

**Borough of Mountain Lakes
Zoning Board of Adjustment
December 4, 2025 Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Borough of Mountain Lakes Zoning Board of Adjustment was held at Town Hall, 400 Boulevard, Mountain Lakes on December 4, 2025. Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm. Chairman Murphy stated that proper notice had been given for this meeting in accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act."

Roll Call

Mr. Caputo – present	Mr. DeNooyer – present
Ms. McCormick – present	Mr. Paddock – present
Ms. Peters – present	Mr. Vecchione – absent
Mr. Astrup – present	Ms. Marotta - present
Chairman Murphy – present	

Also Present: Attorney Michael Sullivan and Board Secretary Kerry Brown

Chairman Murphy requested the January meeting date be changed from Thursday, January 8, 2026 to Wednesday, January 7, 2026 due to conflicts.

Mr. DeNooyer made a motion to change the meeting date to Wednesday, January 7, 2026. Ms. Peters second the motion. All in favor.

Minutes

November 6, 2025

Mr. DeNooyer made a motion to adopt the November 6, 2025 minutes. Ms. Peters second the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote by all eligible members present.

Resolutions

#25-771 – Robert Wagmiller - 112 Pollard Road, Block 110, Lot 41, R-A Zone
Front Yard Setback for proposed vestibule and wrap around covered porch.

Ms. Mc Cormick made a motion to adopt the Wagmiller resolution. Mr. DeNooyer second the motion. The Board voted 5-0 to adopt the resolution of approval with Board members McCormick, DeNooyer, Peters, Astrup and Chairman Murphy voting in favor.

Business

#25-772 - Daniel & Madison Keppeler

10 Scarborough Road, Block 119, Lots 5&6, Zone R-A
Front Yard Setback for proposed addition to front of house.

Mr. Keppeler introduced himself to the Board. He explained he is seeking a C-1 hardship to construct an addition to the front of the house. Mr. Keppeler provided color photos of the existing house (A-1). Mr. Keppeler detailed the proposed project and explained that the existing structure does not meet the front yard setback. Mr. Keppeler stated that proposed addition would be 7.1 feet by 7.5 feet and would essentially square off the corner of the house.

The hearing was opened to the public. No one from the public came forward.

Ms. Peters made a motion to approve the application. Mr. DeNooyer second the motion. The Board voted 7-0 to approve the application with Board members Peters, DeNooyer, Caputo, McCormick, Paddock, Astrup, and Chairman Murphy voting in favor.

#23-755 - Prime Real Estate Management, LLC – Illyas Sarwari

117 Bloomfield Avenue, Block 116, Lot 4, Zone OL-2/R-1

Site Plan, Bulk Variance and Use Variance application to construct an addition and proposed renovations to an existing residential dwelling and garage for proposed residential dwelling, commercial office and van transportation facility.

Bernd E. Hefe, Attorney for applicant

Mark Gimigliano, Engineer for applicant

Joseph Gates, Architect for applicant

Mr. Hefe detailed the proposed application to the Board. Mr. Hefe stated the applicant is requesting to use the existing property as a mixed-use property that would consist of a single-family dwelling, an office and a garage and parking facility for school transportation vehicles. Mr. Hefe stated that when the applicant purchased the property, he started to do work on the existing detached garage and was issued a stop work order and was informed he would need to seek site plan and variance approval.

Mr. Sullivan referenced the borough's professional's reports. Mr. Hefe stated he had not seen the reports. Ms. Brown stated that all reports were uploaded to the one-drive file that was shared with the attorney. Mr. Sullivan stated the applicant's Planner would not present as her report was not available. Mr. Sullivan informed the applicant the report would be ready for the next hearing.

Mr. Ryden informed the Board the applicant is seeking a waiver request from the checklist. Mr. Ryden requested the applicant provide testimony.

Mr. Gimigliano was accepted as a professional engineer and was sworn in. Mr. Gimigliano stated that there is no freshwater detected on the property. Mr. Gimigliano stated that the property was subdivided in 2017 and the NJ DEP determined there were no wetlands within 50 feet of the property at that time. He also indicated that there was a LOI (Letter of Interpretation) issued in 2017.

