

PLANNING BOARD APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

BOROUGH OF ALLENTOWN DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & LAND USE

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General Information

(These instructional pages are for your information and do not have to be submitted with your application)

Welcome to the application packet for the Borough of Allentown Planning Board. The following description provides a general overview of the Board and the reason for Zoning and the instructions for making an application to the Board.

What is Zoning?

The Borough is divided into various “zones” and each has specific regulations related to use, setbacks, lot coverage, building height and other various features of land use. These zones have been created by the Borough Zoning Regulations in the Borough Code which is meant to encourage the most appropriate use of land and conservation of the value of property. It prevents conflicts between different types of uses and provides buffers between different zones. In residential zones for example, incompatible uses such as industrial uses, shopping centers, and offices are not permitted. By regulating the placement, height and intensity of development it allows the Borough to be a safer and more attractive community.

Although each municipality may establish different zoning regulations, all zoning regulations and all actions of the Planning Board must be in accordance with the requirements of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law.

What is the Function of the Planning Board?

The Planning Board is a group of citizens (seven regular members and two alternate members) appointed by the Borough that has the power to grant variances from the zoning requirements. The Board can only grant a variance in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law. In all cases before the Planning Board, it is the applicant's burden to prove his or her case. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that the granting of a variance will not create any harm to the public, or impair the intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations.

The Planning Board is responsible for considering applications that require exceptions from standards in the Borough's Land Development Regulations. The Board is empowered by the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, to grant exceptions to the zoning regulations in cases where the literal and rigid interpretation and enforcement of the zoning laws would cause undue hardship or injustice. These exceptions are called variances.

Since zoning variances may infringe on the rights of neighbors, an applicant is not entitled to a variance. Some items to consider when requesting a variance are special reasons, benefits, negative criteria and hardship. In some cases, applicants may not be able to meet the land use requirements due to the physical characteristics of the property such as shape, lot size, frontage or other features. In other cases, the applicant may want to use a property for something other than permitted in that zone such as a business in a residential zone. Applicants must meet specific criteria contained in the MLUL by satisfying specific legal

standards of proof. This burden of proof is placed upon the applicant to demonstrate the requested relief is justified without impinging upon the rights of neighbors.

This Board also hears appeals of decisions made by the Borough Zoning Officer or interpretations of a zoning ordinance when questions may arise, as well as applications for site plan and subdivision approval.

Applying for a Zoning Permit

Exemptions from Zoning Permit

No Zoning Permit shall be required, nor any application for a Zoning Permit shall be required for the proposed construction, erection or alteration for:

- (1) Siding, or re-siding
- (2) Roof repair
- (3) Replacement of windows
- (4) Replacement of garage doors
- (5) The installation of roof-only solar panels which do not extend beyond the ridge or edge of the roof.

Zoning Permit Requirements

Zoning Permits are required to be secured from the Zoning Officer prior to the construction, erection or alteration of a structure. The applicant shall conform to the requirements of the Uniform Construction Code Ordinance and the Zoning Regulations in the Borough Code and shall in all cases submit detailed plans in accordance with said site plan section to the Planning Board for approval prior to any permit being issued, except other than a detached one (1) dwelling unit building.

Zoning Permit Application Fee

Any person or entity seeking a Zoning Permit shall pay a fee pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance fee Schedule which fee shall be paid in advance of the Zoning Officer reviewing and responding to the request.

Applying for Site Plan

Site Plan Requirements

A. Site plan review and approval shall be required before:

- (1) Any change of use, or
- (2) Any of the following actions taken in contemplation of or in preparation for development of land for any use or purpose not exempted by C. below:

- a. Excavation.
 - b. Removal of soil.
 - c. Clearing of site.
 - d. Modifying the natural condition of any land.
 - e. Placing of any fill on the land.
- B. Except as hereinafter provided, no Construction or Zoning Permit shall be issued for any building or use or structure, or reduction or enlargement in size or other alteration of any building or structure or change in use of any building including accessory structures and outdoor storage and sales areas unless a site plan is first submitted and approved by the Planning Board, and no certificate of occupancy shall be given unless all construction and development conforms to the plans as approved by the Planning Board.
- C. Site plan approval shall not be required for any detached one- or two-dwelling-unit buildings or any uses accessory thereto, such as a private garage or storage shed incidental to residential uses; or accessory nonresidential buildings less than 750 square feet in floor area and the construction of which results in less than a ten-percent (10%) increase of lot coverage, but this shall not limit the requirements for submission and approval of plats as otherwise required by the Borough Land Development Regulations.
- D. Site plan approval may be granted for plans that can be defined below. Applications for minor site plan approval shall comply with the minor or major application form packages as required.

