

**MINUTES
TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
April 15, 2026, 7:30 P.M.**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held its regular meeting on April 15, 2026, at 7:30 P.M. via virtual ZOOM videoconference.

Chairman Bagoff called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 P.M. He announced that notification of the meeting was given to the Township Clerk, and posted on the Township Bulletin Board, sent to the West Orange Chronicle and the Star Ledger, and posted on the Township's website calendar. This meeting has been properly noticed to the public in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. No new matters will start after 10:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- *Chairman Bagoff* requested all persons stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Planning Board special meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.** in person.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Bagoff; Mr. Jerry Guarino;
Mr. Ken Alper; Mr. John Cardoza;
Mayor Susan McCartney; Mr. Christopher Morgan, Sr.;
Councilwoman Susan Scarpa; Mr. Lee Klein;
Ms. Lori Kapferer; Mr. Frank Noborine;

ABSENT: Mr. William Wilkes

ALSO PRESENT: Diana P. McGovern, Esq., Planning Board Attorney;
Jamilet Baquerizo Vite, Planning Board Secretary
Ryan MacNeill, Board Engineer
Malvika Apte, Board Planner

MINUTES & RESOLUTIONS

10-29-2025 Draft Executive Session Minutes

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mr. Guarino

Alper:	Y	Mayor McCartney:	---
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	---
Cardoza (Alt.2):	Y	Noborine:	---

Guarino:	Y	Scarpa:	---
Kapferer:	Y	Wilkes:	---
Klein:	---		

12-3-2025 Draft Executive Session Minutes

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mr. Morgan

Alper:	Y	Mayor McCartney:	---
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	Y	Noborine:	---
Guarino:	Y	Scarpa:	Y
Kapferer:	Y	Wilkes:	---
Klein:	Y		

1-7-26-WO-PB-Draft-Minutes

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mr. Guarino

Alper:	Y	Mayor McCartney:	---
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	Y	Noborine:	---
Guarino:	Y	Scarpa:	Y
Kapferer:	Y	Wilkes:	---
Klein:	Y		

1-14-26-WO-PB-Draft-Minutes

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mayor McCartney

Alper:	Y	Mayor McCartney:	---
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	Y	Noborine:	---
Guarino:	Y	Scarpa:	Y

Kapferer:	Y	Wilkes:	---
Klein:	Y		

1-28-26-WO-PB-Draft-Minutes

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mayor McCartney

Alper:	Y	Mayor McCartney:	---
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	Y	Noborine:	---
Guarino:	Y	Scarpa:	Y
Kapferer:	Y	Wilkes:	---
Klein:	Y		

2-25-26-WO-PB-Draft-Minutes

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mr. Guarino

Alper:	Y	Mayor McCartney:	Y
Bagoff:	Y	Morgan:	Y
Cardoza (Alt.2):	Y	Noborine:	Y
Guarino:	Y	Scarpa:	Y
Kapferer:	---	Wilkes:	---
Klein:	Y		

SWEARING IN

- The Township Professional(s) sworn in.

Ordinance 2955-26 Review

- The Board reviewed Ordinance 2955-26, referred by the Town Council.
- The ordinance proposed amending Chapter 25, Section 475 regarding:
 - o Organization of the Land Use Board
 - o Chair and Vice Chair terms for the Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Purpose of the Ordinance is to remove term limits for the leadership of the Zoning Board of Adjustment for:
 - o Zoning Board Chair
 - o Zoning Board Vice Chair
- Align local ordinance language more closely with New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL).

PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS

- Ms. Apte explained under the MLUL, ordinances affecting land use must be reviewed by the Planning Board to determine consistency with the Township Master Plan.
- The current ordinance required annual elections and didn't allow consecutive terms.
- The amendment would allow zoning board members themselves to decide whether a chair or vice chair could continue serving consecutively.
- Ms. Apte believes the amendment is consistent with the 2019 Master Plan
- The Master Plan encourages:
 - o Efficient administration
 - o Improved procedural regulation
 - o Better functioning of boards and commissions
- Ms. McGovern explained the ordinance change has only to do with the Zoning board, which has separate powers than the Planning Board
- The proposed ordinance would remove the restriction only for the Zoning Board, creating inconsistency between the two boards.

BOARD QUESTIONS

- Councilperson Scarpa asked how the board had historically operated with the same chairpersons for multiple years if the ordinance prohibited consecutive terms. Chairman Bagoff said they're out of compliance with the ordinance, but in compliance with the state MLUL.

BOARD COMMENTS

- Mr. Alper questioned whether the Town Council had authority to impose such restrictions in the first place. Nonetheless, he agreed the ordinance was consistent with the Master Plan.