Mr. Ryden stated that the waiver can be granted for administrative completeness. Mr. Ryden informed the applicant that they may need to provide additional testimony during the hearing.

Chairman Murphy made a motion to grant the waiver. Mr. DeNooyer second the motion. The Board voted 7-0 to approve the application with Board members Murphy, DeNooyer, Caputo, McCormick, Paddock, Peters and Astrup voting in favor.

Mr. Hefe described the conditions of the property, including the existing structures and the past uses. Mr. Hefe explained Mr. Sawari's business and his current location.

Mr. Sawari was sworn in. Mr. Sawari described his business to the Board. He stated he wishes to use the property as his residence and an office for his transportation business. Mr. Sawari stated that his employees receive their routes and will pick up their van prior to the school year starting. He stated that the employees keep the van year round and are usually parked at the employee's place of residence.

Mr. Sawari testified that when the vans are not in use, they are stored at other locations. Mr. Sawari testified that he has multiple storage lots located in Newark, New Jersey and Elizabeth, New Jersey. Mr. Sawari testified that no vans would be stored at the site long term. He stated that there will be times where small maintenance items may need to be repaired such as wiper blades or other similar repairs. Mr. Sawari testified that there would be no repairs on site, such as oil changes, tire changes or other similar repairs.

Mr. Sawari informed the Board that the office space would normally be three to four employees, and the hours of the office would be normal business hours. Mr. Sawari stated he has been in business for over eight years.

Mr. Gimigliano described the existing conditions of the property. He stated that the structures are not visible from Route 46. Mr. Gimigliano stated he was not sure what the prior uses of the property were. Mr. Gimigliano stated a tree fell onto the garage and damaged a portion of the garage.

Mr. Gimigliano detailed the layout of the property, including the proposed parking area. He went into detail on the proposed grading plan and the storm water management plan. Mr. Gimigliano detailed the landscape plan and the buffering between the existing property and the King of Kings Church. Mr. Gimigliano informed the Board that roughly 30-50 trucks of soil would be removed from the site.

Mr. Hefe stated that the applicant is not seeking any signage as part of the application. Mr. Hefe also stated that there would be no outdoor storage or dumpsters. Mr. Hefe stated the hours of operation would be 7 am until 5 pm and that the lights would be on a timer. He also stated that the lights would shut off one hour after closing.

Mr. Ryden went over his report. Mr. Ryden asked for verification on several items and asked that the proposed HVAC system be shown on the architectural plans. Mr. Ryden also asked about the existing oil tank that is on the property. Mr. Hefe stated the oil tank is no longer in use and would be removed. Mr. Hefe indicated that his client would comply with Mr. Ryden's report.

Mr. Jahr, the Borough Traffic Engineer, stated that the site is a low trip generator, but his main concern is the driveway access location and the distance between the adjoining property. Mr. Jahr informed the applicant they would need to receive NJ DOT approval for the driveway access. Mr. Jahr stated that the applicant might need to shift the driveway to comply with the NJ DOT regulations.

Mr. Kreisher, the Borough Environmental Engineer, had concerns about the parking lot layout and stated that the corner of the lot may collect water. Mr. Kreisher stated that the applicant may want to look at redesigning the curb.

The meeting was opened to the public. No one came forward.

Mr. Gates provided a color rendering of the property and went over the project in detail including the rear addition and the floor plans for the residential structure. Mr. Gates stated that the renovations are needed to make the house more comfortable. He stated the house is very modest in size and the existing rooms are small. Mr. Gates stated the proposed HVAC units for the residential dwelling will be amended to show on the plans.

| There was a brief discussion regarding the application, and it was determined that the applicant would need to submit revised plans addressing all the concerns of the Board and the Professionals.

Chairman Murphy made a motion to carry the application until the January meeting. Mr. Paddock seconded the motion. The Board voted 7-0 to carry the application until January 7, 2026 with Board members Murphy, Paddock, Caputo, DeNooyer, McCormick, Peters and Astrup voting in favor.

Public Comment

No one from the public came forward.

Correspondence

No correspondence at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Brown, Board Secretary