PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

October 14, 2026

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

Members Present:

John Casadia
Jeffrey DiMatteo
Douglas Menz
Thomas Tobolski
Sandy Velez
Scott Reale
Robert Odorizzi
Elizabeth Arthur
David Catalana

Also present were:

Amanda Moscillo, Planning Board Solicitor
Yasmin Perez, Planning Board Secretary
Ryan Headley, Planning Board Planner/Engineer
Elizabeth Jambor, Assistant Planner

PRE-MEETING

Robert Martino - Southerly side of Trento Avenue between Cornucopia Avenue and Union Road, Block 7401, Lots 13 & 14, Tax Map Sheet #74, Project #PBA 26-00026. The applicant requests a resubdivision approval to convey a portion of one lot to another lot.

Mr. Headley discussed the application, which involved a proposed resubdivision of two approximately 15-acre parcels located on the other side of Trento Avenue, between Cornucopia and Union Road in the East Vineland area. The parcels are currently under common ownership, with one dwelling located on each parcel and agricultural use occurring toward the rear of the properties, including several existing farm-related outbuildings.

The applicant currently has a driveway that crosses the existing lot line and is in the process of winding down his former shop-related operations. He is proposing to resubdivide the property and shift the existing lot line approximately 20 feet so that the driveway will be located entirely on his property. The proposed adjustment will also provide additional area for the applicant to construct a pole barn to support his agricultural operation. The applicant resides on the property and intends to sell the other portion following the resubdivision.

Mr. Headley explained that there are no variances associated with the proposed resubdivision because the resulting lots will have sufficient acreage and frontage. The initial plan showed the proposed pole barn

approximately four feet from the property line, which would typically require a variance; however, the applicant immediately agreed to relocate the pole barn to provide a six-foot setback. As a result, the proposed pole barn would comply with the applicable setback requirements.

Mr. Headley noted that there were several perfected-plan items for which waivers may be requested, including Items 11B, 11C, and 11D. Based on discussions with the applicant, he indicated that he had no objection to those waivers, as they are routinely requested for older farm resubdivisions.

A Board member asked whether there was a limitation on the size of a farm-related pole barn. Mr. Headley explained that, when the structure is part of an active farming operation, there is technically no stated size limitation. The property is located in the A-5 Agricultural Zone, and the proposed structure would be considered an accessory farm structure. He noted that the existing sheds and other farm-related structures on the property are similarly associated with the agricultural operation and therefore were not being separately identified as part of the application. It was also asked whether there was a minimum acreage requirement for the agricultural use. Mr. Headley stated that the minimum acreage requirement in the A-5 Zone is 2.3 acres and noted that each of the subject parcels contains approximately 15 acres, well in excess of the minimum requirement.

Take 5 Auto Service– located on the northerly side of Landis Avenue between N Orchard Road and Delsea Drive (NJ Route 47), Block 2707, Lot 16, Tax Map Sheet #27, Project No. PBA-26-00025. The applicant requests a preliminary/final major site plan approval, to construct a 1,326 square foot specialized repair garage (Take 5 Auto Service) along with associated site improvements.

Mr. Headley discussed the application for Take Five Auto Service, located on the north side of Landis Avenue in the area of Walmart and Taco Bell. The proposed use is a drive-through oil change business, primarily providing oil changes and other quick-service automotive services. The operation would be designed as a “right-in, right-out” facility from Landis Avenue. Customers would enter the site, follow a looped drive aisle and queue before entering one of two garage bays. Customers would remain in their vehicles while the oil change is performed and would then exit the site.

There is currently an existing single-family home on the property, which will be removed to accommodate the proposed development. Mr. Headley explained that the property is located within the age-restricted residential redevelopment area, which was planned many years ago for age-restricted development but has not come to fruition and is not expected to do so.

Several variances are requested, including relief related to on-site parking. Under the ordinance, a typical garage use requires one parking space per person on the main work shift, in addition to three spaces per garage bay. The applicant is expected to argue that the proposed use is different from a conventional garage because customers remain in their vehicles and do not occupy parking spaces while receiving service. The office area will not be open to the public, and the seven proposed parking spaces will primarily serve employees. The Board Engineer indicated that the business is expected to operate as a quick in-and-out service, with no overnight operation anticipated and limited storage requirements because the business does not provide services such as tire sales or installation.

Mr. Headley then discussed the signage variances. The applicant originally proposed signage on all four sides of the building, as well as a freestanding sign. He noted that the Board has historically not favored signage on all four sides and questioned the visibility or necessity of signage on the rear portions of the building. The applicant subsequently revised the signage plan and removed the signs from the easterly and westerly sides. Signage will remain on the southerly face in accordance with the applicable requirements, and the freestanding sign is also believed to be compliant.

A sign is also proposed on the northerly side of the building stating, “Stay in Your Car.” Although the sign is relatively large, he characterized it as informational signage intended to instruct customers to remain in their vehicles during service. An additional small directional sign is proposed to direct vehicles to stay to the right as they enter and proceed through the looped circulation pattern.