APPLICATIONS

- **PB24-01 West Essex Highlands Inc**
Block: 179 Lot: 32 Zone: IH-1
Warner Road
The applicant is proposing to develop a 496-unit inclusionary multifamily residential development on a 120-acre property in the northwest corner of the township.
- **The application will be carried to the next Planning Board regular meeting on May 6, 2026, without further notice in person, starting at 6:30 pm.**
- **PB24-05 Yerrr Canna LLC**
Block: 62 Lots: 22.01, 32, and 34 Zone: I
76-82 Ashland Avenue
The application to occupy and develop an existing vacant two-story metal warehouse building space consisting of approximately 9482 square feet into a Class 1 cannabis cultivator use, with 2,500 square feet of cultivation space on the first floor to stripe the parking lot and put up a security fence.

PRESENTATION

- On behalf of the applicant, attorney Kenneth McPherson explained that the description on the agenda described the approval that was granted to the applicant.
- Approved in April 2024 for 2 years
- Mr. McPherson requested a one-year extension of prior approvals.
- Reasons for extension as explained by Mr. McPherson
 - o Another cannabis-related application, Blue Violet LLC, was approved on the same property.
 - o Site improvements for Blue Violet overlapped with Yerrr Canna's approvals.
 - o It made little sense for Yerrr Canna to proceed before final site coordination was completed.
- Mr. McPherson explained that the applicants coordinated parking and site design
- Shared access and parking areas required unified planning
- Now that Blue Violet was approved, both projects could move forward together

PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONS

- Ms. McGovern asked if they're looking for an extension from the date of publication. Mr. McPherson confirmed yes, April 25, 2024.
- Ms. Apte asked whether future resolution compliance submissions will be with Blue Violet's plans. McPherson said both applications would now proceed consistently and jointly.

NO BOARD QUESTIONS

NO BOARD COMMENTS

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion: Chairman Bagoff

Second: Mr. Guarino

Alper: Y	Mayor McCartney: Y
Bagoff: Y	Morgan: Y
Cardoza (Alt.2): Y	Noborine: Y
Guarino: Y	Scarpa: Y
Kapferer: ---	Wilkes: ---
Klein: Y	

● **PB25-11 525 Northfield Avenue, LLC**

Block: 159.04 Lot 1.01 Zone: B2

525 Northfield Avenue

The applicant is proposing a 4-story mixed-use building containing 1,200 square feet commercial space on the ground floor, and 95 residential units on the upper floors, and 165 off-street parking spaces.

PRESENTATION

- Attorney Marsha Moore, presented the application on behalf of 525 Northfield Avenue, LLC.
- Applicant is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval, as well as conditional use approval and certain C variances, to permit the redevelopment of the property located at 525 Northfield Avenue.
- Application proposes demolition of an existing vacant structure, as well as the construction of a mixed-use building consisting of:
 - o 95 residential units
 - o 20% affordable units
 - o 1,200 square feet of commercial space
 - o 165 parking spaces
- The 19 affordable units will be integrated into the building, match the quality and design of market-rate units, and be built concurrently with market-rate units
- The property is approximately 2.53 acres and located at the Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Avenue intersection, along County Route 508
- Alongside the application, the design includes residential amenities:
 - o Co-working space
 - o Gym
 - o Simulator room
 - o Landscape zen garden
- Application proposes 165 physical parking spaces.
 - o EV credits increased parking count to 183 spaces
 - o Included stacked parking
- C variances requests include:
 - o Front yard setback
 - o Corner side setback
 - o Impervious coverage
 - o Building height
 - o Number of stories
 - o Residential buffer relief
 - o Driveway distance to nearby residential property
- The site previously contained a house.
- The property has reportedly remained vacant since COVID
- The applicant believes the project advances township redevelopment goals, supports affordable housing obligations, and enhances walkability
- Limited tree removal proposed
- Most removed trees are in bad conditions
- Applicant is seeking to replace 27 trees with approximately 51 new replacements.
- As required by the board, they appeared before the SPRAB.
- Based on the comments from the board's experts, the applicant has reduced the scope of the project from 105 units to 95 residential units.
- Ms. Moore emphasized that the application had been substantially revised in response to prior feedback from the SPRAB meeting and city representatives
- She stated that the applicant received and reviewed:
 - o Planner Malvika Apte's report dated April 8, 2026.
 - o Board Engineer Ryan MacNeill's report dated April 10, 2026.
- Ms. Moore explained that the applicant would **not seek a lighting variance** because the engineer would testify that the project complies with lighting requirements.

- The applicant intended to comply with ADA requirements for EV charging spaces, eliminating the need for relief on that issue.
- Testimony would address parking concerns regarding tandem and stacked parking spaces that had been raised during the SPRAB review.
- Ms. Moore also identified requested submission checklist waivers, including:
 - Existing/proposed contour intervals.
 - Landscape plans prepared by a professional landscape architect.
 - Certain plans/legal documents.
 - EIS waiver.
- She confirmed that public notice had been published in both the Essex Daily and the Star-Ledger in accordance with regulations.

PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS

- Ms. Apte reviewed the requested waivers and recommended several for approval based on the nature of the application.
- Waivers discussed included:
 - Graphic scale waiver
 - Soil survey data
 - Storm permit application
 - Landscape plans by a professional landscape architect
 - Compliance with West Orange COAH ordinances (to be addressed during final site plan phase)
- Ms. Apte specifically highlighted:
 - Soil survey data appeared sufficiently addressed through submitted mapping and supporting materials, pending Board Engineer input.
 - The Environmental Impact Study waiver was supported by a memo from the applicant's expert explaining why a full EIS was unnecessary.
- Chairman Bagoff asked whether wetlands existed on the property.
 - Ms. Apte responded that the applicant's materials stated there were no wetlands.
- Mr. MacNeill stated the applicant had provided adequate environmental information within the plans themselves.
- Although a standalone EIS report was not prepared, the submitted materials allowed him to complete his review satisfactorily.
- He recommended approval of the EIS waiver request.

PRESENTATION

- The professional engineer, Anthony Facchino, entered on the record; he was sworn under oath. His credentials were accepted by the board and he testified to the following:
- Facchino explained why they're requesting the Environmental Impact Study waiver:
 - The project wouldn't disturb already-developed portions of the site, including the existing building and parking lot.
 - Earlier project versions had proposed greater encroachment into steep slopes, but the project had since been downsized.
 - The revised plan avoids impacts to:
 - Steep slope areas beyond the already-developed footprint
 - Wetlands
 - Wooded areas
 - Trees

- Wildlife habitat
- Mr. Facchino introduced several exhibits:
 - **Exhibit A1 / E100**
 - An aerial photograph of the site and the surrounding area.
 - Dated April 8, 2026.
 - **Exhibit A2 / E200**
 - A proposed site exhibit overlaying the development concept on the aerial image.
 - Dated April 8, 2026.
- The previously submitted formal site plan set was also identified:
 - Preliminary and final site plans for “Sofia by Gomes.”
 - Originally dated October 2, 2025.
 - Last revised March 30, 2026.
 - Consisting of 16 sheets.
- Surrounding land uses:
 - West:
 - Retail building
 - St. Cloud Elementary School nearby
 - East:
 - Vacant land
 - Turtle Brook running along the easterly property line
 - South:
 - Turtle Back Zoo
 - South Mountain Arena
 - South Mountain Reservation
- Existing conditions on the property:
 - One-and-a-half-story masonry building formerly used as a catering hall.
 - A large paved parking lot accommodating about 171 vehicles.
 - Significant steep slope areas occupying the undeveloped rear portions of the property.
- Mr. Facchino explained areas with slopes greater than 10% are classified as steep slopes under township code.
- The site lies within the B-2 General Business Zone where mixed-use development is permitted.
- Adjacent zoning districts:
 - North: R-6 residential
 - East: R-5 residential
 - South: R-1 residential
- There is a full movement driveway from Northfield Avenue
- Existing nonconformities:
 - Front yard setback along Northfield Avenue:
 - Existing building only 4 inches from property line where 30 feet is required.
 - Sheridan Avenue frontage:
 - Portions of the building extend 3.3 feet into township right-of-way.
 - Other sections are only 3-6 inches from the property line where 25 feet is required.
- Stormwater and drainage:
 - A 72-inch culvert runs east-to-west beneath the parking area.
 - Ownership of the culvert is unclear based on title searches.

- Applicant may provide an easement to the township for inspection and maintenance access.
 - The culvert conveys flows from Turtle Brook through the property and downstream toward the Rahway River.
 - No existing stormwater management system currently exists on-site.
 - Runoff currently sheet-flows across the parking lot into drains feeding the culvert.
 - The site also receives off-site runoff from neighboring properties and uphill areas.
- In regards to utilities, existing public water, sewer, gas, and electric service already serve the site.
- The existing building and parking lot would be demolished.
- The existing culvert would remain undisturbed.
- The applicant seeks preliminary and final major site plan approval for a mixed-use development.
- Proposed building:
 - Four-story mixed-use building
 - Approximately 44,541 square feet footprint
 - 95 residential units total:
 - 68 one-bedroom units
 - 22 two-bedroom units
 - 5 three-bedroom units
 - Ground-floor commercial space:
 - Revised to 1,250 square feet
- Ms. Moore emphasized that the project satisfies conditional-use standards:
 - Minimum lot area requirement:
 - Required: 5,000 sq. ft.
 - Provided: over 110,000 sq. ft.
 - Minimum street frontage:
 - Required: 50 feet
 - Provided: approximately 440 feet on Northfield Avenue
- Total proposed parking is 165 spaces. This includes 6 ADA-accessible spaces.
- Parking configuration includes:
 - 16 dual stacked parking units
 - Tandem parking spaces in several areas of the site
- Mr. Facchino noted that the number of tandem spaces had been reduced through revisions.
- Retail parking requirement is 6 spaces required for the proposed commercial component.
- EV charging:
 - 27 EV charging spaces required under state law.
 - Charging stations placed primarily outdoors to address fire department concerns.
 - One ADA-accessible EV charging space would be relocated near an accessible parking stall under the building to comply with state requirements.
- Mr. Facchino stated the project meets the parking requirement exactly with 165 spaces after applying EV parking credits.
- Two gated access points are proposed:
 - One at the Northfield Avenue entrance
 - Another inside the building area
- In regards to gate operations, it will be activated through technology such as key fobs or barcode readers.
- Emergency access:
 - Gates integrated with building security systems.