Minor Site Plan Definition

- A. A site plan for construction of an addition or modification to an existing building, which meets the following criteria:
- (1) Shall not exceed 1,500 square feet in floor area.
 - (2) Shall not result in the addition of more than five parking spaces.
 - (3) Shall not involve any change of use or require a use variance, encroach into any required front, side or rear yard or exceed minimum or maximum design standards contained in this chapter.
- B. No development, including parking spaces, shall encroach into any buffer, landscape area, drainage area, wetlands area or open space required by this chapter or designated for such purpose(s) on a previously approved site plan or subdivision plan or other approved by the Planning Board.
- C. There shall be no alterations of the existing drainage involving construction of, addition or modification to, site grading or addition of parking spaces and/or aisles which, in the

written opinion of the Borough Engineer, would substantially change the direction or quantity of storm drainage or surface water flow;

- D. The proposed addition or alteration shall not violate any requirements of the Borough Land Development Regulations or other ordinances of the Borough nor any condition of a previously approved site plan.
- E. The total disturbed area of the site shall not exceed 5,000 square feet or require Soil Conservation Service approval.

Major Site Plan Definition

- A. Any site plan that is not defined as a minor site plan shall be deemed a major site plan.

Applying for Subdivision

Subdivision Requirements

- A. Subdivision plan review and approval shall be required for the division of a lot, tract or parcel of land into two or more lots, tracts, parcels, or other divisions of land for sale or development. The following shall not be considered a subdivision if no new streets are created:
 - (1) Divisions of land found by the Planning Board to be for agricultural purposes where all resulting parcels are five acres or larger in size;
 - (2) Divisions of property by testamentary or intestate provisions;
 - (3) Divisions of property upon court order including but not limited to judgments of foreclosure;
 - (4) Consolidation of existing lots by deed or other recorded instrument, provided each lot to be combined does not contain a principal structure; and
 - (5) The conveyance of one or more adjoining lots, tracts or parcels of land owned by the same person or persons and all of which are found and certified by the Zoning Officer to conform to the requirements of the Borough development regulations and/or shown and designated as separate lots on the Tax Map of the Borough. The term "subdivision" shall also include the term "re-subdivision."

Major and Minor Subdivision

The differences between a minor subdivision and a major subdivision are as follows:

Minor Subdivision

Any subdivision containing not more than two lots plus the remainder fronting on an existing street approved to Borough standards, not involving any planned development, a new street or road, the extension of a street or road and/or municipal facilities or an extension of any off-tract improvement the cost of which shall be pro-rated pursuant to the Borough Code and not adversely affecting the development of the remainder of the parcel of adjoining property. In addition thereto, all "cluster developments" as defined by the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., where subdivision or re-subdivision approval is required shall be major subdivisions.

Major Subdivision

Any subdivision not classified as a minor subdivision. Any proposed subdivision which would otherwise qualify as a minor subdivision shall be classified as a major subdivision if the subdivision under consideration represents a further subdivision of an original tract of land for which a previous minor subdivision has been approved by the Planning Board and the combination of the proposed and approved minor subdivision shall constitute a major subdivision.

Concept Plan Submission to the Planning Board

The purpose of a concept plan review is an informal discussion and review by the Board with the applicant, prior to the preparation of detailed plans and designs, to establish general guidelines for the proposed preliminary site plan so that the applicant may be informed of specific planning, design and engineering criteria which the Board deems necessary for compliance with the regulations applicable to the proposed development.

