

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

May 13, 2026

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

Members Present:

John Casadia
Sandy Velez
Douglas Menz
Thomas Tobolski
Jeffrey DiMatteo
Robert Odorizzi
Elizabeth Arthur
David Manders

Also present were:

Amanda Moschillo, Planning Board Solicitor
Gina Nassar, Conflict Board Solicitor
Yasmin Perez, Planning Board Secretary
Kathleen Hicks, Supervising Planner
Ryan Headley, Planning Board Planner/Engineer
Elizabeth Jambor, Assistant Planner

PRE-MEETING

David Development Group– located on the southeasterly corner of Lincoln Avenue and Magnolia Road, Block 5219, Lot 3.01, Tax Map Sheet #52, Project No. PBA-25-00044. Preliminary major subdivision approval to configure one (1) existing lot into thirty-three (33) lots over two phases. Phase 1 will consist of eleven (11) single-family home lots and three (3) stormwater management lots. Phase 2 will consist of nineteen (19) single-family home lots.

Mr. Headley explained that this is a proposed two-phase development located along Magnolia Road and Lincoln Avenue. The Board had previously approved a Master Plan of Streets amendment establishing the roadway layout, as well as a recent minor subdivision approval for three lots fronting Dolly Drive that are currently under construction. The balance of the tract is now proposed for development. Existing streets in the area include Dolly Drive, Blue Court, Linden Court, and Junior Drive. Phase One of the project includes the extension to the northside to Blue Court to Lincoln Avenue, along with the proposed stormwater management facilities. Phase Two consists of the extension of Linden Court, completion of the Junior Drive cul-de-sac, and the construction of three single-family attached dwelling lots fronting Lincoln Avenue. There are numerous variances associated with the application. It was explained that the six single-family attached dwelling lots along Lincoln Avenue were created by dividing conforming lots along a shared wall, resulting in proposed zero-foot lot line setbacks, reduced side yard setbacks, lot frontage variances, lot width variances, and lot depth variances. Additional variances were requested for the stormwater basin lots, primarily relating to frontage and width requirements. The applicant also requested developable lot area variances due to the required ten-foot utility easements along the frontages of the lots. It was explained that these easements are intended for underground utilities such as electric, cable, and fiber services and do not restrict development in the same manner as wetlands or environmental constraints. There are developable area variances that have been approved in prior major subdivision applications. Additional side and rear yard setback variances were identified for certain proposed homes, although the applicant indicated that some of these issues may be resolved through revisions to the placement of the homes on the lots.

Mr. Manders inquired whether there were any discussions regarding the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Magnolia Road and Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Headley stated that no such discussions had been brought to his attention and noted that Lincoln Avenue is a county roadway subject to County jurisdiction. He explained that the County has already reviewed aspects of the project and is requiring roadway widening and curb line improvements along Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Headley also stated that the revised street layout was intended to provide multiple points of ingress and egress for residents, dispersing traffic movements throughout the development. Each residential unit is estimated to generate approximately ten vehicle trips per day, while Lincoln Avenue currently carries an average daily traffic volume of approximately 15,600 vehicles. He did not believe the proposed development would significantly impact overall traffic volumes.

Mr. Headley reviewed the stormwater management design and associated waiver requests. He expressed concern regarding the proximity of several stormwater basins to adjoining residential property lines. Some basin top-of-bank areas appeared to be located directly on the property line rather than maintaining the typical fifteen-foot required setback. The basins are bio-infiltration basins designed to remain dry and contain vegetative plantings rather than open sand-bottom basins.

Inspira Vineland – located on the northwesterly corner of the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Orchard Road, Block 6001, Lot 20, Tax Map Sheet #60, Project No. PBA-26-00002. Preliminary/final major site plan approval, to construct a 53,170 square foot two story medical office (26,585 square foot per floor) along with associated site improvements.

Mr. Headley explained that the applicant proposes to demolish the existing building and parking lot and construct a new two-story medical office building. He noted that the applicant submitted revised plans addressing many of the comments identified in the original review report. As a result, a revised review report was prepared and submitted to the Board for consideration. The revised layout relocates portions of the building slightly closer to Sherman Avenue and eliminates a previously proposed drive aisle and several parking spaces in order to improve the overall site configuration.

There are variances associated with the application. Variance relief was requested for the building line setback along Sherman Avenue, where 73 feet is proposed whereas 100-foot setback is required. A building height variance was also requested, proposed building exceeds the permitted 35-foot maximum height by approximately 3.5 feet. In addition, the applicant requested relief for impervious lot coverage, proposing 64 percent whereas 50 percent is permitted. The proposal is a reduction in impervious coverage compared to existing site conditions. The existing stormwater basin located within the former walking track area at the rear of the property will remain and be used for stormwater management.

Mr. Headley also discussed the proposed parking arrangement. The applicant proposes 239 parking spaces whereas 335 spaces are required under ordinance standards for a medical office building. The applicant intends to provide testimony to address the parking variance request.

The proposed stormwater basin generally follows the footprint of the existing basin. The applicant intends to regrade the slopes, deepen portions, and reconfigure certain areas to meet current standards. The basin exceeds two feet in depth and, therefore, fencing would typically be required. No fencing was shown on the plans.

Revisions were made to the site's entrance drive, including relocation of the driveway farther north in an effort to lessen the steepness of the grade and improve vehicular access. Orchard Road and Sherman Avenue are County roads, and the County has required additional right-of-way dedications and roadway widening along both frontages. As a result, the applicant is unable to provide the full twenty-five-foot landscape buffer. Mr. Headley explained that the applicant proposed a reduced landscaped area, consisting of a combination of shrubs, ground cover plantings, ornamental trees, and shade trees within the available frontage areas. Along Sherman Avenue, the landscaped strip is approximately six feet wide in certain locations due to the roadway widening requirements, although the landscaping plan accounts for the final widened roadway configuration. Additional shade trees and shrubbery are proposed throughout the perimeter of the site and near the internal drive aisles. The applicant has addressed many of the previously omitted plan details in the revised submission.

Aldi, Inc – located on the south easterly corner of the intersection of Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive, Block 3601, Lot 1, Tax Map Sheet #36, Project No. PBA-26-00004. Preliminary/final major site plan approval, to convert an existing 18,716 square foot building (formerly Rite Aid) into a grocery store (Aldi), including a 2,705 square foot building expansion and associated site improvements.