- Police and fire departments would receive access codes.
 - A Knox Box would be installed for emergency building entry.
- Building height variance:
 - Ordinance permits 35 feet
 - Proposed height: 38.5 feet
- The proposed building will also have a front yard variance:
 - Northfield Avenue:
 - Proposed setback: 2.6 feet
 - Sheridan Avenue:
 - Proposed setback: 0.4 feet
 - Required: 25 feet
- Building coverage variance:
 - Ordinance permits 40% building coverage.
 - Proposed: 40.41%.
- Mr. Facchino additionally discussed “effective lot area” calculations under the steep slope ordinance:
 - Total lot area: 110,205 sq. ft.
 - Effective lot area after excluding steep slopes: 84,123 sq. ft.
- Mr. Facchino explained that if the “effective lot area” calculation is used instead of the total property area:
 - Building coverage would be 53% instead of 40.41%.
 - Impervious coverage would be 33.77% instead of 63.94%.
- He stated that the site already has an existing impervious coverage variance:
 - Existing impervious coverage is 69.21%.
 - Proposed impervious coverage would be reduced to 63.94%.
- He noted that the project still requires variance relief, and the planner would later provide additional testimony regarding those variances.
- Mr. Facchino described the circulation design for the property:
 - Two main driveway entrances are proposed from Northfield Avenue.
 - The existing western driveway would remain in approximately the same location.
 - A new eastern driveway would be added near the easterly property line.
- The new eastern driveway would be only about 1.2 feet from the property line.
- He explained that separating the drive aisles eliminated the need for a deceleration lane. It also allowed creation of a nice streetscape with lawn areas and sidewalks for pedestrian access around the site.
- A variance is required for the second driveway because:
 - The adjacent property is residentially zoned and town-owned.
 - Code requires a 50-foot setback/buffer.
 - The proposal provides only a 1.2-foot setback.
- He also noted an existing driveway on Sheridan Avenue would be eliminated.
- Vehicles would be able to circulate freely throughout the site.
- The eastern driveway would permit only right turns out.
- The western driveway would allow right-in, right-out, and left-out movements similar to existing conditions.
- Parking aisles would generally be 24 feet wide, meeting ordinance requirements.
- Some sections widen to 25 feet near ramps.
- Parking areas along Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Place would largely be hidden from public view by the building itself.
- Mr. Facchino emphasized that placing the building close to Northfield Avenue was intentional to shield parked cars from view

- Additional parking details:
 - o Standard spaces would be 9 feet by 18 feet.
 - o Two compact spaces are proposed at 9 feet by 17 feet and comply with code.
 - o Sixteen spaces would be car stackers.
- Mr. Facchino explained stackers would be reserved for individual tenants.
- Tenants using them would receive operational and safety training.
- Ms. Moore added that the stackers are commonly used in other buildings.
- Manufacturer-provided safety training would be available for tenants operating them.
- Mr. Facchino concluded that:
 - o The parking layout complies with ordinance requirements and RSIS standards.
 - o A traffic engineer would later testify regarding traffic counts and driveway operations.
- He also reiterated that approximately 5,807 square feet of impervious pavement would be removed. Those areas would become landscaped or lawn areas.
- Mr. Facchino stated that no dedicated loading zone was proposed because the retail component is below the threshold requiring a loading space.
- However, the parking layout allows U-Haul trucks and delivery vehicles to maneuver safely.
 - o Move-ins and move-outs would occur only by scheduled appointment with building management.
 - o Building staff would coordinate parking and staging locations to minimize inconvenience.
- On Sheet C950, turning movement exhibits demonstrated:
 - o Passenger vehicles and small U-Haul trucks could circulate through the site.
 - o A small garbage truck could access the lower level, load from trash rooms, and exit safely.
- Trash pickup frequency was expected to be approximately once or twice per week initially.
- Mr. Facchino explained that existing drainage patterns would remain substantially unchanged.
- Stormwater currently sheet-flows downhill into the property and then into an existing culvert system.
- A small masonry retaining wall is proposed:
 - o Located on the northwest side of the building.
 - o Maximum height approximately 2 feet.
 - o Intended primarily to provide emergency pedestrian egress access.
- Existing elevations along property lines would largely remain unchanged.
- He emphasized the project avoids disturbing steep slope areas.
- The building was designed to fit the natural topography.
- Parking lot grades already run slightly above 5%, and those conditions would generally be maintained.
- The split-level parking configuration was described:
 - o Lower-level parking with a ramp leading to upper-level parking.
 - o The design responds directly to the sloping terrain.
- Mr. Facchino described the landscaping plan as generous in both quantity and variety of plantings.
- He stated earlier versions of the design removed more trees in steep slope areas.
 - o The revised design avoids removing trees within the steep slope section.
- Total tree impacts:
 - o 27 trees would be removed.