Any applicant who is required to obtain site plan approval, as defined herein, may submit to the Board, for informal discussion, concept plan information, maps and other appropriate materials, for the purpose of determining applicability and general conformance of the proposed development or improvement to the standards and regulations applicable to the development. Such concept plan information, upon written request by the applicant, may be submitted at, or prior to, a regular meeting of the Board or at such other meetings and under such conditions as the Board may establish.

No public hearing is required for the concept plan submission, although the Board may place the applicant's proposal on the agenda of a regularly scheduled meeting for public discussion.

Applying for a Variance

What is a Variance?

All development must conform to the specific requirements of the zoning district in which the property is located as well as the Borough's general zoning regulations. In some cases, it may not be possible to meet these requirements because of the shape or special physical characteristics of the property. In other cases, a property owner may wish to develop a site in a different way than is permitted by the zoning regulations. A variance is an official act of the Borough which permits a property owner to use or develop property in a manner which would not otherwise be allowed under the zoning requirements of the Borough of Allentown.

Are There Different Categories of Variances?

Generally, there are two broad categories of variances. The Planning Board may grant a "d" or "use" variance to permit a use or type of building that is not otherwise allowed. The Planning Board may also grant "bulk variances" from the zoning requirements related to the location and placement of building or structures, or the size and configuration of a piece property. There are two different types of bulk variances, also known as the "C-1" and "C2" variances. (The number refers to the subsection of the Municipal Land Use Law which describes these variances.)

"C-1" Variances involve cases where because of the size, shape, topography or other physical features that are unique to the property, the zoning requirements would place an exceptional burden or hardship upon the owner or applicant. Suppose that one would like to build a house on a property that has steep slopes on a portion of a site. In order to avoid disruption of the slopes, the house would have to be placed on the property in a manner such that the side yard setback of the house (i.e., the distance required between the house and the side property line) would not meet the Borough zoning requirement. The Planning Board would be justified in granting a variance for the insufficient side yard setback if it were demonstrated that 1) the physical constraints of that particular property would not allow meeting the zoning requirements and 2) that the variance could be granted without harming the public welfare or impairing the intent and purpose of the Borough's Land Development Regulations.

"C-2" Variances do not require a demonstration of hardship however, the applicant must demonstrate that the variance requested would promote one of the goals of the Municipal Land Use Law and show that the benefits of granting a variance would substantially outweigh any detriment to the zoning provisions of the Borough Code. For example, suppose an applicant would want to build a house or commercial building on a property in a historic zoning district that does not have any physical limitations such as wetlands or steep slopes. Although a house or commercial building could meet all zoning requirements, an applicant would like to place the house or commercial building closer to the front property line than is normally allowed in order to be consistent with the setback of other houses or commercial building adjacent to or close proximity in the immediate neighborhood. If the applicant can demonstrate that 1) the proposed development allows a more desirable visual environmental and a better utilization of the property and 2) that the benefits of blending in which the existing pattern of development in

the neighborhood and creating a more attractive appearance would outweigh any possible detriments associated with the reduced front yard setback, then the Planning Board would be justified in granting a variance.

Instructions on Applying to the Board

Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Borough Zoning Officer prior to filling out any forms to ensure that the proper application package and forms are required for the proposed development or improvement. Once the Zoning Officer has determined that the applicant must appear before the board, the application process may begin. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the Borough Code and application forms which are available on the Borough website at: www.allentownboronj.com/. Based on the level of complexity of the application that is required, applicants may wish to consider hiring professionals to represent them and make their case to the Board.

A. In order to file an application before the Board, an applicant must submit the following:

- (1) Fifteen (15) copies of the completed Application Form and other relevant forms within the application package.
- (2) Application and escrow fees (separate checks or money orders made payable to the Borough of Allentown – see fee schedule). Submit a completed Escrow Maintenance Form and a W-9 (must match name on escrow check).
- (3) Fifteen (15) copies of a property survey or plan drawn to scale, clearly showing the correct property address, location and dimensions of the property and all existing and proposed structures (buildings, swimming pools, sheds, fences, driveways, garages, etc.). A rendering should be provided for any proposed structures, indicating proposed materials and colors (four copies). A digital copy (pdf) of all plans should be provided if available. Additional copies of plans, reports, etc. may be requested as needed in order to properly review the application.
- (4) **If the lot is undersized**, a copy of the Undersized Lot-Acquisition Form must also be submitted no later than 20 days prior to a scheduled hearing date to show that an attempt was made to acquire additional property. Proof of submission would include certified mail slips, the adjacent property owners signing a receipt of the notice and the completed form returned.