Mr. Headley explained that the property is located at the southeast corner of Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive. The applicant is proposing to convert the existing commercial building into an Aldi grocery store. The proposed site improvements include removal of the existing drive-through lane, which will be converted into landscaped green space, as well as an expansion to the rear of the building to accommodate additional floor area and a new dock loading facility.

There are two variances associated with this application. The first variance relates to the number of required parking spaces. The applicant proposes 85 parking spaces, whereas 107 spaces are required under ordinance standards based on the proposed building square footage. The second variance concerns impervious lot coverage, with the site proposed at 58.8 percent where 50 percent is permitted. He noted that the proposal represents a substantial reduction in impervious coverage compared to the existing site conditions.

There are also waiver requests relating to parking space dimensions, aisle widths, landscape buffering, and street shade trees. Staff explained that an existing front buffer area along Delsea Drive had previously been approved and that the current proposal generally maintains the existing buffering conditions, with only minor modifications along the southern portion of the property where a small extension of approximately four feet is proposed. The overall buffer condition would not change significantly from what currently exists at the site.

The applicant has agreed to address comments regarding street shade trees and pedestrian connectivity and is expected to provide a pedestrian accessway from the site toward the intersection corner, where existing crosswalks are located. He explained that directing pedestrian traffic toward the signalized intersection is preferred for safety purposes. Overall, the application is relatively straightforward aside from the requested variances and design waivers.

FLAG SALUTE

Public notice pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act was given on December 16, 2025 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 April 8, 2026 board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the minutes.

Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

RESOLUTIONS

Approval of resolutions from the April 8, 2026 board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the resolution.

Resolution #6756

Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

Resolution #6757

Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Ordinance 2026-31- Ordinance adopting the Center City Redevelopment Plan for the Landis Avenue Commercial District.

Mr. Chris Dochney, Professional Planner with Artheon (formerly CME Associates), appeared before the Board to present Ordinance No. 2026-36, an amendment to the Center City Redevelopment Plan previously adopted through Ordinance No. 2004-25. Mr. Dochney explained that the proposed amendment is limited to the Landis Avenue Commercial District and would remove the broadly defined permitted use category of “social services, public and private outreach and training facilities” from the list of principal permitted uses. He noted that the term is vague and does not clearly define the types of activities or facilities intended. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that permitted uses within the district remain consistent with the redevelopment plan’s vision of promoting active, pedestrian-oriented retail, restaurant, and commercial storefront uses that contribute to the vitality of the downtown area.

Mr. Dochney explained that the City’s 2008 Master Plan and 2018 Reexamination Report both emphasize the importance of revitalizing the downtown area, particularly along Landis Avenue, and encouraging economic development through appropriate commercial activity. He explained that the Center City Redevelopment Plan has been incorporated into the Master Plan and that the Reexamination Report specifically recommends periodic review and reevaluation of permitted uses within redevelopment districts to ensure they support redevelopment goals. Based upon his review, he concluded that the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and advances the objectives of the redevelopment plan by aligning permitted uses with the intended vision for the Landis Avenue Commercial District.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

The Chairman entertained a motion to approve Resolution #6758. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:
John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

PUBLIC HEARING

Inspira Vineland – located on the northwesterly corner of the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Orchard Road, Block 6001, Lot 20, Tax Map Sheet #60, Project No. PBA-26-00002. Preliminary/final major site plan approval, to construct a 53,170 square foot two story medical office (26,585 square foot per floor) along with associated site improvements.

The applicant was represented by Mr. Mark Asselta, Esq., of Brown & Connery. He advised the Board that the applicant would present testimony from four witnesses: Christian Roche, Professional Engineer; Joel Trexler, Architect; Jason Copare, an Inspira representative familiar with the proposed facility; and Sean Oransky, Professional Planner. All witnesses were sworn prior to the commencement of testimony.

Mr. Christian Roche, Professional Engineer, testified on behalf of the applicant. He described the property as Block 6001, Lot 20, consisting of approximately five acres located at the intersection of South Orchard Road and West Sherman Avenue. The property is currently developed with a sports rehabilitation and physical therapy facility and includes access driveways from both South Orchard Road and West Sherman Avenue, an existing stormwater detention basin, and utility easements that will remain unaffected by the proposed development. The property is located within the B-3 Business Zone.

He testified that the applicant proposes to demolish the existing improvements and construct a two-story outpatient cancer care medical office building containing approximately 53,170 square feet, with a building footprint of approximately 26,585 square feet. The facility will include patient treatment and examination areas as well as administrative office space. Access to the site will continue to be provided from both South Orchard Road and West Sherman Avenue; however, the access points have been redesigned in coordination with Cumberland County. The South Orchard Road driveway has been relocated farther north to improve sight distance and increase separation from the nearby signalized intersection. The West Sherman Avenue access will be restricted to right-in/right-out movements in accordance with County requirements. Mr. Roche also testified that the applicant has agreed to provide twenty-foot-wide roadway widening easements along both frontages to accommodate future County roadway improvements.

With respect to parking, Mr. Roche explained that the applicant is requesting a variance. Based on the City's parking ordinance, the proposed facility would require 335 parking spaces, calculated at one space per 200 square feet of medical office area plus one space for each employee during the maximum shift. Using a projected maximum of 69 employees, the applicant proposes to provide 239 parking spaces, resulting in a deficiency of 96 spaces. Mr. Roche indicated that additional testimony regarding the parking variance would be provided following testimony from the architect and applicant representative. He further testified that the site complies with all ADA-accessible parking and electric vehicle charging station requirements and includes a patient drop-off area on the east side of the building.

Mr. Roche reviewed additional site improvements, including a designated loading area on the west side of the building capable of accommodating SU-30 delivery vehicles and a trash enclosure located on the northwest side of the site. Stormwater management improvements include expansion and modernization of the existing detention basin to meet current State stormwater regulations and conversion of the facility into a green infrastructure infiltration basin. He stated that the applicant had no objection to addressing all technical stormwater comments contained in the Engineer's review letter.

Utility service will be provided by the existing infrastructure, with sanitary sewer service from the Landis Sewerage Authority, water and electric service from the City, and natural gas service from South Jersey Gas. Mr. Roche further testified that the applicant proposes substantial landscaping improvements, including approximately 90 new trees and 430 shrubs, concentrated around the site perimeter and within parking lot islands. He indicated the applicant remains willing to enhance landscaping within future County right-of-way areas, subject to County approval. Site lighting will consist of ten LED pole-mounted fixtures and six building-mounted fixtures designed to comply with ordinance requirements and minimize light spillover onto adjacent properties. Mr. Roche stated that the applicant had reviewed the Planning and Engineering reports and had no objection to complying with the technical comments contained therein.