- Most removed trees are near the bottom of the slope and reportedly in poor condition.
- Tree replacement plan:
 - Ordinance requires replacement of 51 trees.
 - The applicant proposes 51 new trees.
- Proposed landscaping includes:
 - 6 trees along Sheridan Avenue
 - 41 additional trees along the rear property line to strengthen buffering.
- Along Northfield Avenue, large shade trees were avoided due to overhead wires and underground utilities.
- Instead, the plan emphasizes lawn areas and extensive shrub plantings.
- Mr. Facchino stated the landscaping goal was to create a nice streetscape experience along Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Place.
- Proposed plantings overall:
 - 51 new trees
 - 201 shrubs
 - 6 shrub varieties
- He acknowledged another ordinance requirement:
 - Parking lots with 30 or more spaces require one tree per 10 spaces.
 - This would require an additional 16 trees.
- The applicant agreed to work with the township forester. Either plant the additional trees or contribute payment in lieu if approved by the township.
- Mr. Facchino explained that the project qualifies as a “major development” because disturbance exceeds one-half acre.
- Despite reducing impervious coverage by about 5,807 square feet, full stormwater analysis was still required.
- The project’s stormwater strategy focuses on non-structural best management practices:
 - Minimizing underground infrastructure that is difficult to maintain
 - Maintaining existing drainage patterns
 - Minimizing land disturbance
 - Preserving native vegetation
 - Increasing landscaping for infiltration and recharge benefits
- Stormwater analyses were conducted for:
 - 2-year, 10-year, and 100-year storm events.
- Results showed:
 - Reduced runoff rates and volumes at both design discharge points:
 - The culvert crossing Sheridan Place.
 - A discharge area toward Northfield Avenue.
- Groundwater recharge requirements do not apply because impervious coverage is being reduced.
- Water quality improvements:
 - Reduced paved surface area.
 - Increased roof area, which generates cleaner runoff than parking surfaces.
- Mr. Facchino requested a waiver from ordinance section 2529.4S2, which requires on-site retention of one-half of the projected two-year storm.
- He argued the project already reduces two-year storm runoff volumes by approximately 1,691 cubic feet (about 12,000 gallons).
 - The proposal satisfies the intent of the ordinance through overall runoff reduction.
- Additional storm infrastructure:

- Storm inlets and manholes would convey roof and pavement runoff to the existing culvert system.
 - Roof drainage would connect into specific storm pipes identified on the utility plan.
- Mr. Facchino reviewed the lighting design:
 - Combination of pole-mounted, wall-mounted, and ceiling-mounted lighting.
 - Parking garage lighting similar to standard parking deck lighting.
- Lighting characteristics:
 - Full cutoff fixtures
 - Downward-directed illumination
 - LED fixtures capable of nighttime dimming for security purposes
- Light spill:
 - Generally minimized along property lines.
 - Most areas remain well below the township maximum of 0.5 foot-candles.
- He acknowledged one issue where along the easterly property line, light spill reached approximately 0.89 foot-candles.
- Mr. Facchino committed to revising the lighting design to bring it into compliance.
- The site would continue to use:
 - Public sewer
 - Public water
 - Gas
 - Electric service
- Mr. Facchino stated utilities are readily accessible along adjacent roadways, simplifying connections.
- Mr. Facchino added testimony regarding another required variance, a residential zone buffer variance.
- He explained:
 - Existing buffer is currently approximately 13 to 13.5 feet
 - Proposed condition would improve the buffer to about 24.5
 - Further east, the buffer widens to 34 feet and eventually exceeds the required 50 feet.
- He emphasized the proposal significantly improves existing conditions.

Chairman Bagoff announced a 10-minute break.