The Planning Board Office will review the items submitted and advise the applicant if the application is complete, incomplete or requires additional items/information.

B. When all submittal requirements have been fulfilled, the application will be declared complete, distributed for professional review and referred to the Chairperson to be scheduled for a tentative hearing date. The application must be deemed complete no less

than twenty-one (21) days prior to a meeting in order to be scheduled for a meeting agenda. If that agenda is filled, the application will be placed on the next available agenda. The Chairperson sets the final agenda dates.

C. All applications required before the Planning Board require Public Notice. Once an application is scheduled for a public hearing the applicant must:

- (1) Arrange for publication of the notice in the Asbury Park Press or The Trenton Times at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the hearing. **NOTE: The newspaper requires several days advance notice in order to print a legal notice.**
- (2) Request an Affidavit of Publication from the newspaper and send it to the Planning Board Office at least three (3) days prior to the hearing.
- (3) Serve notice by personal service or certified mail at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing date to the following parties where applicable:
 - (a) Owners of all real property located within two-hundred feet (200') feet in all directions of the subject property. NOTE: The Borough Tax Assessor will provide applicants with a certified list of property owners in the Borough of Allentown. If properties in other municipalities are within two-hundred feet (200') of the subject property, the applicant must contact the other municipality or municipalities to obtain a list of property owners in those municipalities.
 - (b) The Clerks(s) of adjoining municipalities where the subject property is within two-hundred feet (200') of another municipality.
 - (c) Monmouth County Planning Board where the subject property is adjacent to an existing County Road or proposed road, adjoining County land, or situated within two hundred feet (200') of another municipality.
 - (d) Mercer County Planning Board where the subject property is within two hundred feet (200') of a municipality located in Mercer County.
- (4) An applicant must return the notice forms that are included in the application package (Affidavit of Proof of Service Form, Affidavit of Publication), the list of persons served, a copy of the notice served and an Affidavit of Publication from the newspaper to the Board office at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. If notice was served by Certified Mail, the receipts must also be submitted to the Planning Board Office. **A digital (scanned) copy of the proof of service can be provided for review three (3) days prior to the hearing date as long as the originals are brought to the public hearing.**

NOTE: No action will be taken on any application unless an applicant has

demonstrated that all affected parties have been properly notified.

- D. Applicants must appear at the meeting and may be represented by an attorney at law. No one other than an attorney can represent an applicant. If the applicant is a corporation or LLC, then it must be represented by an attorney at law. The applicant should be prepared to testify regarding the reasons for requesting the variance.

The applicant may also provide expert witnesses at the meeting to assist in presenting the applicants case. All witnesses will state their name and occupation, be sworn in, and present their credentials to the Board. They will then give testimony as directed by the applicant's attorney. Expert witnesses only testify in their field of expertise. The term "expert witness" is not defined in the Municipal Land use Law, and the Rules of Evidence are applicable but not mandatory in land use proceedings. Typical witnesses may include a professional planner, engineer, surveyor or architect depending on the nature of the application. Expert witnesses typically testify as to the nature of the application and if necessary describe and provide required testimony on any variance or waiver relief being sought by the application.

- E. IT IS THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE VARIANCE CAN BE GRANTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW JERSEY MUNICIPAL LAND USE LAW. Applications for variances are legally complex, and the applicant may wish to consult an attorney for guidance in submitting an application and preparing for a public hearing. The Borough staff cannot provide advice or information as to how to prove the merits of an application. Please note that if an applicant is unrepresented by an attorney and the public hearing has commenced, it is highly unlikely that Board will grant an adjournment of the hearing to permit retaining an attorney if the applicant has subsequently decided that one is needed.

