

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

August 12, 2025

The pre-meeting of the Planning Board was called to order by Vice Chairman Mr. Michael Pantalone at 6:00 PM in the Second Floor Caucus Room of City Hall.

Members Present:

John Casadia
David Catalana
Jeffrey Di Matteo
Douglas Menz
Michael Pantalone
Thomas Tobolski
Sandy Velez
Robert Odorizzi
Elizabeth Arthur
David Manders

Also present were:

Amanda Moscatello, Alternate Planning Board Solicitor
Yasmin Perez, Planning Board Secretary
Kathleen Hicks, Supervising Planner
Ryan Headley, Planning Board Planner/Engineer
Elizabeth Jambor, Assistant Planner

PRE-MEETING

Relema, Inc.– located on the northerly side of Garden Road between Delsea Drive and Mill Road, Block 604, Lot 30.01, Tax Map Sheet #6, Project No. PBA-25-00025. Amended preliminary/final major site plan approval for modifications to existing site improvements on a previously approved 137,892 square foot 4 industrial building constructed over two (2) phases.

Mr. Headley explained that there is a waiver request regarding basin fencing. The original design included fencing around each of the four basins individually; however, as the project has been phased, the applicant now proposes fencing along the rear property line instead of enclosing all four sides of each basin. This modification requires a technical waiver. The applicant indicated that the fencing would consist of two types, with blue fencing installed without privacy slats and red fencing installed with privacy slats. He also noted that the site is adjacent to residential properties, although some of those lots are deeper and provide additional separation.

True North Territory– located on northeastern corner of the intersection of Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive, Block 2802, Lots 20, 21 and 22, Tax Map Sheet #28, Project No. PBA-25-00029. Preliminary/final major site plan approval, to convert a vacant department store/automotive center (Sears) into a church along with associated site improvements.

Mr. Headley explained that the applicant proposes to convert the existing structures into a church with associated site improvements. The site plan includes the reconfiguration, milling, and paving of portions of the parking area, sealcoating of other portions, new landscaped islands, and buffering along both Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive. One driveway nearest the intersection will be removed, with two access points retained further north. The applicant also coordinated with the utility provider regarding the on-site pump station, which will be reconfigured and screened with landscaping. There are several variances required as part of this application. The front buffer requirement of 25 feet is not met, with 19 feet provided along Delsea and 21 feet along Landis Avenue. Variances are also required for side buffers due to existing asphalt-to-asphalt conditions and cross-access drives, as well as for lot coverage, where 70 percent is permitted and 90 percent is proposed (though this represents a reduction from existing conditions). Parking setbacks mirror the buffer variances at 19 and 21 feet. Additional variances are requested for signage, including multiple monument signs, the location of freestanding signs, and certain directional signage. Waivers include a reduction in end island widths, a deficit in parking area shade trees (29 provided versus 52 required), and the use of painted islands in lieu of landscaped or curbed islands in some locations. The applicant noted that the former Sears Auto Center will be used exclusively for storage of church vehicles and equipment, not for commercial operations. Access to the site will be maintained through the remaining driveways, with designated right-turn and left-turn lanes to reduce queuing. The property line limits ownership to the Sears parcel and auto center, and does not extend to the larger parking area to the rear. Non-conformances include the existing building's close setback to both Delsea Drive and Landis Avenue.

Spotless Brands– located on the southeasterly corner of Delsea Drive and Sherman Avenue, Block 7002, Lot 1, Tax Map Sheet #70, Project No. PBA-25-00031. Amended preliminary/final major site plan approval to remodel an existing 14,673 square foot pharmacy (Rite Aid) into a three (3) bay carwash that will include two (2) dry tunnels and one (1) wet tunnel along with additional site improvements.

Mr. Headly noted that the project had previously been approved and is currently under construction. The applicant returned to request minor amendments to the approved plan. The primary change involves the elimination of proposed employee parking spaces near the building to improve turning radii for vehicles accessing the car wash tunnels. Parking was relocated to another area of the site, with three new spaces provided in the revised layout. Initially labeled as “flex spaces” with vacuums, these will instead be designated as standard parking spaces to satisfy the ordinance requirement of twelve parking spaces for employees and visitors. With this adjustment, no parking variance is required. Aside from these modifications, the overall plan remains substantially unchanged from the prior approval. The applicant confirmed that vacuums will remain only at the designated stalls, with a total of sixteen vacuum stalls to be provided on-site.

FLAG SALUTE

Public notice pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act was given on December 17, 2024 by posting written notice on the Official Bulletin Board in City Hall, and mailing written notices to the Daily Journal, City Clerk, and the Board members.

MINUTES

Approval of minutes from the July 9, 2025 board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the minutes.

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Abstain
Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Abstain
Michael Pantalone: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Abstain
David Manders: Abstain

RESOLUTIONS

Approval of resolutions from the July 9, 2025 board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the resolution.

Resolution #6722

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Abstain
Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Abstain
Michael Pantalone: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Abstain
David Manders: Abstain

Resolution #6723

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Abstain
Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Abstain
Michael Pantalone: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Abstain
David Manders: Abstain

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Relema, Inc.– located on the northerly side of Garden Road between Delsea Drive and Mill Road, Block 604, Lot 30.01, Tax Map Sheet #6, Project No. PBA-25-00025. Amended preliminary/final major site plan approval for modifications to existing site improvements on a previously approved 137,892 square foot4 industrial building constructed over two (2) phases.