Mr. Headley also discussed variances related to the required perimeter landscape buffer. A substantial buffer has been provided along the westerly side of the property, which is adjacent to another residential property. The easterly side is adjacent to a commercial use, identified as the Taco Bell property. He noted that there are two homes in the vicinity and that the applicant has provided landscaping along the residential side and intends to supplement the landscaping.

He noted that the subject parcels are relatively deep, although their width is more limited. A stream is located toward the rear of the property, resulting in a 300-foot riparian buffer that limits development in that area. Although there is considerable land area overall, the proposed development represents a relatively small footprint considering the site constraints and available buildable area.

Land Use Ordinance Amendment- Review for Consistency with the Master Plan, Chapter 425, Article XII, Recycling Operations and Junkyards.

Mr. Headley provided a brief overview of the proposed amendments to the Land Use Ordinance, noting that the matter had been referred to the Planning Board by City Council. He explained that the City’s Junkyards and Recycling Centers Ordinance establishes specific standards for junkyards and recycling centers due to the nature of those uses. Recycling centers, however, have not been under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board for some time and instead fall under the jurisdiction of the County Improvement Authority (CCIA), as is generally the case throughout the State. As a result, the Planning Board does not have site plan jurisdiction over recycling centers.

He further explained that the City’s ordinance had not been updated to reflect more modern site development standards. The last significant changes were made in the 1990s, and since that time the City has completed a Master Plan update and several Master Plan reexaminations. The proposed amendments are intended to bring the ordinance more in line with current site development standards and the recommendations of the City’s Master Plan reexaminations, particularly the goal of providing appropriately sized and properly developed industrial land.

Mr. Headley stated that a consultant had prepared a report and would be presenting the proposed changes in greater detail. He also anticipated that at least one objector would be present to discuss his objections. Following the presentation and public comment, the Planning Board would consider whether the proposed amendments are consistent with the City’s Land Use Element. The Planning Board’s role is advisory to City Council because the matter involves the Land Use Ordinance.

FLAG SALUTE

This meeting is being held in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was given on December 16, 2025, and has been posted on the Official Bulletin Board in City Hall, posted on the City’s website and published in the Vineland Daily Journal.

MINUTES

Approval of minutes from September 9, 2026, board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the resolution.

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

Approval of minutes from August 5, 2026, special board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the minutes.

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

Approval of minutes from August 17, 2026, board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the resolution.

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

RESOLUTIONS

Approval of resolutions from September 9, 2026, board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the resolution.

Resolution #6768

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes

Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

Resolution #6769

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Robert Martino - Southerly side of Trento Avenue between Cornucopia Avenue and Union Road, Block 7401, Lots 13 & 14, Tax Map Sheet #74, Project #PBA 26-00026. The applicant requests a resubdivision approval to convey a portion of one lot to another lot.

Mr. Martino testified on his own behalf. Mr. Headley provided an overview of the application. He explained that Mr. Martino owns both properties, each containing a little more than 15 acres. The existing lot line currently runs through the middle of Mr. Martino's driveway. The applicant proposed to relocate the lot line approximately 20 feet to the west

Mr. Martino explained that he intended to move the property line approximately 30 feet closer to the farmhouse. He stated that he had built a ranch-style home next to the farmhouse approximately 47 years ago and wanted to relocate the property line so that the driveway would be entirely on his property and so that he could construct a pole barn. Mr. Martino initially discussed a four-foot setback but, after learning that a variance would be required and that neighboring property owners would have to be notified, he agreed to provide a six-foot setback. He stated that he would have his surveyor revise the plans.

Mr. Headley stated that there were no variances associated with the application and no design waivers. He clarified that there were several perfected-plan items under Item 11 of his report. The applicant intended to comply with Item 11A, which would be revised by the surveyor, and requested waivers for Items 11B, 11C, and 11D. He stated that, due to the relatively minor nature of the proposed change, which involved moving an existing lot line, creating no new driveways, and providing for a pole barn that was not out of character with the neighborhood, he had no objection to granting the waivers for Items 11B, 11C, and 11D.

The Chair asked whether there were any questions from staff or Board members and whether anyone from the public wished to comment on the application. There were no questions or public comments.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

Take 5 Auto Service– located on the northerly side of Landis Avenue between N Orchard Road and Delsea Drive (NJ Route 47), Block 2707, Lot 16, Tax Map Sheet #27, Project No. PBA-26-00025. The applicant requests a preliminary/final major site plan approval, to construct a 1,326 square foot specialized repair garage (Take 5 Auto Service) along with associated site improvements.