Mr. Joel Trexler, Architect, testified on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Trexler reviewed the architectural plans for the proposed two-story outpatient cancer treatment facility. Beginning with the first-floor layout, he explained that the main entrance is centered beneath a covered vehicular drop-off canopy. Patients and visitors would enter through a vestibule into a central lobby area containing reception, security, elevators, and other support functions. The northern portion of the building is dedicated to radiation oncology services and includes two linear accelerator treatment vaults, a procedure room, four examination rooms, staff support areas, and a CT simulator used for treatment planning. Adjacent to the radiation oncology area is a PET/CT suite, which serves as a diagnostic imaging component supporting cancer detection and treatment planning. Mr. Trexler further testified that the southern portion of the first floor contains a laboratory for blood draws and specimen collection, along with administrative offices serving the facility. Mechanical, electrical, and building support spaces are located along the western side of the building. A dedicated patient drop-off area for transport vans is provided near the southwest portion of the building. The northwest corner contains an enclosed mechanical yard housing emergency generators and chiller units necessary to support the medical equipment, while a separate trash enclosure is located nearby. Turning to the second-floor plan, Mr. Trexler explained that the central lobby area extends upward as a two-story atrium surrounding the elevators. The northern portion of the floor contains the infusion center, which includes twenty-six infusion bays, two of which are private treatment rooms. The southern portion of the second floor is devoted to a medical clinic that will accommodate multiple specialists involved in oncology care. An oncology pharmacy is also located on the second floor and will prepare and dispense chemotherapy treatments for patients receiving infusion services. He then reviewed the building elevations. The primary façade facing South Orchard Road incorporates Inspira's architectural branding through the use of a masonry base, metal panel accents, curtain wall glazing, exterior insulation finish systems, and storefront windows. The two-story entrance feature and drop-off canopy create a prominent focal point along the roadway. The Sherman Avenue elevation utilizes similar materials and includes both the primary patient drop-off canopy and a secondary canopy serving patient transport vehicles. The north elevation primarily reflects the location of the radiation treatment vaults and includes screened service areas housing the emergency generator, mechanical equipment, and trash enclosure. The rear elevation consists largely of service and utility areas associated with the operation of the facility. Finally, Mr. Trexler presented architectural renderings depicting the proposed development from various vantage points around the site. The renderings depicted views from South Orchard Road, the primary parking area, and the intersection of South Orchard Road and West Sherman Avenue, as well as views of the service and support areas located behind the building. The renderings were offered to provide the Board with an overall impression of the building's appearance, scale, and relationship to the surrounding site improvements.

Mr. Jason Cooper, Vice President of Operations for Support Services at Inspira Health, testified on behalf of the applicant. He explained that the proposed facility is intended to expand and enhance cancer care services currently provided at Inspira's hospital campus. He testified that patient volumes have increased significantly over time and that expanding cancer treatment services within the existing hospital building would be cost-prohibitive. As a result, Inspira determined that a standalone outpatient cancer center would provide the most effective solution for both patients and staff. He stated that the proposed facility would centralize oncology services and provide dedicated clinicians, support staff, and specialized treatment areas focused exclusively on cancer care. Mr. Cooper further testified that the facility will house advanced medical equipment in appropriately sized treatment spaces designed to improve workflow and patient experience. He emphasized that the outpatient setting will provide a quieter and more controlled environment than a hospital campus, reducing patient exposure to emergency department activity and other hospital-related traffic. He noted that cancer patients are often immunocompromised and that a dedicated outpatient facility will better support infection prevention and patient safety. Mr. Cooper also stated that the facility will strengthen Inspira's presence within the community, attract additional specialists and staff, and expand access to oncology services for area residents. Addressing the proposed parking variance, Mr. Cooper testified that Inspira carefully evaluated parking demand during the planning process. The applicant analyzed existing patient volumes and projected future growth, including an anticipated increase of approximately thirty percent over current utilization levels. Based upon those projections, the applicant determined that the proposed parking supply would adequately serve the facility's needs for the foreseeable future, including the next five to ten years. Mr. Cooper stated that the facility is expected to operate primarily between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., with the flexibility to expand hours into the evening or weekends if necessary. Mr. Cooper further explained that the facility will operate on a scheduled appointment basis rather than as a walk-in facility. Appointments for treatments, imaging services, and specialty consultations will be coordinated and managed by staff, allowing the facility to regulate patient volumes throughout the day. Should parking demand ever approach capacity, Inspira would have the ability to adjust scheduling practices and operating hours to distribute patient visits more effectively and ensure adequate parking remains available.

Mr. Sean Oransky, Professional Planner, testified on behalf of the applicant. He first addressed the requested bulk variances. He testified that the applicant seeks a height variance where 35 feet is permitted and a maximum height of 38 feet 5 inches is proposed. He explained that the excess height is primarily attributable to the stair tower, rooftop equipment, and architectural features associated with the building's atrium rather than the overall building mass. He opined that the limited height increase represents only a small portion of the structure and can be justified under the purposes of zoning and the benefits outweighing any detriments.

Mr. Oransky next discussed the setback variance along West Sherman Avenue. While a 100-foot setback from the roadway centerline is required, the proposed building will be located approximately 73 feet from the centerline. He noted that the building nevertheless exceeds the required side-yard setback and that the area between the building and roadway will contain substantial landscaping. He further testified that the proposed location allows the facility to remain in close proximity to the existing medical campus and function as an integrated component of Inspira's healthcare services.

With respect to impervious coverage, Mr. Oransky explained that the ordinance permits a maximum of 50 percent coverage, while the existing site contains approximately 66 percent impervious coverage. The proposed development will reduce impervious coverage to approximately 64 percent, resulting in a net reduction of roughly 4,300 square feet. He stated that the reduction provides opportunities for improved landscaping, circulation, and stormwater management and represents an improvement over existing conditions.

Mr. Oransky then addressed the parking variance. The ordinance requires 335 parking spaces, while the applicant proposes 239 spaces. He testified that cancer treatment facilities differ significantly from typical medical office uses because patient appointments are scheduled and controlled throughout the day, resulting in predictable parking demand. He referenced a study of more than fifty similar cancer treatment facilities and noted that the proposed parking ratio of approximately 4.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet exceeds the average demand identified in the study. Based on projected patient, staff, and visitor volumes, he estimated peak parking demand would range from approximately 175 to 195 occupied spaces and stated that the proposed 239-space parking supply would adequately accommodate demand.