BOARD QUESTIONS

- Chairman Bagoff asked if there is going to be anything on the roof of the building. Mr. Facchino deferred detailed discussion to the architect but stated only mechanical equipment is anticipated.
- Mr. Guarino asked Mr. Noborine whether the fire department had fully reviewed the site plan and had concerns about apparatus access. Mr. Noborine responded that he is unsure whether a complete review had occurred. He knows the fire official had reviewed aspects related to EV charging station placement. He personally had questions regarding access and the height of the parking structure.
- Mr. Guarino asked whether the applicant had reviewed West Orange's Complete Streets requirements and emphasized that the township prioritizes walkability and pedestrian safety. Mr. Facchino stated he has not.
- Mr. Guarino asked how they are going to address reducing the sidewalk from 4 feet to 2 feet, which in his opinion isn't an accessible and safe access for pedestrians and residents

on a major roadway. Mr. Faccino clarified that the 2.6-foot dimension referred to the building setback from the property line, not the sidewalk width. The sidewalk itself would remain a standard 4-foot-wide sidewalk within the public right-of-way.

- Mr. Guarino asked if the access coming out of the property will direct the traffic to make a right-hand turn and not a left-hand turn. Mr. Facchino confirmed yes.
- Mr. Guarino asked regarding water runoff and eliminating impervious coverage, where would that excess water go during a major storm. Mr. Facchino stated they are keeping the drainage patterns the way they are. The majority goes out to Northfield Avenue, and then the remainder goes out within the covert.
- Mr. Guarino asked regarding the car stack parking, will new tenants receive training to use those apparatus. Mr. Faccino stated they will receive training. They will not receive the key fob to operate the machinery unless they're trained.
- Mr. Guarino asked regarding the commercial area, will delivery trucks be guided onto the property. Mr. Facchino stated they will enter the driveway through the westerly side.
- Mayor McCartney asked regarding the culvert running east to west and there being a proposed building over the culvert, does DEP or any other agency have to get involved. Mr. Facchino stated he doesn't believe so since it's unknown who the owner of that culvert is. If it's town-owned, he believes they would be responsible for that pipe.
 - o Mr. MacNeil added that since it's not an environmentally constrained area, they would not have to review in this case. However, the building department will need to review this at a later stage of the project
- Mayor McCartney asked to clarify the lift regarding the tandem spaces. Mr. Facchino stated the car will drive in, be lifted up one level, and then another car can park directly underneath it.
- Mayor McCartney asked if they will be assigned parking to the tenants. Mr. Facchino confirmed yes.
- Mayor McCartney asked where the trash or recycling receptacles would be. Mr. Facchino stated the architect will show the trash rooms and recycling areas.
- Mayor McCartney relayed comments from the township historian regarding a historic Pullman railcar located on the property. McCartney asked whether the railcar could be preserved rather than demolished. Ms. Moore stated she would discuss preservation with the developer and did not anticipate objections to donating the railcar. Later, Moore stated her understanding that the railcar was already planned for donation to a museum.
- Mayor McCartney asked whether proposed trees would be native species. Mr. Facchino confirmed native trees would be used and stated the Township Forester would review and approve the landscaping plan.
- Council President Scarpa remained concerned about runoff from the steep slope and the brook running beneath the property. She questioned whether increased development could worsen flooding conditions. Mr. Facchino reiterated that the reduced impervious coverage mathematically results in less runoff generation and stated the development would improve downstream conditions rather than worsen them.
- Mr. Guarino asked if there will be warning devices to let people know that cars are exiting the property as pedestrians walk down the sidewalk. Mr. Facchino acknowledged that no warning devices had originally been planned. Ms. Moore stated the applicant would agree, as a condition of approval, to provide some form of pedestrian alert or warning system for vehicles exiting the property.
- Mr. Alper asked whether 100% of Turtle Brook's flow is contained within the culvert pipe. Mr. Facchino stated DEP had reviewed the system and confirmed the culvert has adequate capacity even for projected 2050 storm events under updated DEP standards.