NOTES:

- (1) Applicants are not required to obtain a list of variances from the Zoning Officer. You may prepare this list yourself, however, if you need assistance, it is recommended that you contact the Zoning Officer or seek the advice of a land use attorney.
- (2) Applicants may prepare the list of property owners within two-hundred feet (200') of the subject property yourself; however, it is recommended that you ask the Planning Board Administrative Officer to prepare this list.

PLEASE MAKE SURE APPLICATION FORMS, MAPS AND DRAWINGS ARE CLEAR, LEGIBLE AND DESCRIBE PRECISELY WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED. ALL DOCUMENTS MUST CLEARLY STATE THE PROPERTY ADDRESS.

AT THE PUBLIC HEARING, PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER MATERIALS MAY BE

PRESENTED TO ASSIST IN PRESENTING THE CASE. A POSTER BOARD EXHIBIT SHOWING ALL EXISTING AND PROPOSED STRUCTURES ON THE PROPERTY MAY ALSO BE PRESENTED SO THAT ALL BOARD MEMBERS CAN CLEARLY SEE WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED. A DIGITAL DISPLAY IS AVAILABLE USING THE APPLICANTS OWN LAPTOP COMPUTER; HOWEVER, THE APPLICANT MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE PLANNING BOARD OFFICE IN ADVANCE TO SET UP THE MONITORS. A HARD (8.5" X 11") COPY OF ANYTHING PRESENTED DIGITALLY TO THE BOARD MUST BE PROVIDED TO THE PLANNING BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER TO BE MARKED AS EVIDENCE.

APPLICATION FORMS

The application consists of various documents that must be filled out and submitted in order for an application to be deemed complete. The following items must be submitted:

- A. **Development Application** – This provides the Board with contact information for the applicant and all professionals, the type of application, the items of the proposed development, an overview of the project and the consents required for the application review and approval. There are separate applications packages for site plans and subdivisions.
- B. **Application Checklist** – A checklist that the applicant can complete. The checklist provides an account of items that must be addressed by the applicant for required application completion. Based on the type of application and/or variance required, the applicant will only have to address those items that correspond to the application and are checked off on the checklist. This is for guidance only and does not need to be submitted with the application. It is suggested that the checklist be given to all professionals so they can ensure the application submitted is complete. Please make sure all plans/surveys/drawings are folded not rolled.
- C. **Affidavit of Completeness**
This form must be filled out and signed by the applicant or their professional(s) to confirm that the applicant has completed or addressed the checklist items.
- D. **Consent of Owner Form**
This form must be filled out by the owner of the property to show consent of the application to the Planning Board. This is applicable for instances where there is a contract purchaser of a property.
- E. **Consent to Inspect Premises**
This form must be filled out by the owner of the property to approve his/her consent to have members of the Board, consultants or other Borough officials the ability to inspect

the property.

F. Disclosure Statement

This statement is required to be filled out pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-48.1. *It is only applicable for the following applications:*

A corporation or partnership applying to a planning board or a board of adjustment or to the governing body of a municipality for permission to subdivide a parcel of land into six or more lots, or applying for a variance to construct a multiple dwelling of 25 or more family units or for approval of a site to be used for commercial purposes shall list the names and addresses of all stockholders or individual partners owning at least 10% of its stock of any class or at least 10% of the interest in the partnership, as the case may be.

G. Waiver of Statutory Time Limitations

This form is to be filled out by the applicant to grant an extension of time to the Planning Board to consider the application. As indicated in the form the applicant reserves the right to withdraw the extension of time after expiration of the initial statutory period provided that applicant gives the Planning Board 30 days notice of the intention to withdraw the waiver.

H. Tax Statement

This is a form that is filled out to indicate the address and block and lot of the property. This form will be forwarded to the Office of the Tax Collector for authorization that the property taxes have been paid and are current.

I. Application and Escrow Fee Calculation Worksheet

Application Fee – An application fee will be required and shall be determined by the CFO and/or Engineer based upon the type of application pursuant to the fees as described on the worksheet. The applicant will be notified of such fee and shall be required to pay it within five (5) days of notification or prior to the actual meeting date.

Escrow Fee – The CFO of the Borough of Allentown will require a separate escrow fee to be paid at the time of filing the application.