The requested variances advance several purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law, including promoting the public health, safety, and welfare through the development of a modern cancer treatment facility; providing sufficient space for a specialized healthcare use; encouraging desirable visual environments through improved architecture, landscaping, and site design; and promoting the efficient use of land and public infrastructure. He further stated that the proposed development would provide substantial public benefits by expanding access to healthcare services and enhancing the community's medical facilities.

Addressing the negative criteria, Mr. Oransky stated that the requested variances could be granted without substantial detriment to the public good or impairment of the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance and Master Plan. He cited the upgraded stormwater management system, enhanced landscaping, improved site circulation, modern building design, and coordinated access improvements required by Cumberland County. He further noted that parking demand can be effectively managed through appointment scheduling and operational controls.

Mr. Oransky also testified in support of several requested design waivers. These included a waiver to permit parking stall widths slightly below the ordinance requirement, with proposed spaces measuring 9 feet 9 inches compared to the required 9 feet 6 inches minimum standard. He stated that the proposed dimensions are consistent with modern parking design and allow the site to accommodate necessary parking while maintaining adequate circulation. Additional waivers were requested for parking island widths, driveway separation distances, landscape buffer dimensions, and the continued use of the existing stormwater basin within existing setback areas. He testified that the proposed design provides substantial landscaping throughout the site and represents a significant improvement over existing conditions while satisfying the intent of the ordinance. The requested variances and design waivers satisfy the applicable statutory criteria and can be granted without adverse impacts.

Mr. Roche confirmed that the previously requested waiver regarding fencing within the stormwater management basin would be withdrawn. The applicant agreed to install a fence and provide access into the basin for maintenance purposes. It was further clarified that the applicant would comply with the requirement to provide a fence around the basin area.

Mr. Headley explained the board's preference for a four-foot-high post-and-rail-style fence, constructed of wood or vinyl, with wire mesh backing for safety and security. The applicant confirmed waivers related to the provision of divider strips and/or fully compliant landscaped parking islands, citing the need to preserve parking capacity within the site design. The applicant also confirmed a request for waiver 15C, relating to sidewalk or pedestrian access directly from individual parking spaces to the building entrance. It was confirmed that landscaped islands would still be provided throughout the parking areas and would include trees and planting materials, although some dimensional modifications were necessary to accommodate parking circulation and supply. The applicant confirmed that all engineering comments had been accepted with the exception of certain stormwater-related comments, which were addressed through the revised design. It was also noted that Cumberland County's

conditional approval included requirements related to roadway dedication, water infrastructure, and landscaping enhancements within the right-of-way, which the applicant acknowledged and agreed to comply with, including additional landscaping within the County frontage areas where feasible.

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

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: 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
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

David Development Group– located on the southeasterly corner of Lincoln Avenue and Magnolia Road, Block 5219, Lot 3.01, Tax Map Sheet #52, Project No. PBA-25-00044. Preliminary major subdivision approval to configure one (1) existing lot into thirty-three (33) lots over two phases. Phase 1 will consist of eleven (11) single-family home lots and three (3) stormwater management lots. Phase 2 will consist of nineteen (19) single-family home lots.

The applicant was represented by Matthew Robinson, Esq. The applicant is seeking approval to develop, over the course of two phases, 30 stick-built single-family homes within the City of Vineland, along with three additional lots designed to comply with the more stringent stormwater management requirements. There are two fact witnesses along with Rami Nassar who testified as both the project engineer and planner.

David DeLeonardo, Sr., Partner for David Development Group, testified on his own behalf. He stated that he has been involved in land development and homebuilding projects throughout southern New Jersey for approximately 27 years and has extensive experience developing residential communities, including stick-built single-family homes. He confirmed that the proposed development at 1427 South Lincoln Avenue would be constructed in two phases. He explained that all infrastructure improvements, including the stormwater management facilities, would be installed at the outset to ensure proper functionality of the development. The first phase would consist of approximately 11 homes, with construction and sales anticipated to take approximately 16 months before proceeding to the second phase. He further testified that all homes would be owner-occupied single-family residences.

Mr. DeLeonardo explained that the project will have multiple access points created through the City's updated street network plan. In addition to access from South Lincoln Avenue and Magnolia Road, the development would connect to alternative routes for residents and dispersing traffic throughout the area rather than concentrating it on a single roadway. He stated that these additional connections would improve accessibility and circulation within the neighborhood. Regarding the stormwater management facilities, Mr. DeLeonardo testified that he worked closely with the project engineer to develop an attractive and functional design for the bioretention basins. He explained that he elected to install four-foot-high split-rail fencing around the basins to provide a clear delineation between the residential lots and the stormwater facilities while maintaining an attractive appearance. He noted that the fencing was a design choice rather than a regulatory requirement. He further testified that the basins would be landscaped with a naturalized wildflower and native vegetation mix consistent with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection recommendations. This approach would create an attractive appearance, improve stormwater filtration, and significantly reduce maintenance requirements by limiting mowing to approximately once per year, thereby helping to minimize future homeowners' association expenses.

He also testified that he intends to install irrigation systems for all residential front yards. The irrigation design would also assist in maintaining the portions of the stormwater basin areas adjacent to the residential lots. Addressing other site improvements, Mr. DeLeonardo testified that he is requesting a waiver from curb and sidewalk requirements only along Magnolia Road, which is an existing roadway without such improvements. He confirmed that curb and sidewalk improvements would be installed throughout the interior streets of the

development, including along Lincoln Avenue and Junior Drive, representing a significant investment in the project's infrastructure. He discussed the landscaping plan and testified that the development would incorporate Leyland Cypress trees along South Lincoln Avenue, particularly behind residential lots fronting the roadway. The purpose of the plantings is to provide privacy screening for residents, create a visual buffer between the homes and the roadway, and enhance the overall appearance of the development from both the street and adjoining properties.