The applicant was represented by Michael Gruccio, Esq. He explained that the application followed City Council's adoption of Ordinance No. 2025-97, approved on January 14, 2026, which amended the Center City Redevelopment Plan to specifically permit the conversion of the existing single-family home on the 1.54-acre property to a specialized auto repair garage as a permitted use. The ordinance followed Planning Board Resolution No. 6739, adopted in December 2025, which recommended that City Council consider the amendment. He stated that the application was consistent with the Planning Board's prior recommendation and with the amendment ultimately adopted by City Council. The application seeks preliminary and final major site plan approval for construction of a 1,326-square-foot specialized auto repair garage, together with associated site improvements, including parking, landscaping, screening where required, street shade trees, vehicular maneuverability, stormwater management, and signage.

He noted that the property is located immediately east of Taco Bell. A remaining residential property is located to the west, and Mavis Tire, another specialized repair garage previously approved by the Planning Board, is located directly across Landis Avenue. He stated that the applicant would rely upon the Planning and Engineering reports during the remainder of the presentation and would address the variances identified in Sections 6A through 6D of the Planning Report. With respect to the Engineering Report, he represented that there were no material matters in dispute and that the applicant was prepared to comply with all recommendations and requirements contained in the Engineering Report.

Mr. Gruccio then addressed the existing nonconformance in Section 7 of the Planning Report concerning lot size. The property is located in an age-restricted community zone, which requires 20 acres for comprehensive development of an age-restricted community. The subject property contains only 1.54 acres. He noted that the Planning Board had specifically recognized this issue in December 2025 and stated that development of the property for an age-restricted use would require assembling numerous adjoining properties in order to satisfy the 20-acre requirement. The applicant therefore requested that the Board consider the existing nonconformance in connection with the present application.

Mr. Gruccio addressed signage under Section 8 of the Planning Report. He explained that, following a PAR meeting with City staff and the applicant's representatives, the applicant had revised the signage proposal and was eliminating the requested variance relief for wall signage on the easterly and westerly facades. The applicant would therefore no longer request relief for those two sides.

With respect to stormwater management under Section 9, the applicant requested a partial waiver concerning the height of the basin fence. The proposed fence would be four feet high, and the applicant's engineering consultant would provide testimony regarding the fence's appearance and amenities. A waiver was also requested under Section 9C for the side-yard setback of the stormwater basin. The basin would be located approximately 11 feet from the property line where 25 feet is required. He noted that, due to the stringent NJDEP stormwater management requirements, this type of waiver is commonly encountered with developments of this nature.

Under Section 10B, the applicant requested partial relief concerning screening associated with the basin fence. The proposed screening would be provided along the southerly side of the basin rather than along the northerly, easterly, and westerly sides.

Mr. Gruccio then addressed Section 23 of the Planning Report concerning freshwater wetlands. He pointed out that the site plan shows a 300-foot riparian buffer affecting the property and stated that no improvements are proposed within the 300-foot riparian buffer. He maintained that the established buffer effectively satisfies the applicable freshwater wetlands requirements and that all proposed improvements are located outside the buffer.

Olivia Kanoniu, Project Engineer with Stonefield Engineering and Design, testified on behalf of the applicant. She began with the existing conditions and identified Exhibit A-1 as an aerial exhibit prepared by her office and dated October 14, 2026. The exhibit showed the subject property, commonly known as 1316 West Landis Avenue, also known as NJ Route 56. The property contains an existing residence on 1.54 acres, with 112 feet of frontage and approximately 600 feet of depth, making it a long and narrow parcel. A small stream, Little Robin Branch, runs along the rear property line just off the subject property. A 300-foot riparian buffer extends onto the rear portion of the property. Ms. Kanoniu stated that the applicant's team had worked to design the project so that no portion of the riparian buffer would be disturbed and, consequently, NJDEP permitting associated with the stream would not be required.

Ms. Kanoniu then identified a colorized site plan rendering prepared by her office and dated October 13, 2026. The rendering illustrated the proposed site improvements, including landscaping, asphalt pavement, parking striping, and the proposed building. The development consists of a 1,326-square-foot Take 5 specialized repair garage with two service bays. She explained that the property is subject to the previously discussed redevelopment plan amendment, which allows the specialized repair garage within the zone. Seven parking spaces are proposed. Site access would be provided by a right-in/right-out driveway along West Landis Avenue. Customers would enter the site and travel along the eastern drive aisle toward the service-bay queue area. A service technician would greet customers, perform the initial intake, and direct them through the queue.

Ms. Kanoniu explained that Take 5 services include oil changes, oil-filter replacement, air-filter replacement, and topping off windshield-wiper fluid. No auto body repair would be performed. Customers remain inside their vehicles while the work is completed. Vehicles are not lifted; instead, the service area contains a pit approximately three feet deep that allows technicians to safely access the underside of the vehicle. Windshield wipers, air filters, and air fresheners are the only products available for purchase, and customers do not enter the building to purchase them. Instead, they request the products from the technician, who brings them to the vehicle and assists with installation as applicable. The proposed hours of operation are seven days per week, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Weekday peak periods are approximately 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with the weekend peak period occurring approximately from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., particularly on Saturdays.