J. W-9 Taxpayer Identification

A W-9 IRS form must to be submitted to the Borough. This form can be filled out on-line and printed by visiting: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>

K. Escrow Maintenance Form

This form is required to be submitted to show the person/firm responsible for maintaining the escrow account.

L. Request for List of Certified Property Owners

This form will request that a certified list of property owners within 200 feet of the application property from the Borough Tax Assessor. The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that notice be served on all property owners within two hundred feet (200 ft.) of the parcel that is the subject of the application. This notice alerts the neighbors that an application is being requested and assures them an opportunity to witness the presentation and support or object to the application.

M. Public Notice Form

The Municipal Land Use Law requires that an applicant provide a public notice which shall appear in a local newspaper designated by the Borough. This notice alerts the public that a variance or variances are being requested and assures that anyone who wants the opportunity to witness the presentation and support or object to the application may do so. The public notice shall appear in the newspaper at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing. Copies of the public notice and an Affidavit of Publication must be submitted to the Board Secretary at least three (3) days prior to the hearing or the application may be removed from the agenda. The Asbury Park Press (APP) or the Trenton Times (TS) are the local newspapers designated by the Borough for purposes of newspaper notice. Notice should be sent to the APP or TS a few days ahead of time to meet their internal deadline for publication.

N. Affidavit of Service

This form must be filled out, signed and notarized for all applications to the Board. The applicant should check off all parties that were served notices and swear to it to ensure compliance with the MLUL. The applicant should attach copies of all notices that were sent out.

O. Affidavit of Publication

This form must be filled out, signed and notarized for all applications to the Board. The applicant should indicate the paper / publication in which the notice of the application was published to ensure compliance with the MLUL. The applicant should attach copies of the Notice that was sent and an Affidavit of Publication by the applicable newspaper.

P. Application for Environmental Commission Review

This application provides the Environmental Commission of the Borough of Allentown with information needed to help determine, in an orderly manner, whether a proposed project or action may be environmentally significant.

Q. Application for Historic Preservation Commission Review

This application provides the Historical Preservation Commission of the Borough of Allentown with information needed to help determine, in an orderly manner, whether a proposed project or action may be historically significant.

Package Completeness

Once the application has been deemed preliminary complete by the Board Secretary, and the escrow paid by the applicant, the Board Secretary will notify the applicant of the assigned

hearing date. The applicant shall fill out the “Notice to Owners” as provided in the package and send a copy to all owners on the list via certified mail, return receipt requested, at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing. Copies of the notice and the certified receipts must be submitted to the Board Secretary at least three (3) days prior to the hearing or the application may be removed from the agenda.

In order for an application to be deemed preliminarily complete by the Board Secretary, all items listed above must be addressed and anything checked off on the checklist must be provided. Fifteen (15) copies of the completed application and forms, copies of plans, surveys, pictures, drawings, etc. must be submitted to be deemed complete. If the applicant is requesting a waiver for an item on the checklist, a written explanation for the request must be submitted.

- A. If the application requires review from the Planning Board Engineer the full application will be submitted to the Planning Board Engineer for review. A review letter will then be mailed to the applicant and their professionals.
- B. Once the applicant has paid the fee, the Board Secretary will assign a hearing date for the application. When the hearing date has been assigned, the applicant shall notice all parties as listed above and on the attached checklist, and provide copies of the notice, receipts, and affidavits at least three (3) days prior to the hearing. Failure to provide these documents may cause the application to be removed from the hearing agenda.
- C. After all of the items listed above have been addressed and the package is deemed administratively complete, the application will be heard at the assigned hearing date. The applicant should be prepared to provide testimony on their behalf in support of the application which should include exhibits, professionals, and any other pertinent information

This is a general overview of the process for an application to the Borough of Allentown Planning Board. This overview should not be considered all-inclusive and it is the responsibility of the applicant to follow all rules and regulations of the Borough Code, the Planning Board and the MLUL. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Planning Board Secretary, at planning@allentownboronj.com.

Keep in mind that Borough and Planning Board cannot offer legal advice or information on how best to present the merits of an application. Applicants should consider seeking outside professional assistance in preparation of their case when there are any questions involved.