Mr. David DeLeonardo, Jr., testified on behalf of the applicant. He testified regarding the proposed residential units fronting South Lincoln Avenue, specifically Lots 3.01 through 3.03B, which are designed as zero side-yard setback homes. Mr. DeLeonardo explained that the homes are intended to address a growing need for attainable housing opportunities for younger families and first-time homebuyers, particularly individuals in their late twenties and early thirties who are increasingly challenged by rising housing costs. He stated that the design provides a more affordable housing option while maintaining the quality and character of traditional stick-built single-family residences. He clarified that the zero side-yard setback homes are not attached dwellings with shared ownership arrangements. Each unit will be separately deeded and will contain its own driveway, garage, utilities, and access, with no common ownership or cooperative housing component. He explained that the lot configuration and building design were selected to provide greater affordability while still offering private ownership opportunities. He further testified that the proposed driveways along South Lincoln Avenue would be approximately 40 feet in length and designed to safely accommodate vehicle maneuvering on-site. Mr. DeLeonardo also noted that the applicant has received approval from the County for improvements along South Lincoln Avenue. An architectural rendering of the proposed residential buildings was displayed and marked as Exhibit H-2. Mr. DeLeonardo testified that the rendering accurately depicts the style and appearance of the proposed homes. He described the project as a residential infill development situated along a high-traffic corridor already influenced by surrounding commercial and institutional uses. He noted that nearby uses include medical, dental, rehabilitation, urgent care, and mental health facilities, making the site appropriate for the proposed housing type. The project consists of six residential units designed with quality architectural features, landscaping, and an attractive streetscape intended to enhance the appearance of the corridor. He stated that the buildings are designed to appear cohesive and proportionate and will improve the visual character of the area. He further testified that all parking will be provided on-site through garages and driveways, ensuring that the development will not create parking impacts on surrounding streets. Mr. DeLeonardo explained that the homes are anticipated to contain three bedrooms, full basements, garages, and individual driveways with driveway bump-outs to facilitate vehicle maneuvering. He estimated that the homes would be marketed in the upper \$200,000 to low \$300,000 price range, providing attainable homeownership opportunities for working individuals and young families.

Mr. Rami Nasser, Professional Engineer, testified on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Nasser reviewed the overall subdivision layout and explained that the plan reflects modifications previously approved by the Board as part of the Master Plan street network revisions. He testified that the revised street network is beneficial to both the proposed development and the surrounding neighborhood because it provides additional access points and allows existing residents to access Lincoln Avenue without traveling through internal neighborhood streets.

He described the proposed stormwater management system, which consists primarily of interconnected bioretention swales and basins that ultimately discharge into a larger stormwater basin. He testified that the bioretention areas are relatively shallow, generally containing less than two feet of water depth, with maximum water elevations ranging from approximately 1.8 to 1.99 feet. While these facilities are technically classified as basins under the ordinance, he explained that they function more like landscaped bioretention swales than traditional detention basins. Because the ordinance treats them as basins, setback variances are required. Mr. Nasser stated that the applicant proposes to install split-rail fencing with wire mesh behind the fence to clearly define the limits of the stormwater facilities and separate them from residential lots. He further testified that the proposed native landscaping will eventually create a naturalized appearance consistent with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection stormwater management practices while reducing long-term maintenance requirements.

Mr. Nasser testified that the subdivision will generate minimal traffic due to the limited number of homes served by each street segment. Approximately ten homes will access one internal street and eleven homes will access another, resulting in relatively low traffic volumes. He noted that the applicant has received County approval and that the County required roadway widening along South Lincoln Avenue. As part of those improvements, the applicant will construct additional pavement width and shoulder area, improving ingress and egress and enhancing traffic safety along the roadway.

Addressing the requested variances, the property is located in the R-4 Zone, where a minimum lot area of 16,500 square feet and minimum lot width of 110 feet are required. He explained that many of the requested lot area variances result from the City's requirement to deduct utility easement areas from the developable lot area calculation. While the easement areas remain part of the lots and may contain driveways and other improvements, they cannot be counted toward developable lot area under the ordinance. Consequently, numerous lot area variances are required even though the lots are otherwise adequately sized and functional. He characterized these as technical variances resulting from ordinance calculations rather than practical deficiencies in the lots themselves. He further testified that several frontage and lot width variances are required for the stormwater basin

lots. Because those lots are dedicated solely to stormwater management purposes and are not intended for residential development, he stated that strict compliance with residential lot standards serves little practical purpose. He also identified the lot area, lot width, and lot frontage variances associated with the proposed zero lot line residential units along South Lincoln Avenue. Additionally, he noted that two previously identified rear-yard setback variances for Lots 3.03 and 3.03A and B were determined to be unnecessary and could be removed from the application. With respect to waiver requests, he explained that several design waivers relate to the bioretention swales and basin configuration. He testified that strict compliance with basin setback and fencing requirements would necessitate deeper and larger detention facilities, whereas the proposed shallow bioretention design better serves the site and creates a more attractive development. He reiterated that the applicant would install fencing around the stormwater facilities, despite requesting relief from the ordinance's six-foot fence requirement.

Mr. Nasser also addressed landscaping requirements. He testified that the applicant proposes to install approximately sixty Leyland Cypress trees along South Lincoln Avenue to provide privacy screening between the road and residential backyards. The trees would be planted approximately six feet on center and would eventually form a buffer. He stated that this landscaping approach would function more effectively than traditional shade trees and provide substantial visual screening. The applicant agreed to comply with additional shade tree requirements throughout the remainder of the development and to limit the requested landscaping waivers to the Lincoln Avenue frontage area. Regarding irrigation, Mr. Nasser testified that the applicant is proposing partial irrigation throughout the development, including irrigation of front yard areas and portions of the stormwater facilities adjacent to residential lots. He explained that a waiver is requested from the requirement that all landscaped areas be irrigated. He also testified that all homes will provide adequate off-street parking, including garages and driveways that satisfy Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) requirements. The zero lot line homes along Lincoln Avenue will include approximately 40-foot driveways capable of accommodating multiple vehicles in addition to garage parking. Mr. Nasser testified that the applicant will comply with all remaining engineering comments and recommendations contained in both the Planning Division review report dated January 30, 2026, and the City Engineer's review report, subject to final review and approval by the City's professional staff.

Mr. Nasser testified that, following discussion with Board professionals, the applicant agreed to limit its landscaping waiver requests to the areas along Magnolia Road and South Lincoln Avenue. He stated that while waivers would continue to be requested for certain shade tree requirements in those locations, the applicant would comply with the remaining shade tree requirements throughout the development by providing the additional trees identified during the review process.