During peak periods, approximately eight vehicles may be on site. A typical shift would have four employees, increasing to six employees during peak periods. Ms. Kanoniu stated that the development would

require 12 parking spaces based on the number of peak employees and two service bays; however, seven spaces are proposed. The spaces are nine feet wide, and the applicant agreed to provide the hairpin striping recommended in the Board's professional review letter. No EV make-ready spaces are proposed because the site contains only seven parking spaces, whereas the requirement applies when a development provides a minimum of 25 spaces. The vehicles serviced by Take 5 would consist of regular passenger vehicles and vans, with no fleet-service vehicles such as larger commercial delivery vans. Deliveries are anticipated approximately twice per week, with a box truck being the largest delivery vehicle. Deliveries would occur during the daytime, with no off-hour deliveries anticipated.

Regarding stormwater management, Ms. Kanoniu explained that stormwater would be managed by an infiltration basin located at the rear of the property. Water would be collected through proposed inlets and conveyed to the rear basin. The development would increase impervious coverage by approximately 9,000 square feet, and the basin is designed to manage the additional stormwater runoff generated by that increase.

Following discussions during the PAR meeting, the stormwater plan would be revised to show a four-foot split-rail fence with non-climbable mesh, reducing the requested relief from the required six-foot basin fence. The applicant also agreed to comply with the remaining stormwater comments contained in the Engineering Report.

Utilities would connect to existing infrastructure along Landis Avenue. The water service would utilize the existing service lateral on the property, while electric service would connect to the existing utility pole located in the southeastern corner of the site. Sanitary service exists along West Landis Avenue but terminates at the eastern property line. The applicant proposed extending the sanitary line to the western portion of the site to serve the proposed development. No gas service is proposed because the facility does not use gas.

LED light poles, wall packs, and building lighting would be provided throughout the site. The lighting plan would provide an average of 2.5 foot-candles as required by code, with illumination along the property lines not exceeding one foot-candle. In response to a recommendation in the professional review letter, the applicant proposed adding two decorative lights on either side of the driveway.

Ms. Kanoniu then discussed landscaping. The applicant proposed a comprehensive landscaping plan consisting of trees and shrubs with contrasting forms and all-season, New Jersey-native plantings. The trash enclosure near the center of the site would be screened to limit its visual impact. Shrubs would also be provided along curb lines where headlight screening may be necessary to protect neighboring properties or passing motorists.

Due to the limited width of the property, approximately 112 feet, relief would be required from the perimeter landscape buffer requirements along the easterly and westerly sides. The eastern buffer is constrained by the proposed curb line, while the western side provides a substantially larger buffer. The building is approximately 20 feet from the western property line where 30 feet is required; excluding the building, approximately 30 feet of buffer would be provided along the western side. Approximately 6.6 feet would be provided along the eastern side. Ms. Kanoniu noted that a substantial evergreen buffer is proposed along the western property line, with similar buffering provided along the eastern side.

The applicant agreed to work with the City Engineer regarding additional street shade trees and screening along the southerly side of the stormwater basin. Because of the utilities and existing infrastructure in the southeastern portion of the site, Ms. Kanoniu stated that the applicant was willing to provide two additional shade trees but could not confirm that they would be located directly along the street. Mr. Headley noted that this would technically constitute a waiver because the trees would not be located on the street, but indicated that such an arrangement had been approved previously.

Ms. Kanoniu then reviewed the architectural elevations. The proposed building follows the standard Take 5 prototype, with a red roof and red upper band around the building. The remaining portions of the building would consist of light and medium tan elements, with garage doors forming the primary architectural elements on the front and rear elevations.

She then discussed the signage. The front and rear elevations are the only building elevations where signage would remain. The front elevation would contain the Take 5 oil-can logo and "Oil Change" lettering. The rear elevation would contain "Stay in Your Lane" lettering. The signs originally proposed on the eastern and western elevations would be removed, eliminating the corresponding variance requests for wall-sign area and orientation on those facades.

Mr. Headley confirmed that additional signage relief identified in Items 8D and 8G had also been discussed for elimination. Ms. Kanoniu explained that the applicant had revised the freestanding sign during the PAR process. The freestanding sign would be 20 feet high, with the Take 5 bucket approximately six feet in height, an approximately eight-inch gap to the three-foot marquee, and approximately ten feet of clearance between the bottom of the sign and grade. The ten-foot clearance adjustment would allow the sign to be located at the property line and eliminate the requested sign setback variance. The applicant also agreed to move the sign so that it would be at least ten feet from the drive aisle.

The applicant also proposed directional signage consisting of two four-square-foot signs, one indicating "Enter" and one indicating "Exit," along with a "Thank You" message. Ms. Kanoniu stated that these were the only directional signs proposed on the site and expressed her professional opinion that the signage was appropriate, aesthetically suitable, and not overwhelming for the proposed use.

