the patio was not, which Ms. Green agrees to. She clarifies that the building coverage is therefore 25.6% rather than the required 25%. Mr. Capizzi and Mr. Pessolano confirm this number.

Chair Woods asks for more witnesses from Mr. Capizzi. Mr. Capizzi states there aren't any more. Chair Woods asks for a motion from the public to talk to the experts.

A motion was made to open to the public for questions of the professionals by Mr. Adelman. Ms. Chin seconds.
All in favor – Motion Passes

No member of the public wishes to ask a question.

A motion was made to close the meeting to the public by Mr. Adelman. Ms. Chin seconds.
All in favor – Motion Passes

A motion was made to open to the public for comments on the application by Mr. Adelman. Ms. Chin seconds.
All in favor – Motion Passes

Ms. Federico swears in Ms. Nadalie Fedaral. Ms. Fedaral testifies two properties that are slightly upset at this new development on 7 Christie, due to the replacement plan of 11 trees being planted on the border of the new property and the existing ones. This is due to the existing large tree already having large branches break off into the properties, and at some points hitting the dwellings. Ms. Federal would like to know what types of the trees will be, out of fear of the trees remaining unkempt and affecting the other properties. Ms. Federal expands that the large trees that might create privacy for the new property also create shade on her property, not allowing the ground underneath to dry properly and encouraging moss to grow.

Chair Woods asks if the resident got to see the landscape plan, which Ms. Federal claims she has, but didn't know about the tree replacement plan. Chair Woods invites Mr. Dipple to discuss the tree plan. Mr. Dipple explains the tree replacement plan as it stands is consistent with the Boroughs' tree replacement ordinance. Mr. Dipple explained that the trees should be placed at the back, both because the trees there are dying and the property closest to the front of the new dwelling is only 10ft away versus the rear having a larger distance between the new property and the adjacent one. Mr. Dipple concedes that the large tree in the back is very distressed and will be taken out. He details that the tree species will be Armstrong maple, Eastern Hemlock, and Serviceberry trees. Ms. Federal asks how large the trees are, and Mr. Dipple explains they can get very large, but it takes decades to grow to that height and diameter. Ms. Federal restates her concerns about the large replacement trees, adding that the possible seepage pit in the back as well could disrupt her land.

Chair Woods states there might not be much to do about the tree issue. Ms. Federal suggests that the trees be moved to the right side of the property, where there is 20ft of distance. Chair Woods reiterates that the property to the residents is about 30ft away, and the tree plan as well as the pergola placement is conforming. Chair Woods also allows for comment from Mr. Chelius on the seepage pit and possible drainage issues. Ms. Federal first asks for clarification on the pergola's height, which Mr. Dipple explains is conforming due to the elevation calculations.

Ms. Brenner asks how many trees and shrubs there are. Mr. Dipple states the exact amount isn't known, but not all 11 plants are trees. However, they are there for shade. Mr. Adelman states that the new trees will never be as large as the ones currently exist.

Mr. Dipple adds that when the trees get planted, they come in at 2 inches, and it would be decades before they grow to a substantially large amount. Ms. Chin asks how many trees are being removed. Mr. Dipple details that 8 trees are being removed, with 2 at the back and 1 near the middle. Ms. Chin asks if it is possible to trim the tree branches on the residents' side. Ms. Federal states it is possible. Ms. Chin also adds that the current tree problems will be removed, and the 10 to 12ft trees will add a level of privacy for the residents not having to see the pergola.

Ms. Federal brings concerns with the boards' conversations around pergolas and that the window wells should not encroach into the side yards. The Board assures the residents on both of those points that the applicant is conforming,

and/or relevant variances have already been discussed. Chair Woods specifically references how the engineer will ensure that the seepage pit is conforming on the new property, and the seepage pit in the rear was merely a suggestion because of this meeting. The resident finishes her testimony.

With no other member of the public seeking to make a comment.

A motion was made to close the meeting to the public by Mr. Adelman. Ms. Chin seconds.

All in favor – Motion Passes

Chair Woods asks if Mr. Capizzi has anything further. Mr. Capizzi states there is nothing further.

Chair Woods asks if the board has any further comments. Ms. Chin asks Ms. Federico about the procedure for D variances in terms of the boards’ approach. Ms. Federico states there is a mixture of D-variances and C-variances, but the voting process is the same, with one motion to approve. Chair Woods asks for a motion to approve the application. Ms. Chin makes the motion, and Ms. DiSclafani seconds.

A motion was made to approve the 7 Christie Street variances by Ms. Chin. The motion was seconded by Ms. Disclafani.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote
Mr. Adelman	Yes	Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	n/e
Vice Chair Brenner:	Absent	Ms. Chin:	Yes	Ms. DiSclafani:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	n/e	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Chair Woods:	Yes
Mrs. Hamilton:	Absent				

Motion passed

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve June 4, 2025, meeting minutes, by Mr. Adelman and was seconded by Ms. Discalfani.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote
Mr. Adelman	Yes	Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Absent
Vice Chair Brenner:	Absent	Ms. Chin:	Yes	Ms. DiSclafani:	Yes
Councilwoman Fox:	Absent	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Chair Woods:	Yes
Mrs. Hamilton:	Absent				

Motion passed

A motion was made to approve the June 5, 2025, special meeting minutes by Mr. Adelman and seconded by Ms. Chin.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows *n/e = not eligible*

Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote	Board Member	Vote
Mr. Adelman	Yes	Mr. Alevrontas:	Absent	Mayor Bernstein:	Absent
Vice Chair Brenner:	Absent	Ms. Chin:	Yes	Ms. DiSclafani:	n/e
Councilwoman Fox:	Absent	Ms. Mamdani:	Yes	Chair Woods:	n/e
Mrs. Hamilton:	Absent				

Motion passed

Ms. Chin asks whether Mr. Greco will be presenting the new variance application at the next board meeting, which Mr. Greco confirms will be happening. Ms. Chin brings up concerns with the large site plan pages, asking for smaller requirements on that front. With some pushback from Ms. Federico and Mr. Chelius on that due to scale, readability and proportionality on the plan, Ms. Federico adds a digital copy would also be helpful. Mr. Greco comments that

professionals can receive the full plan with a smaller version given to the board members to make things easier. Mr. Adelman shares Ms. Chin's concerns.

Ms. Chin adds that at the next meeting, she plans to bring up revisions for the bylaws.

Chair Woods asks for any further comments.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business presented, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by: Mr. Adelman and seconded by Ms. Chin.

All in Favor – Motion Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Greco, Joint Planning Board Secretary