BERGENFIELD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
August 17, 2026

Chairman Jason Bergman called the meeting to order at 8:01 P.M.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT
In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates are confirmed at the Annual Meeting. Notice of this meeting was posted on a municipal public notice bulletin board and published on the borough website.

Any board member having a conflict of interest involving any matter to come before the board this evening is reminded they must recuse themselves from participating in any discussion on this matter.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Led by Board member Picheo.

ROLL CALL
Present: Mayor Amatorio (arrived at 8:05pm), Joseph Picheo, Councilman Lodato, Ariel Forman (arrived at 8:05pm), Romeo Abenoja, Ernesto Acosta, Jason Bergman, Oriole Familia, and Yehuda Borg

Absent: Edgar Dimaren

Also Present: Gloria Oh, Planning Board Attorney, Antonios Panagopoulos, Planning Board Engineer, and Hilda Tavitian, Planning Board Clerk

APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – July 27, 2026
Motion By: Board member Abenoja
Second By: Board member Acosta
All present, voting in favor. None opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE
None.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION
No one came forward.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Were Dispensed With
1. Site Plan
2. Parking Legal
3. Capital Improvements
4. Master Plan
5. Liaison to Board of Adjustment

OLD BUSINESS
None.

NEW BUSINESS
1. Applications: Hill Street Associates, LLC
24 Hill Place
Minor Subdivision

Matthew Capizzi, attorney for applicant, stated the project consists of three building lots. There is Bergen Scrap Metal, an existing business in the borough for many years, the center lot is unimproved with the exception of a fence, and Kindergan Landscaping, which has a storage yard existing on the lot next to that. Mr. Capizzi explained in 2009, the representatives of Kindergan Landscaping and Bergen Scrap Metal purchased the interior lot for purposes of dividing it in half and giving half of that lot to Bergen Scrap Metal and the other half to Kindergan Landscaping. A fence was installed and the properties have been used in a shared relationship since that time. However, the mechanism of folding half of that lot into legal description of Kindergan Landscaping and half of the lot into legal description of Bergen Scrap Metal was never done. They are proposing to delete lot 1 and folding half of the lot to 2.02 and lot 7. The existing lot 7 and lot 2.02 are nonconforming as to the M zone requirements in their existing condition. He stated by taking half of lot 1 and folding it would reduce the noncomformance condition as to lot area and lot widths for both lots. No new variances are proposed. There are no proposed changes to either of the two other lots.

Mike Hubschman, 263 S. Washington Avenue, Bergenfield, NJ, licensed engineer, presented the subdivision plan dated 8/4/25 showing the Kindergan property on the left, the Bergen Scrap Metal property on the right, and the middle is lot 1, that is being proposed to subdivide in half. The property is in the M zone, where lot area is 20,000 sq. ft. is required, and they are proposing 10,152 sq. ft. for the new lot area and 17,882. The existing lot areas are 7,293 for the Kindergan lot. They are adding 2,859 sq. ft. The existing scrap metal lot is 14,908 and will be adding 2,974. It will be closer to conformance. The lot widths will also increase. The existing lot width is 79 ft. on the Kindergan lot and going to lot 107 ft. The scrap metal lot is 100 ft. and the new lot width will be 128 ft. There are no improvements proposed. There is an existing fence that separates the lot.

Board engineer Panagopoulos stated there are existing variances, but will all become less of a variance. There is some existing drainage onsite. He inquired if the fence would be upgraded.

Mr. Hubschman stated there is a seepage pit that appears to be working. They would check it as requested in the engineering letter. He stated it is an active yard and there isn't space for additional landscaping.

Mr. Capizzi stated there are no residential structures in the neighborhood. It is an active yard and they can look at upgrading the fence.

Questions from Residents within 200' and Beyond:
None.

Motion to Approve Subdivision Application
Motion By: Board member Familia
Second By: Chairman Bergman
All present, voting in favor. None opposed.

Daniel Lee
58-60 South Washington Avenue
Amended Site Plan Approval Application

Daniel Lee, applicant and owner, stated he is requesting an amendment to the second-floor use and for signage. The business was approved previously by this Board for a Korean BBQ on the first floor and a Korean dining room on the second floor. Mr. Lee explained, after three years of doing a lot of work inside, they have decided to change the restaurant to Jongro BBQ, that is well known in the Korean community and a very successful business in New York City. There will be live music on the second

floor and can be used for birthday parties and other events. The first request is for the usage of the second floor as a banquet hall. The second request is to convert the dance studio on the second floor to a private, karaoke room. The tenants of the dance studio will be moving out when they find another space.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if it was dining only with the first plan. He stated they were confined to the movie theater. He inquired if they will tear the wall down, take over the dance studio, and convert it to a karaoke room. He inquired if there will be separate entrances for the restaurant and the karaoke room. Mayor Amatorio inquired if the karaoke room was in the original plan.