Mr. Headley then reviewed additional items from the Planning Report. Ms. Kanoniu confirmed that the applicant would comply with Item 12, including the bicycle, sidewalk, and landscaping irrigation requirements. She further confirmed that the applicant had no issues with the perfected-plan items in Item 19 or the corrections identified in Item 20 and would comply with those requirements.

Finally, Mr. Headley noted that Item 23D, concerning NJDEP approval, would no longer be required because the proposed improvements are located outside the riparian buffer, which provides a more stringent setback than the wetlands requirement. Ms. Kanoniu confirmed that the applicant could provide a memorandum addressing the matter discussed, to be included with the preventive plan submission so that the information would be documented in the record.

Mr. Headley then returned to Item 9 of the Planning Report to clarify the remaining waivers. Ms. Kanoniu confirmed that the applicant would comply with Items 9A, 9B, 9C, and 9D, as applicable, including the revised basin and management requirements discussed during the testimony.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes

Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

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

Roll Call:
John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

Land Use Ordinance Amendment- Review for Consistency with the Master Plan, Chapter 425, Article XII, Recycling Operations and Junkyards.

The Board then proceeded with the special business item concerning the proposed land use ordinance amendment requested by City Council. Christopher Dochney, a professional planner with Artheon, serving as a consultant to the City, appeared before the Board. Mr. Dochney explained that City Council had introduced Ordinance No. 2026-70, which was referred to the Planning Board pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law for review and a recommendation as to whether the proposed land use ordinance amendment was consistent with the City's Master Plan. He clarified that the Board's role was not to approve or deny the ordinance as it would a site plan or subdivision application, but rather to determine whether the proposed amendment was consistent with the Master Plan and to provide any recommendations to the governing body.

He explained that the proposed ordinance would amend Article XII of the City's zoning code concerning recycling operations and junkyards. The amendment was intended to incorporate changes in State regulations concerning recycling centers and to revise the manner in which junkyards are regulated and permitted. Due to changes in the State permitting process administered by NJDEP, recycling operations would be removed from this section of the City's ordinance, leaving the section to regulate junkyards.

Among the substantive changes, the maximum number of licensed junkyard facilities permitted in the City would be reduced from eight to five. The minimum lot area required for a regulated junkyard would increase from three acres to ten acres, and the minimum required lot frontage would increase from 165 feet to 250 feet. The minimum landscape buffer along a street frontage would increase from 15 feet to 50 feet.

The proposed ordinance would also prohibit the burning of materials at junkyards. Under the existing ordinance, burning could occur if a plan was submitted to and approved by the City's Fire Department; that provision would be eliminated and burning would instead be prohibited. A new requirement would provide that junked vehicles stored at a junkyard must have all fluids removed and properly closed off at a State-licensed recycling center before being stored on the property. The annual junkyard license fee would increase from $200 to $1,000.

Mr. Dochney further explained that the ordinance contained additional provisions concerning data collection, reporting, security, compliance agreements, payments, and property inspections. He noted that many of these provisions were more related to licensing and police or regulatory matters than traditional land use or zoning matters.

The Board questioned the definition of a junkyard. Mr. initially Dochney indicated that he would need to review the ordinance to confirm the precise definition. The ordinance was then reviewed on the record, and the definition was read as including any area, lot, land, parcel, building, structure, or portion thereof used for the storage, collection, processing, purchase, sale, or abandonment of waste paper, rags, scrap metal, or other scrap or discarded goods, materials, or machinery, as well as three or more unregistered, uninspected, or inoperable vehicles or other types of junk. Mr. Dochney further noted that the ordinance contained separate definitions for “junk,” “junkyard,” and “recycling,” and that the proposed amendment would remove certain definitions.

Mr. S Dochney then addressed the relationship between the proposed ordinance and the City's Master Plan. He stated that the City's 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report does not specifically address junkyards or recycling centers or expressly recommend the particular amendments contained in Ordinance No. 2026-70. However, he identified several Master Plan policies and objectives that he believed were relevant to the proposed changes.

The Master Plan identifies a need for planned industrial facilities, including manufacturing facilities, with reasonable access to the highway network, particularly Route 55 and, to a lesser extent, Delsea Drive. It also identifies the need to protect ecologically and environmentally sensitive lands, particularly areas surrounding the City's riparian corridors. Preservation of neighborhood character is identified as an important issue, and the Master Plan recommends that the City's land use regulations be periodically reviewed and updated to remain consistent with new State regulations, including NJDEP requirements.

Mr. Dochney further referenced Master Plan goals concerning maintaining and enhancing air quality, providing additional green space, protecting the health and safety of residents, protecting the natural environment, reducing non-point source pollution, and minimizing pollution carried through stormwater runoff. He noted that the Master Plan also recommends updated industrial zoning and encourages larger industrial users rather than small, piecemeal industrial uses. The Master Plan identifies industrial properties in the range of approximately 10 to 25 acres as preferable for attracting larger industrial users. In addition, the Master Plan addresses the appearance of commercial and industrial corridors and recommends that industrial uses located farther from the Center City area and closer to highways be set farther back from the street and provided with more attractive landscape buffers. Mr. Dochney stated that the Master Plan expressed concern about industrial uses that are too close to the street and lack adequate landscaping, particularly where such properties form a visual gateway into the City.