Turning to the design waiver requests contained in Item 10 of the Planning Division report, Mr. Nasser explained that several waivers relate to the design standards applicable to stormwater management facilities. He testified that while the ordinance contains specific geometric and design standards for basin construction, the proposed bioretention facilities substantially satisfy the intent of those requirements. Although the basins contain some curvature and do not strictly conform to all dimensional standards, he stated that they function appropriately and are designed in accordance with modern stormwater management practices. He further testified that the applicant is requesting a partial waiver from the requirement that all landscaped areas be irrigated. He explained that irrigation will be provided in the front yard areas and other key portions of the development but not throughout every landscaped area. He also addressed the waiver related to fencing around stormwater management facilities, noting that the ordinance requires a six-foot fence while the applicant proposes a four-foot split-rail fence with wire mesh backing. He characterized this request as a technical waiver, emphasizing that the proposed fencing will still provide clear delineation of the stormwater facilities while remaining more compatible with the character of the development. With regard to the remaining comments in the Planning Division report, Mr. Nasser testified that the applicant would continue to work with the City's Engineering Division and comply with any revisions or recommendations. He confirmed that the applicant would address all outstanding engineering comments to the satisfaction of the City's professional staff.

Mr. Nasser also discussed parking accommodations within the subdivision. He testified that every residence will include at least one garage and sufficient driveway space to satisfy Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) and municipal parking requirements. The proposed zero lot line homes along South Lincoln Avenue will contain approximately 40-foot driveways capable of accommodating multiple vehicles in addition to garage parking. He explained that the larger single-family homes will similarly provide adequate on-site parking and that the design is intended to minimize any need for on-street parking. He further noted that the wide roadway design, together with curb and sidewalk improvements, will safely accommodate residents and visitors.

Mr. Nasser confirmed that the proposed homes comply with the applicable R-4 zoning district setback requirements, including approximately 40-foot front yard setbacks and 50-foot rear yard setbacks for the units located along South Lincoln Avenue. He further testified that the applicant would comply with the remaining conditions and requirements identified in Items 13 and 14 of the Planning Division review report.

Addressing the City Engineer's review report, Mr. Nasser testified that he had reviewed the report and agreed to cooperate fully with the Engineering Division to address any outstanding stormwater management or technical issues. He stated that any additional information requested by the City Engineer would be provided and that the applicant would ensure full compliance with applicable engineering standards and municipal requirements.

Finally, Mr. Nasser provided testimony in support of the requested C(2) bulk variances. He explained that the positive criteria are satisfied because the project advances the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law, particularly the goal of promoting appropriate population densities and residential development that contributes to the well-being of residents while preserving environmental resources. With respect to the negative criteria, Mr. Nasser testified that the project will not create substantial adverse impacts. He noted that traffic generation will be minimal due to the relatively small number of homes and the distribution of traffic among multiple access points. Approximately ten homes will utilize one access drive and eleven homes will utilize another, resulting in limited traffic volumes entering South Lincoln Avenue. He further testified that the County reviewed the proposal and expressed no concerns regarding traffic impacts because the anticipated traffic generation is insignificant compared to existing traffic volumes on Lincoln Avenue. Based on these factors, Mr. Nasser concluded that the requested variances can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of the City's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Nicole Gardner, 3038 Palermo Avenue, was sworn in and addressed the Board as a member of the public. Ms. Gardner stated that while she recognizes that new housing is an important component of a growing community, development should remain consistent with established zoning standards, neighborhood character, and public safety considerations. She expressed two primary concerns regarding the application.

First, Ms. Gardner raised concerns about traffic impacts and the absence of a traffic impact study. She noted that Lincoln Avenue has been the subject of multiple traffic studies dating back to 2009 and cited findings from those studies indicating traffic capacity issues at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Magnolia Road, recommendations for a traffic signal, a history of rear-end and turning movement accidents, and reports identifying Lincoln Avenue as having one of the highest accident rates in the area. Ms. Gardner stated that although the City Engineer may not believe the proposed development alone would create significant traffic impacts, the project is being proposed within an area already experiencing known traffic concerns.

Second, Ms. Gardner expressed concern regarding a significant number of variances requested. She stated that, although some variances had been withdrawn during the hearing, the application still contained a substantial number of variances and waiver requests. She argued that at some point the number of requested variances suggests that the proposal may be fundamentally inconsistent with the zoning ordinance rather than simply requiring reasonable relief to accommodate site constraints. The zoning standards are intended to regulate density, preserve neighborhood character, ensure adequate light, air, drainage, and safety, and protect the roads and infrastructure. There are too many lots being crammed in solely for the developer's gain. She expressed concern that reducing lot sizes and increasing density beyond ordinance standards could increase stormwater runoff, add traffic to already congested roadways, and place additional demands on local infrastructure, including drainage systems and emergency services. Ms. Gardner also commented on the applicant's request for C(2) variances. Based upon her understanding of the variance criteria, she stated that such relief should be granted only when the proposal provides benefits relating to site design, aesthetics, environmental protection, safety, or similar planning objectives that benefit the broader community and not solely the property owner. She expressed concern that the Board should carefully evaluate whether the benefits of the requested variances substantially outweigh any potential negative impacts associated with the development.

Ms. Gardner concluded by respectfully requesting that the Board require a conforming development design and a full traffic impact study before approving the application.

Andrea Land, 2412 South Main Road, was sworn in and addressed the Board as a member of the public. Ms. Land stated that many of her concerns were similar to those previously expressed by another member of the public. She initially requested that two questions be posed to the applicant's witnesses: whether they reside in Vineland and whether they had reviewed the prior traffic studies conducted for the Lincoln Avenue corridor. Ms. Land stated that, in her opinion, familiarity with those studies would be important when proposing development along Lincoln Avenue.

Ms. Land referenced the Planning Division review report prepared by Board Planner Ryan Hedley, dated January 30, 2026, concerning the proposed major subdivision at the southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Magnolia Road. She summarized the report's description of the project and noted that she understood some aspects of the application had been revised during the hearing. She stated that she independently reviewed the list of requested variances and waivers and expressed concern regarding the overall number of deviations from ordinance requirements.

Based upon her review of the report, several of the requested lot frontage, lot width, lot area, developable area, setback, and stormwater-related variances represented significant reductions from ordinance standards. She stated that many of the proposed lot dimensions appeared to be substantially less than those required by the R-4 Zone and expressed concern that the development was attempting to place more homes on the property than the zoning ordinance intended. She also expressed concern regarding the number of stormwater-related waivers and landscaping waivers identified in the review report, including waivers relating to stormwater basin setbacks, fencing, and shade tree requirements. Ms. Land stated that, in her view, the volume of requested relief raised questions regarding the overall conformity of the project.

Ms. Land further testified that she was concerned about traffic conditions along Lincoln Avenue. Referring to prior traffic studies of the Lincoln Avenue corridor, she stated that the roadway already experiences significant traffic volumes, congestion, and accident history. She expressed skepticism that residents of the proposed development would utilize internal circulation routes in the manner described by the applicant and suggested that most drivers would seek the most direct access to Lincoln Avenue. She also expressed concern regarding the potential addition of school bus traffic and children living within the proposed development.