Mr. Lee stated it was dining only. They will convert the movie theater to a banquet hall. Mr. Lee stated there will be two separate entrances for the karaoke room. There will be one on Washington Avenue, the one currently used for the dance studio. He stated since they will be putting an elevator inside in the restaurant, the elevator can be used for the second-floor banquet hall and the karaoke room. It's a separate entrance on the second floor, but is connected to the elevator. Mr. Lee stated the karaoke room was not in the original plan.

Chairman Bergman inquired if this is still considered to be a minor application.

Board engineer Panagopoulos stated the difference in the application is an external difference.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if Mr. Lee has applied to the building department to take over the property.

Mr. Lee's response was not yet. They have to first get approval to change the dance studio to a karaoke room. It's probably not going to happen for 6 months to a year since the dance studio has to find a place.

Mayor Amatorio stated even if the Board approves the application, they might still have a problem with the Building Department. The dance studio is a different address.

Mr. Panagopoulos stated he has spoken with Mr. Ravenda and was deferred to this Board.

Mayor Amatorio stated the dance studio wasn't part of the movie theater. He doesn't want to set a precedent. It's one lot, but the square footage of the property will tremendously change.

Chairman Bergman stated they are expanding the upstairs.

Mr. Lee stated the dance studio is about 3,500 sq. ft. and the movie theater is about 4,000 sq. ft.

Mayor Amatorio stated that's more than 50% and concerned whether the process is proper.

Councilman Lodato stated Mr. Ravenda should give them a referral.

Board attorney Oh stated the denial letter doesn't include anything pertaining to changing the dance studio to a karaoke room.

Chairman Bergman stated what they only have before them is the change in use of the second floor from a dining room to a lounge area. Technically, the dance studio change is not in front of them.

Mr. Lee stated he understands the concerns of the Board members. They will submit a separate application for the karaoke side.

Board engineer Panagopoulos stated they should split it up between the one side and the karaoke side. Otherwise, they are teetering towards a use variance, a major versus minor, and other issues. He inquired if there will be food and alcohol served in the lounge area. It's restaurant use, which is a permitted use. That part of the building is usable. Mr. Panagopoulos explained once you add the entertainment part, the karaoke room, use variance comes into question, which should be presented before the Zoning Board. There are planners involved and use variance is more difficult to get. Mr. Lee should think about what he wants to do.

Mr. Lee's response was yes. They already have a liquor license.

Chairman Bergman stated the only thing in front of the Board is the restaurant becoming a lounge, nothing to do with the karaoke. The vote will be just for the lounge area. The dance studio will remain a dance studio. If he chooses to make a change, it would have to go to a different Board. Approval for signage would be included in the vote.

Board member Borg stated he has some concerns the sign might not be conforming, and is above the required height. Board member Berg inquired about the hours of operation.

Board engineer Panagopoulos stated it's a waiver. He inquired if Mr. Lee would consider making the sign smaller to be conforming.

Mr. Lee stated they are using the existing marquee sign, that is the same size, and will just be removing the Cinema 5 letters. The new sign is inside. Mr. Lee stated hours will be from 12:00 pm to 2:00 am, seven days a week.

Chairman Bergman stated it's all pre-existing.

Board member Picheo inquired about the existing seating arrangement for the second floor. He inquired about the seating capacity and the maximum occupancy for the building it.

Mr. Lee stated it will remain the same. They would have to adjust the seating if there is an event. They can accommodate up to 80 people on the second floor. There is bleacher type seating on the stairs in the back of the lounge that can seat up to another 40 people. They are special chairs. There will be live music that can seat up to 120 people. The first floor can accommodate a maximum of 220 people, which will be Korean barbeque dining with approximately 40 tables. Mr. Lee stated before it was a movie theater that accommodated 700 people.

Board engineer Panagopoulos inquired about the number of employees. He inquired about cameras and security.

Mr. Lee stated there will be 30-35 employees for both floors combined on the weekend and 20-25 employees during the week. There will be 10 servers, 6 chefs/cooks, and busboys, and managers on the first floor. He stated the first floor will be open 11:00 am to 11:00 pm and operation hours on the second floor will be 12:00 pm – 2:00 am. They plan to open the first floor in October 2026. They have to install an elevator in order to open the second floor, which will be by the end of this year. There will be 64 cameras inside, every table and every hallway will have a camera. Mr. Lee stated the municipal parking in the back is only four hours, noticed people park there all day, and that parking is only until 7:00 pm. He requested the council consider changing the time.

Mayor Amatorio stated they will check the parking ordinance.

Motion to Approve Application for Change of the Second Floor to a Lounge and the Requested Signage
Motion By: Mayor Amatorio
Second By: Board member Forman
All present, voting in favor. None opposed.

MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING
Motion By: Board member Familia
Second By: Mayor Amatorio
All present, voting in favor. None opposed.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hilda Tavitian

Hilda Tavitian, Clerk
Planning Board