The applicant was represented by Michael Gruccio, Esq. The application is for an amended preliminary and final major site plan approval regarding a previously approved development of an industrial facility. The only revision to the approved site plan involves fencing. They are proposing to extend an existing six-foot fence with privacy slats by adding additional six-foot fencing without slats along the easterly and westerly boundaries of the property, essentially along the rear property line. The revisions triggered waivers related to the landscaping standards, shade tree requirements, and fencing around stormwater basins. There is a waiver from the requirement to break up fencing monotony with landscaping. A waiver from the requirement to fence the entire perimeter of the basins. While basins two and three are fenced, certain interfacing sections are not. A waiver from screening requirements along basin one and the easterly property line. The adjacent areas are heavily vegetated with natural forest growth, which provides adequate screening. The applicant further requested that the amended site plan be approved without the need to submit a perfected revised plan and that the waivers in Section 12 of the staff report be granted, noting that those requirements were satisfied as part of the original Phase 1 approval.

The Chairman entertained a motion to approve the application. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes

David Catalana: Yes

Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes

Douglas Menz: Yes

Thomas Tobolski: Yes

Sandy Velez: Yes

Robert Odorizzi: Yes

Elizabeth Arthur: Yes

Michael Pantalone: Yes

PUBLIC HEARING

True North Territory– located on northeastern corner of the intersection of Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive, Block 2802, Lots 20, 21 and 22, Tax Map Sheet #28, Project No. PBA-25-00029. Preliminary/final major site plan approval, to convert a vacant department store/automotive center (Sears) into a church along with associated site improvements.

The applicant was represented by Robert DeSanto, Esq.

Pastor Eisenhardt testified that the church currently operates in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, holding four Sunday services (9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM, and 6:00 PM), as well as a Wednesday evening youth service for middle and high school students. In addition, the church runs a ministry training program, True North College, which holds smaller gatherings during the week. He explained that, if approved, the church proposes to relocate its operations to the former Sears property. Sunday services and Wednesday youth gatherings would continue as the primary activities. The main Sears building would serve as the primary worship space, while the former auto center would be used solely for ministry storage, including vans and trailers. He confirmed there would be no commercial operations. Planning Report, dated July 31, 2025, regarding sign location requirements, he explained that buffers were increased from 5 feet to approximately 18–21 feet along Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive, whereas as 25 feet required by ordinance. He also addressed the shade tree waiver, noting that 54 shade trees were proposed, with 29 trees within the lot, 23 along the frontages, and 2–3 around the building perimeter. For end island curbing, the applicant proposed 17 curbed islands with trees and the balance striped. Pastor Eisenhardt agreed to withdraw the waiver for the Landis Avenue driveway and provide a radial connection to the curb line. He also responded to comments regarding bicycle parking, irrigation, and waiver requests. He requested that bicycle racks not be required at the auto center, since it would not be open to the public. He also requested a waiver from irrigation in the rear of the property, proposing instead to use hydration rings, as successfully done at the Mullica Hill campus. He confirmed agreement with staff recommendations regarding fire lanes, barrier-free standards, and fire official requirements. He also confirmed compliance with comments regarding tree calipers, trash enclosure buffering, parking notes, and other perfected plan details.

Ted Wilkinson, Project Engineer, described the proposed redevelopment of the 9.5-acre site, which includes the existing 22,000-square-foot building and associated parking areas. Wilkinson testified that large portions of the deteriorated parking lot would be reconstructed with new paving, striping, storm drains, landscaped islands, and upgraded LED lighting. Additional circulation improvements and driveway modifications were included for safety and efficiency. A new trash enclosure would be installed, and landscaping buffers were expanded, though not to the full 25-foot requirement. The redevelopment reduces impervious coverage by over 20,000 square feet, increasing green space and reducing environmental impacts. Variances were requested for pre-existing nonconformities including impervious coverage, buffers, and parking setbacks. He confirmed that inconsistencies between architectural and engineering plans would be corrected and signage dimensions will be provided on the perfected plan.

Concerns were addressed about the large number of parking spaces being resurfaced, noting it exceeded ordinance requirements. Pastor Eisenhardt explained that while only 38,000 square feet of the building would be used

initially, the church intends to grow into the space, which will necessitate use of the full parking capacity in the future. He also explained that the church uses a trained parking team to direct vehicles safely at all services, enhancing safety.

The Board suggested adding landscaped curbed islands at two additional locations along Delsea Drive to formalize the main entrances. The applicant agreed.

The Chairman entertained a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Michael Pantalone: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

The Chairman entertained a motion to approve the application. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Michael Pantalone: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

Spotless Brands– located on the southeasterly corner of Delsea Drive and Sherman Avenue, Block 7002, Lot 1, Tax Map Sheet #70, Project No. PBA-25-00031. Amended preliminary/final major site plan approval to remodel an existing 14,673 square foot pharmacy (Rite Aid) into a three (3) bay carwash that will include two (2) dry tunnels and one (1) wet tunnel along with additional site improvements.

Attorney Tyler Prime of Prime, Touvell & Maselli appeared on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Prime stated that he had spoken with an interested party regarding the application. He informed the Board that the applicant wished to withdraw the application. The applicant is currently midway through construction under a prior approval granted in November of the previous year and, while they had hoped to amend the approval, they determined it was best to proceed under the existing approval. Mr. Prime added that the applicant would continue discussions with the interested party and may return in the future if an amendment is sought.

The Chairman entertained a motion to withdraw the application. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Michael Pantalone: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman entertained a motion to adjourn.

Roll call:

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes

David Catalana: Yes

Jeffrey Di Matteo: Yes

Douglas Menz: Yes

Michael Pantalione: Yes

Thomas Tobolski: Yes

Sandy Velez: Yes

Robert Odorizzi: Yes

Elizabeth Arthur: Yes

David Manders: Yes

TIME: 7:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Perez

Planning Board Secretary