Ms. Land stated that previous corridor studies identified high traffic volumes, intersection capacity concerns, crash history, and future traffic growth projections along Lincoln Avenue. Based upon those findings, she had concern that additional residential development could further burden an already heavily traveled road. She suggested that traffic control improvements, such as traffic signals in the area.

Mr. Headley acknowledged that prior traffic studies had identified issues at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Magnolia Road and explained that Lincoln Avenue is under the jurisdiction of Cumberland County. As a result, any decisions regarding traffic signals, intersection improvements, or roadway modifications would be made by the County rather than the City. He stated that he was not aware of any currently planned County improvements but agreed to communicate the concerns expressed by residents and the Board to the County Engineer for consideration as part of future planning efforts.

Mr. Headly further explained that traffic studies for residential subdivisions of this size are not typically required in the City because the traffic generated by approximately 27 to 30 homes is relatively minor when compared to the approximately 16,000 vehicles that travel Lincoln Avenue daily. He also stated that the Board would not have authority to require the applicant to install a traffic signal at a County-controlled intersection.

Mr. Robinson reminded the Board that significant consideration had already been given to traffic circulation when the Master Plan street revisions were approved.

Mr. Headley explained that the original street layout would have resulted in substantially more direct access points and residential driveways along Lincoln Avenue. Through the revised design, multiple access routes were created, allowing residents alternative means of entering and exiting the neighborhood. He stated that the revised street network was specifically intended to improve circulation and minimize potential traffic impacts.

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

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

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

Roll Call:
John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

Aldi, Inc– located on the south easterly corner of the intersection of Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive, Block 3601, Lot 1, Tax Map Sheet #36, Project No. PBA-26-00004. Preliminary/final major site plan approval, to convert an existing 18,716 square foot building (formerly Rite Aid) into a grocery store (Aldi), including a 2,705 square foot building expansion and associated site improvements.

The applicant was represented by Mr. Prime of the firm Prime, Tuvel & Miceli. Mr. Prime stated that the property is located at 7 West Landis Avenue, also known as Block 3601, Lot 1 on the City tax map, within the B-3 Business Zone. He noted that the site is more commonly recognized as the former Rite Aid pharmacy situated at the intersection of Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive. The property consists of approximately three acres and is currently developed with a one-story masonry commercial building that was formerly occupied by Rite Aid. He explained that the application before the Board seeks preliminary and final major site plan approval to renovate and convert the existing pharmacy building into an ALDI grocery store. As part of the project, the applicant proposes a building expansion of approximately 2,700 square feet, which will increase the total building area to approximately 21,421 square feet. In addition to the building conversion and expansion, the proposal includes associated site improvements consisting of parking lot reconfiguration, landscaping enhancements,

updated site lighting, and new signage. Mr. Prime noted that, as identified in the reports prepared by the Board's professionals, a grocery store is a permitted use within the B-3 Zone. Accordingly, no use variances or other "D" variances are required. He acknowledged that the application includes requests for certain bulk variances and design waivers, which would be addressed during the course of the testimony.

Mr. Josh Sewell of Dynamic Engineering Consultants was sworn in and accepted by the Board as an expert in professional engineering and professional planning. Mr. Sewell first reviewed the existing conditions of the property. Referring to an aerial exhibit contained within the application materials, he testified that the subject property consists of approximately 2.9 acres and is currently occupied by the former Rite Aid pharmacy located at 7 West Landis Avenue. He explained that the site has been developed for commercial purposes for many decades, dating back to the 1940s, and is located within the B-3 Business Zone. Surrounding land uses include additional commercial development along West Landis Avenue to the north, the recently developed ModWash facility to the south, Route 47 (Delsea Drive) to the west, and other commercial establishments including a hotel and restaurant uses in the vicinity. He noted that the property is uniquely configured, with frontage along West Landis Avenue, Delsea Drive, and Coney Avenue.

Mr. Sewell then reviewed a colored site plan rendering, which was marked into evidence as Exhibit A-1. He explained that the application is a redevelopment project involving the reuse of the existing Rite Aid building rather than new construction on an undeveloped site. The exhibit illustrated the existing building, proposed addition, parking areas, landscaping, and circulation improvements. He testified that the proposal consists of converting the existing building into an ALDI grocery store containing approximately 21,421 square feet, including a building expansion of approximately 2,705 square feet. He described ALDI as a neighborhood-oriented discount grocery store that differs from larger supermarket formats because it does not contain full-service deli, seafood, or prepared food departments. Approximately ninety percent of the merchandise consists of private-label products, allowing the company to control product distribution and inventory. He testified that store operations typically involve one to two tractor-trailer deliveries per day.

As part of the building expansion, Mr. Sewell explained that a new loading area would be constructed on the south side of the building. The loading dock will be recessed below grade and will contain a dumpster area. He testified that ALDI generates relatively little waste because products arrive prepackaged and most shipping materials, pallets, cardboard, and racks are returned to distribution facilities for recycling. He further noted that the site will not contain outdoor display areas, propane storage cages, vending areas, or other exterior merchandising commonly associated with some retail establishments. He testified that the project includes significant site improvements. The existing drive-through pharmacy canopy and associated pavement located on the eastern side of the property will be removed, resulting in the elimination of approximately 10,000 square feet of impervious coverage. That area will be converted to landscaped green space, which will improve stormwater management and reduce runoff from the site. He stated that this reduction in impervious coverage represents one of the major environmental benefits of the redevelopment project.

The parking lot will be reconfigured to accommodate the ALDI operation while maintaining efficient circulation for customers. The site will provide a total of 85 parking spaces. Mr. Sewell testified that the existing curb cuts along Delsea Drive, West Landis Avenue, and Coney Avenue will remain substantially unchanged, although one existing curb cut on Coney Avenue will be eliminated because it is unnecessary for circulation and presents operational challenges due to its grade. The remaining driveways will continue to provide access to the site.

Mr. Sewell testified that all existing Rite Aid signage will be removed and replaced with ALDI signage fully compliant with the City's ordinance requirements. Two existing freestanding signs located along West Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive will be replaced with conforming ALDI monument signs, and no signage variances are being requested.

With respect to engineering, Mr. Sewell explained that only minor grading modifications are required because the existing building and much of the site infrastructure will remain. The reduction in impervious coverage will improve stormwater management, water quality treatment, and groundwater recharge. Existing utility connections will largely remain in service, and no major off-site utility improvements are required. He also testified that existing site lighting poles will remain, but lighting fixtures will be upgraded to modern LED fixtures consistent with ALDI corporate standards, improving energy efficiency while maintaining adequate site illumination.