- Mr. Alper asked whether the culvert had been inspected for leaks or clogs. Ms. Moore stated the developer had already tested the culvert and could provide testimony and reports regarding its condition.
- Mr. Alper also asked whether a sinkhole or slope collapse had occurred near the site during past hurricanes. Ms. Moore stated the developer had no knowledge of any such event.
- Mr. Alper asked about stacker noise levels. Mr. Facchino stated that the manufacturer stated the lifts are very quiet. Noise levels would comply with state and local noise standards.
- Mr. Alper asked whether delivery demand from Amazon, DoorDash, and similar services had been analyzed. Mr. Facchino stated he will defer those issues to the traffic engineer.
- Mr. Noborine asked about height and weight clearances for parking areas, as well as mechanical equipment placement. Mr. Facchino deferred those questions to the architect.
- Mr. Noborine asked whether maintenance personnel would be available in emergencies involving stackers. Mr. Facchino stated a superintendent would be available on-call for move-ins, maintenance, and emergencies. Ms. Moore later clarified there would be 24/7 availability for building-related issues, including stacker malfunctions.
- Mr. Cardoza asked what other amenities are being offered. Mr. Facchino deferred his question to the architect.
- Mr. Cardoza asked if there is a minimum age requirement to operate the vehicle lift. Mr. Facchino believes they have to be at least an adult, 18 years or older.
- Mr. Cardoza asked whether the lobby itself would have concierge services. Mr. Facchino stated that is a question for the architect.
- Mr. Cardoza asked about package delivery operations and how residents would receive packages. Ms. Moore stated architectural testimony would address package rooms, Amazon deliveries, mailrooms, and related logistics.
- Mr. Cardoza asked about security systems and cameras. Mr. Facchino stated as far as security, they have entrance gates, but as far as cameras, it hasn't been discussed.
- Mr. Cardoza asked if the gates would be accessed through key fobs. Mr. Facchino stated access systems would likely include key fobs and windshield barcode readers for gates.
- Mr. Cardoza asked whether affordable housing units would have equal finishes and amenities. Ms. Moore confirmed that affordable units would be indistinguishable from market-rate units. Affordable residents would have equal access to amenities and common areas. The only distinction would be income qualification under affordable housing regulations.
- Mr. Cardoza also requested stronger visual striping and safety markings around the garage ingress and egress points, especially near the western entrance adjacent to Sheridan Avenue. Mr. Facchino stated the applicant agreed to consider additional warning measures.
- Ms. Kapferer asked if crosswalks will be provided across the driveway entrances off of Northfield. Mr. Facchino stated there's a crosswalk on the westerly one, but both can be done.
- Ms. Kapferer asked whether any modifications to the culvert itself would be required. Mr. Facchino stated the project would not significantly alter the culvert. The design intentionally minimizes fill over the culvert. Existing drainage paths and inlet connections are largely being preserved. The work mainly involves tying new roof drainage into existing structures.
- Ms. Kapferer asked whether inlet capacity analyses had been performed to ensure the new stormwater inlets would adequately capture runoff. Mr. Facchino confirmed that an analysis had been completed in the stormwater report and can handle the flow.

- Mr. Cardoza asked how garbage collection would operate within the parking structure. Mr. Facchino stated large front-loading garbage trucks would not fit. Smaller rear-loading garbage trucks would likely be used instead. Pickup frequency would depend on the building's actual waste generation.

PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONS

- Ms. Apte asked if there would be circulation issues as the tandem spaces are being used. Ms. Moore deferred the question to the traffic engineer.
- Ms. Apte requested revised circulation diagrams showing safe maneuvering for garbage trucks on both the eastern and western sides of the site. Mr. Facchino agreed to provide circulation analyses using appropriately sized trucks.
- Several board members deferred many operational questions to future architectural testimony.
- Ms. Apte requested written confirmation from the township fire department regarding the revised location of EV charging spaces and ADA spaces. Ms. Moore agreed this could be made a condition of approval.
- Ms. Apte asked how snow removal would be handled in open parking areas and whether stackers would be impacted. Mr. Facchino stated snow would be managed using small equipment. Minor storms would allow on-site snow stacking. Major storms would require snow hauling off-site by truck.
- Ms. Apte discussed landscaping adjacent to a proposed modular block wall. Mr. Facchino stated the wall would only reach approximately two feet in height. The township forester would review the plan.
- Ms. Apte asked if revised landscaping submissions had already been sent to the Township Forester. Mr. Facchino stated it was submitted, and was told to go forward with the approval process.
- Ms. Apte raised concerns about lighting levels along Sheridan Avenue. Mr. Facchino stated he personally visited the site at night and agreed additional lighting would improve visibility and aesthetics.
- Ms. Apte revisited earlier concerns regarding steep slope disturbance. Mr. Facchino testified that revised plans eliminated all disturbance to steep slopes.
- Mr. MacNeill asked whether EV spaces would be installed immediately or phased as "make-ready" spaces. Mr. Facchino initially stated state law allows phased installation. Ms. Moore then clarified the developer intends to install all EV charging infrastructure from the outset rather than phase installation over time.
- Mr. MacNeill asked whether the applicant could comply with remaining technical stormwater management comments from his April 10, 2026 review letter, particularly regarding the O&M manual, recording requirements, and minor revisions. Mr. Facchino confirmed the applicant would comply with those engineering comments.

PUBLIC QUESTION

- Kevin Malanga (Ridge Road) asked Mr. Facchino about endangered species on the site. Mr. Facchino confirmed he was unaware of any endangered species on the property.
- Mr. Malanga asked if Mr. Facchino is an environmental biologist and what the basis of his statement is. Mr. Facchino said he is not an environmental biologist. Mr. Facchino emphasized that the applicant is not disturbing the steep slopes.