Based upon his review, Mr. Dochney concluded that, although the Master Plan does not directly address junkyards, the proposed ordinance was generally consistent with the Master Plan's overarching objectives concerning environmental protection, enhanced landscaping and visual buffering, and encouraging industrial development on larger tracts of land. He stated that the proposed minimum lot area of ten acres was generally consistent with the Master Plan's preference for industrial users on 10- to 25-acre tracts. He also found the increased vegetative buffer requirement consistent with the Master Plan's stated desire to improve the appearance of industrial corridors and provide greater setbacks and landscaping along street frontages.

Mr. Dochney further stated that the requirements to remove fluids from junked vehicles and prohibit the burning of materials were generally consistent with the Master Plan's goals of protecting environmental and air quality and reducing pollution that could enter stormwater runoff. He characterized the additional recordkeeping, data collection, and reporting requirements as less directly related to the Master Plan because

they were not typically zoning matters, but stated that they were generally consistent with the broader goals of protecting health, safety, and the community.

Mr. Dochney identified two areas of potential inconsistency or ambiguity within the City's existing zoning code. First, the proposed ordinance states that junkyards are permitted in the I-3 and I-4 districts; however, the individual zoning provisions for those districts do not appear to be consistent with that language. He noted that the I-4 district expressly permits certain related uses, including an auto wrecking yard, recycling facility, and non-hazardous waste reduction facility, while the proposed amendment would remove recycling from Article XII and address junkyards specifically. He stated that this creates some uncertainty as to the extent to which the proposed ordinance would apply to related uses such as auto wrecking yards or non-hazardous waste reduction facilities.

The Board discussed the apparent discrepancy concerning the I-3 and I-4 districts with City staff. Mr. Headley explained that, when reviewing permitted uses, the City typically relies upon the uses specifically enumerated in the applicable zoning district provisions. He noted that the reference to junkyards in both the I-3 and I-4 portions of Article XII appeared to be inconsistent with the current zoning provisions, where junkyards are permitted only in the I-4 district. He indicated that the discrepancy may have resulted from an oversight or a prior amendment to the zoning ordinance that was not carried through to the cross-referenced junkyard provision. Mr. Headley explained that Council could revise the section being amended, although any recommendation concerning the separate provisions governing auto wrecking yards would more appropriately be considered as part of a future amendment to that separate section of the zoning ordinance.

Jeffrey Kantowicz, Esq. appeared before the Board on behalf of Honest Lookup, LLC. Mr. Kantowicz identified Ali Lafta, the managing member of Honest Lookup, LLC, as being present with him. Mr. Kantowicz stated that he intended to ask the Board to recommend a finding that Ordinance No. 2026-70 was inconsistent with the City's Master Plan. He indicated that he would provide specific reasons for that position and requested that any report or recommendation issued by the Board address those concerns and be provided to him directly or through counsel.

Mr. Kantowicz advised the Board that Honest Lookup, LLC had previously been represented by other counsel who was unable to attend the meeting. He stated that a letter had been prepared by the law firm of Hill Wallach, specifically Mr. Vidath Sripathi, who had appeared before the Board the previous evening. Mr. Kantowicz submitted the letter to the Board for consideration as part of the Board's review of the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Kantowicz explained that Honest Lookup, LLC had purchased property at 1508 Elm Road, Block 5501, Lot 28, located in the I-4 zoning district, on August 31, 2026. He stated that on September 4, 2026, the company submitted an application for a license to conduct operations involving the receipt and dismantling of automobiles, removal and resale of reusable parts such as doors and fenders, and removal of the remaining vehicle bodies. Additional information was requested, and the application was resubmitted on September 21, 2026. Mr. Kantowicz noted that Ordinance No. 2026-70 was introduced on September 22, 2026, and that the ordinance was subject to Planning Board referral under the Municipal Land Use Law. He understood that the ordinance was scheduled for a second reading and potential vote at the next City Council meeting.

Mr. Kantowicz stated that Honest Lookup, LLC believed the proposed ordinance was inconsistent with the Master Plan for several reasons. He questioned whether sufficient study had been performed to support the proposed changes, particularly the increase in the minimum lot area for junkyards from three acres to ten acres. He noted that Mr. Dochney had acknowledged that he had not analyzed the effect of the proposed ordinance on each property within the I-4 district. Mr. Kantowicz argued that, without an economic analysis of the effect of more than tripling the minimum lot size, it would be difficult to determine whether the

proposed change would promote economic development, which he identified as one of the Master Plan's objectives.