He then addressed the requested variance relief. He testified that the principal variance involves parking. Based upon the City's ordinance, a grocery store of this size would require approximately 104 parking spaces, whereas the applicant proposes 85 spaces. He stated that ALDI has extensive operational experience with more than 2,000 stores nationwide and has determined that 85 spaces are sufficient for the anticipated customer demand at this location. He further testified that industry parking generation standards published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) indicate that a discount grocery store of this size would require only approximately 63 parking spaces, meaning the proposed parking supply substantially exceeds industry demand estimates.

Mr. Sewell explained that the parking variance is requested pursuant to the C(2) variance criteria. He testified that the reduction in parking allows the applicant to eliminate significant amounts of unnecessary pavement, thereby

reducing impervious coverage, improving stormwater management, and enhancing site aesthetics. He noted that if additional parking were ever determined to be necessary, there is physical room available on the site to add spaces in the future, although the applicant does not believe such expansion will be required based on operational experience and parking demand analyses. Mr. Sewell explained that benefits of the reduced parking supply, including environmental and site design improvements, substantially outweigh any potential detriments. He explained that the proposed ALDI store contains approximately 21,421 square feet of gross floor area, which under the City's parking ordinance would require approximately 104 parking spaces. The applicant, however, proposes to provide 85 parking spaces and is therefore requesting a parking variance. Mr. Sewell testified that the request satisfies the criteria for a C(2) variance. He explained that ALDI operates more than 2,000 stores nationwide and has extensive experience analyzing parking demand at its facilities. Based upon the company's operational data and experience, the proposed 85 parking spaces are sufficient to accommodate anticipated customer demand at the site. He noted that he has worked on numerous ALDI projects, including the existing Vineland location, and that the proposed parking supply falls within the company's proven operational model. Additional parking could physically be accommodated on the site if necessary; however, doing so would eliminate one of the project's primary benefits, namely the reduction of approximately 10,000 square feet of impervious coverage. He stated that preserving landscaped areas rather than constructing unnecessary parking represents a significant environmental and site-planning benefit. Addressing the negative criteria, Mr. Sewell testified that the parking variance can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of the Zone Plan and Zoning Ordinance. He stated that the proposal remains consistent with the Master Plan and that the Board should evaluate the overall benefits of the redevelopment project rather than focusing solely on the parking variance in isolation. He emphasized that the project reuses an existing vacant commercial building, introduces a permitted retail use, and significantly increases landscaped areas while reducing impervious coverage.

Mr. Sewell then addressed the second variance request relating to maximum impervious coverage. He testified that the B-3 Zone permits a maximum impervious coverage of 50 percent, whereas the proposed development will contain approximately 58 percent impervious coverage. As a result, the project will reduce impervious coverage by roughly 10,000 square feet and move the site substantially closer to ordinance compliance. He characterized the impervious coverage variance as a clear example of a C(2) variance where the benefits substantially outweigh any potential detriments. He testified that the reduction in pavement area improves stormwater management, water quality treatment, groundwater recharge, and the overall appearance of the property. He further stated that the redevelopment will not alter the character of the surrounding commercial corridor and will have no adverse impact on nearby residential neighborhoods. In his opinion, the project represents a substantial improvement over existing conditions.

As part of his planning testimony, Mr. Sewell reviewed several purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law that he believes are advanced by the proposal. He highlighted the objective of promoting efficient land use and reducing the costs associated with development through the appropriate reuse of existing sites. He testified that the application exemplifies sound planning principles because it reuses a vacant commercial building within an established commercial corridor rather than requiring development of an undeveloped property elsewhere in the City. He stated that the proposal introduces a permitted grocery store use, revitalizes a vacant building, improves environmental conditions on the site, and provides an additional retail option for Vineland residents. The requested parking and impervious coverage variances satisfy both the positive and negative criteria for C(2) variance relief and can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good or impairment of the Zone Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Sewell testified that he had reviewed both the Planning Division and Engineering Division reports. He stated that the applicant does not object to the recommendations contained in those reports and is prepared to comply with the comments and conditions identified by the Board's professionals. Planning Division review letter, Items 7, 8, and 9, identified deficiencies represent existing nonconforming conditions that were established as part of the prior Rite Aid development and are not being worsened by the proposed ALDI conversion. He noted that several items involve existing landscape islands, parking space dimensions, and other site design features that predate the current application. While the applicant is improving the appearance and functionality of the property, those existing conditions remain largely unchanged. With respect to Item 9B, he indicated that the applicant would comply with the recommendation to provide bicycle racks.

Mr. Headley explained that while public sidewalks already exist around portions of the site, a direct pedestrian connection should be provided from the public sidewalk system to the store entrance. The applicant agreed that the final design and location could be reviewed and approved administratively by Planning staff.

Mr. Sewell acknowledged that while mature trees currently exist along portions of the frontage, the site may technically fall short of current ordinance requirements. He explained that ALDI intends to retain and improve the existing landscaping through professional maintenance, pruning, cleanup, seal coating of the parking lot, and other site improvements. Mr. Headley suggested that additional trees or equivalent landscaping enhancements should be incorporated into the plan to address any deficiencies.

Ms. Hicks expressed a preference for enhanced landscaping along the highly visible Landis Avenue and Delsea Drive frontages rather than simply adding a large number of trees in less visible portions of the site. The applicant

agreed to work with staff on a revised landscaping plan that could include a combination of ornamental trees, landscaped planting beds, shrubs, and decorative mulch areas. The applicant also agreed to install drip irrigation for the new landscaped areas to ensure long-term viability of the plantings while avoiding the need for a more extensive irrigation system.

Mr. Sewell addressed Item 15 of the Planning Division report regarding screening of the refuse area. He explained that the proposed dumpster would be located within the sunken loading area at the rear of the building rather than within a separate freestanding enclosure. Following discussion, staff determined that additional screening would be required to fully block views of the dumpster area from Delsea Drive. The applicant agreed to provide fencing and screening improvements. He confirmed that the applicant would comply with the remaining comments contained within both the Planning Division and Engineering Division review letters. He stated that the site contains an existing stormwater management system and that any necessary upgrades or modifications would be coordinated with the City's Engineering Division to ensure compliance.

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

John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: 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
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman entertained a motion to adjourn.

Roll call:
John Casadia: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobloski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

TIME: 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Perez
Planning Board Secretary