- Mr. Malanga asked about the dimensions of the current and proposed buildings. Mr. Facchino stated existing building frontage was stated to be approximately 150 feet long. The proposed building frontage was stated to be approximately 408 feet long.
- Mr. Malanga questioned the existing building height listed as 31 feet. Mr. Facchino said the height was likely measured to the roof peak.
- Mr. Malanga asked whether the applicant considered the proposal an improvement over the existing nonconformity. Mr. Facchino said he was not claiming the nonconformity itself was improved.
- Mr. Malanga asked regarding tree placement in the parking lot under Township Ordinance 25-12.10. He asked whether the applicant would install trees inside the parking lot instead of primarily along the perimeter. Mr. Facchino said he preferred perimeter planting because interior parking-lot trees would receive limited sunlight due to surrounding buildings.
- Edith Behr (Dogwood Drive) asked about pedestrian circulation, she asked whether sidewalks and pedestrian pathways would exist throughout the site or whether people would walk through parking areas. Mr. Facchino deferred the question to the architect and traffic engineer.
- Seth Weisleder (Howell Drive) asked about roadway changes, he confirmed with Mr. Facchino that the current deceleration lane on Northfield Avenue is paved and part of the county roadway.
- Mr. Weisleder asked if Mr. Facchino has been in communication with the county regarding the lane. Mr. Facchino said he had met with the county during a pre-application meeting and they indicated no objection to removing the deceleration lane.
- Mr. Weisleder also asked about gate operations and vehicle stacking. Mr. Facchino explained resident access would use a full gate, not a simple arm barrier.
- Mr. Weisleder asked how many vehicles could queue before backing onto Northfield Avenue. The question was deferred to the traffic engineer.
- Richard Gajdek asked why no retaining wall was proposed. Mr. Facchino responded that the revised plan intentionally avoided disturbing the steep slopes, eliminating the need for a retaining wall in his view. Mr. Facchino added that the additional vegetation and evergreen plantings would help stabilize the area naturally.
 - o Mr. Gajdek argued that proposed landscaping appeared to be located at the base of the slope rather than on the slope itself and therefore would not adequately stabilize it.
 - o Mr. Facchino agreed to consult with the project forester about adding additional plantings if necessary.
- Mr. Gajdek requested additional visual buffering because the proposed structure would sit significantly above neighboring properties. Mr. Facchino said the project was already required to add 16 additional trees and offered to work with neighbors and the township forester on the placement of evergreen screening trees.
- Sasha Eaton (Lenox Terrace) raised concerns about visibility and slope stability. She said her home overlooks the parking lot area and asked how high the building would appear relative to the slope top and surrounding terrain. Mr. Facchino deferred visual/elevation questions to the architect and stated the applicant would consider additional trees if required.
- Christine Bosco (Mason Place) discussed prior mudslide issues. Ms. Bosco strongly advocated for a retaining wall because of continuing erosion concerns. Mr. Facchino stated that the redesign aimed to avoid disturbing the steep slopes and stated he would need a geotechnical engineer to determine whether slope stability requires intervention.

- Ms. Bosco also raised concerns about an open brook on the east side of the property and drainage conditions.
- Ms. Bosco asked about EV charging stations and lighting near neighboring homes. Mr. Facchino confirmed EV charging stations would be located at lower grade near the neighboring properties. He stated all lighting would be downlit and directed away from homes.
- Ms. Bosco reiterated the need for substantial tree planting regardless of whether a retaining wall was built.
- Rachel Klein (Howell Drive) asked whether the applicant had completed an off-site sewer capacity analysis. Mr. Facchino admitted that analysis had not yet been completed.
- Ms. Klein asked what would happen if the municipal sewer system could not handle approximately 100 additional residential units. Mr. Facchino explained DEP approval would require downstream capacity analysis. He stated that if the system lacked capacity, the applicant would be required to upgrade the town system before proceeding.
- Justin Goldsman (Moran Road) asked if the car lift parking system would only be available to residents, not visitors. Mr. Facchino confirmed that was correct.
- Mr. Goldsman asked if the project lighting would use LED fixtures. Mr. Facchino confirmed yes.
- Mr. Goldsman referenced environmental documents discussing heat-island and questioned whether rooftop planters on an amenity deck were sufficient mitigation for increased paved parking surfaces. Mr. Facchino deferred heat-island design questions to the architect.
- Mr. Goldsman asked about visitor parking overflow and potential spillover onto nearby school and residential streets. Mr. Facchino said the parking calculations complied with Residential Site Improvement Standards and township requirements, including visitor parking demand.
- Mr. Goldsman further asked whether wildlife impacts on the nearby Turtle Back Zoo had been considered during construction. Mr. Facchino said soil conservation inspections would monitor dust and erosion during construction. He believes the site is far enough from the zoo that construction noise impacts would likely be minimal, though he cannot provide testimony regarding sound.

***The application has been carried to the next Planning Board regular meeting on May 6, 2026, without further notice in person, starting at 6:30 pm. ***

ADOPTED:

Jamilet Baquerizo Vite
Planning Board Secretary