Mr. Kantowicz further argued that increasing the minimum lot size to ten acres could render existing parcels smaller than ten acres nonconforming for purposes of a junkyard use and could create uncertainty for property owners seeking to develop or expand such properties. He questioned whether the City had studied the feasibility of assembling undersized parcels to create conforming ten-acre properties and suggested that uncertainty concerning parcel assembly could discourage developers from pursuing economic opportunities in Vineland.

He stated that neither the 2008 Master Plan nor the 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report specifically recommended increasing the minimum lot size for junkyards in the I-4 district. He questioned the basis for selecting ten acres rather than another acreage threshold, noting that the Master Plan did not provide a specific range or standard from which the ten-acre requirement could be derived. He similarly questioned the proposed reduction in the maximum number of junkyard licenses from eight to five, asking what study or rationale supported the selection of five licenses rather than four, three, two, or another number.

Mr. Kantowicz stated that, in his view, limiting the number of licenses could affect economic development and that environmental concerns could instead potentially be addressed through site-specific stormwater and other design requirements. He questioned whether the proposed license limitation was supported by an analysis of the City's economic-development objectives or the number of businesses that could be affected.

Mr. Kantowicz also questioned whether the proposed changes had been applied to other industrial zoning districts and stated that the I-4 district appeared to be specifically affected by the proposed lot-size and licensing changes. He maintained that a broader and more comprehensive economic analysis, including an examination of the existing parcels in the district, would be necessary before the Board could conclude that the ordinance was consistent with the Master Plan.

He further questioned how many parcels within the I-4 district would become nonconforming if the ten-acre minimum were adopted and whether creating a substantial number of nonconforming parcels would constitute sound planning. In response to a Board member's clarification, Mr. Kantowicz acknowledged that his concern related specifically to parcels that could be used for the junkyard use, rather than every property within the I-4 district.

Mr. Kantowicz stated that the currently listed uses in the district included sewage treatment plants, non-hazardous waste reduction facilities, junkyards, auto wrecking, recycling, composting, and public purposes. He noted that a substantial portion of the district was already devoted to public purposes. He reiterated that, in his opinion, the Board had not been presented with sufficient data concerning the effects of the proposed amendment.

As requested recommendations, Mr. Kantowicz asked the Board to issue a written recommendation finding Ordinance No. 2026-70 inconsistent with the Master Plan based upon the concerns he had raised. He further requested elimination of the ten-acre minimum lot requirement, elimination of the limitation on the number of junkyard licenses, and protection for applications that had been filed before the ordinance was introduced. He referenced the time-of-application rule and the City's licensing requirements, stating that a license was required before a complete development application could be submitted. He also requested that the provisions of the ordinance concerning recycling operations and junkyards be reconsidered.

Mr. Dochney stated that he did not intend to characterize or refute the legal arguments presented, emphasizing that the Board's role that evening was to consider Master Plan consistency rather than determine whether the proposed ordinance was legally valid, arbitrary, unreasonable, or otherwise subject to legal

challenge. He clarified that the other bulk regulations within the zoning code would continue to apply and that the proposed change in lot size would result in a lot being nonconforming for the junkyard use only where a property was proposed to be used as a junkyard and did not meet the new minimum lot-size requirement.

Mr. Kantowicz reiterated that the three primary inconsistencies he identified were the increase in minimum lot size, the reduction in the number of permitted licenses, and the increase in required frontage, as well as the absence of specific supporting analysis concerning the proposed changes.

Mr. Headley clarified that the proposed increase in frontage from 165 feet to 250 feet would still be less than the frontage required for other I-4 uses, which require 300 feet.

Mr. Odorizzi also discussed the proposed limitation on junkyard licenses. He questioned why a limit should be imposed on junkyard licenses when the City has licensing limits for other types of uses. Mr. Headley explained that the number of licenses was primarily a licensing matter rather than a planning matter. When asked how many junkyard licenses were currently active in the City, it was indicated that the exact number was not known.

Mr. Lafta stated that there were currently five active junkyard licenses and that Honest Lookup, LLC had applied for an additional license.

The Board continued discussing the distinction between the proposed ordinance and the Master Plan. Mr. Catalana stated that, while the concerns raised by Mr. Kantowicz warranted consideration and additional information might be beneficial, he was not prepared to conclude that the proposed ten-acre minimum lot size was necessarily inconsistent with the City's broader Master Plan objectives. He proposed changes might warrant further study and discussion, particularly concerning the rationale for the five-license limitation and the basis for selecting ten acres as the minimum lot size.

Mr. Catalana questioned why the subject property had been selected for the proposed use. Mr. Lafta explained that the property is a former City landfill consisting of approximately five-acre lots and that, based on his research, it was the only privately owned property in the I-4 District that met the existing three-acre minimum requirement. He stated that the property could accommodate auto wrecking, junkyard, and recycling uses under one license, whereas in other jurisdictions, including Philadelphia, those activities are subject to separate licenses. He indicated that this was a significant reason the property was selected.

Ms. Moscillo expressed concern that the discussion was becoming individualized to the pending property and reiterated that the Board's responsibility was to determine whether the proposed ordinance was consistent with the Master Plan. Mr. Catalana stated that, in his opinion, the proposed amendment was not necessarily inconsistent with the Master Plan, while acknowledging concerns regarding the effect of the proposed changes on the pending application. The Board was advised that such concerns could be expressed in its recommendation, but that the circumstances of one applicant should not dictate the Board's determination of Master Plan consistency.

Mr. Kantowicz maintained that his concern was not limited to the individual applicant. He argued that increasing the minimum lot size from three acres to ten acres could affect economic development because a developer would either have to seek variance relief or assemble additional parcels. He stated that assembling parcels could involve existing uses, disagreements over purchase prices, uncertainty, delay, and additional entrepreneurial risk, which could discourage development from locating in Vineland. He maintained that, absent information demonstrating that tripling the minimum lot size would not adversely affect economic development, the proposed change could be viewed as inconsistent with the Master Plan's objective of promoting economic development.

Mr. Catalana acknowledged that concern but noted that Vineland has a limited supply of industrial properties and suggested that the City Council may be seeking to promote larger industrial sites and developments rather than smaller ones. Mr. Kantowicz responded that requiring larger sites could nevertheless force developers to seek variances or assemble parcels, creating uncertainty and potentially causing developers to consider other municipalities.

Mr. Casadia then asked how the proposed ten-acre minimum lot size and five-license limitation had been established. Mr. Headley responded that those numbers were recommended by City Council and were the provisions referred to the Planning Board for review. When asked how City Council arrived at those particular numbers, he indicated that he was not a member of City Council and therefore could not provide the rationale for the specific figures.

Ms. Velez also questioned whether existing junkyard licenses could continue if the properties did not meet the proposed ten-acre minimum. Ms. Moscillo explained that existing lawful junkyard uses that did not conform to the new dimensional requirements would become pre-existing nonconforming uses and would not be required to cease operation solely because of the ordinance amendment. Mr. Headley further explained that the amendment would primarily affect new applications and that an expansion, addition of new structures, or other improvements requiring site plan review could result in an evaluation under the new standards. Existing approved conditions, such as previously authorized buffers or setbacks, would not automatically be changed. However, if an existing use had expanded into an area without prior approval, a future expansion could require variance relief.

Ms. Velez asked about the current use of the property that was the subject of the pending license application. Mr. Kantowicz stated that the property was being used as a single-family home. Discussion also referenced chicken coops located toward the rear of the property. Mr. Kantowicz stated that he had not independently researched the licensing history or whether relicensing requirements might affect the property and therefore did not offer an opinion regarding that issue.

Following closure of the public hearing, the Board continued its deliberation regarding the proposed ordinance amendment and the recommendation to City Council. The discussion remained focused on whether the proposed changes were consistent with the City's Master Plan, including the concerns raised regarding the proposed ten-acre minimum lot size, the limitation on the number of junkyard licenses, and the potential effect of the amendments on future economic development.

The Board then discussed whether to include in its recommendation the issue identified regarding the permitted uses listed for the I-3 and I-4 zoning districts. Mr. Headley explained that the zoning code contains a provision that references both I-3 and I-4, while the individual zoning district provisions do not appear to correspond. It was suggested that the recommendation to City Council state that the references to I-3 and I-4 be removed and replaced with language providing that junkyard uses comply with the zoning code provisions governing where such uses are permitted. The Board agreed that this appeared to be more of a clarification or cleanup of the zoning language than a substantive change to the proposed ordinance.

The Board also revisited the proposed limitation on the number of junkyard licenses. Mr. Catalana expressed concern that limiting the number of licenses to five, when testimony indicated that five licenses were already in place, could effectively prevent additional licenses from being issued. Ms. Moscillo explained that the Board could recommend that City Council increase the number, although the Board's formal determination at this hearing was whether the ordinance was consistent with the Master Plan.

Mr. Catalana stated that the Master Plan includes economic development as a goal and expressed concern that limiting licenses to the number already in existence could restrict future economic development. Mr.

Headley noted that the Master Plan also recommends creating industrial-sized parcels in the range of approximately 10 to 25 acres.

After further discussion, a motion was made to find that the proposed ordinance was consistent with the Master Plan and to recommend that City Council adopt the ordinance amendment. The motion further recommended that City Council incorporate a correction to the inconsistency identified regarding the permitted uses in the I-3 and I-4 zoning districts and clean up the related language.

The Chairman entertained a motion to make the recommendation to City Council. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: No
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: No
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Catalana: No

The Chairman entertained a motion to approve Resolution 6770. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Abstain
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Abstain
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Catalana: Abstain

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman entertained a motion to adjourn.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Scott Reale: Yes

Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Catalana: Yes

TIME: 8:14 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Perez
Planning Board Secretary