

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

June 10, 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
David Catalana
Jeffrey DiMatteo
Douglas Menz
Thomas Tobolski
Sandy Velez
Nilsa Rosario
Robert Odorizzi
Elizabeth Arthur
David Manders

Also present were:

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

PRE-MEETING

McDonalds USA, LLC – located on the northeasterly corner of Landis Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, Block 3303, Lot 19, Tax Map Sheet #33, Project No. PBA-26-00007. Preliminary/final major site plan approval to construct a 3,708 square foot (36-seat) fast food restaurant (McDonalds) along with associated site improvements.

Mr. Headley explained that this is for the development of the northeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Landis Avenue, the site of a former gas station. The applicant proposed demolishing the existing structure and constructing a new McDonald's restaurant utilizing one of the company's newer, smaller-format designs featuring dual drive-through lanes. The property is bordered by roadways and access easements serving the adjacent shopping center, creating site design constraints. Several variances were requested, including reductions to required buffer widths, parking spaces, lot coverage standards, and building setbacks from the centerlines of Lincoln and Landis Avenues. He also explained that the applicant had revised the site layout several times and moved the building farther from the roadways in response to staff comments.

He also reviewed proposed signage, including monument signs and wall signs on multiple building facades. Additional sign-related variances were requested for menu boards, curbside pickup signs, courier parking signs, and other incidental signage associated with the drive-through operation.

Mr. Headley explained the site's circulation pattern and requested design waivers. The drive-through configuration includes a bypass lane and multiple access points designed to accommodate customer vehicles and delivery trucks. The layout will function adequately given the site's constraints. Staff recommended the installation of sidewalks along both street frontages and connections to the building entrance. Establishing a pedestrian network in anticipation of future redevelopment on surrounding properties and to improve access for users of nearby public transit routes. Board members agreed that incorporating sidewalks would support long-term development goals for the area.

The Board also reviewed the landscaping plan and associated waivers. While the ordinance requires substantial landscaping and irrigation, the applicant proposed a landscape plan that provides a significant amount of vegetation compared to other developments in the city.

Cavsel Development, LLC- located on the northerly side of Magnolia Road between S Main Road and Iris Avenue, Block 5118, Lot 42, Tax Map Sheet #51, Project No. PBA-26-00010. Minor subdivision approval to create one (1) new lot with one remainder lot.

Mr. Headley explained that this was a minor subdivision application involving a property located along Hoffman Drive with a private roadway that has existed for many years but has never been formally dedicated as a public right-of-way. He explained that although Hoffman Drive remains privately owned, the City currently provides municipal services to the area, including roadway maintenance and trash collection. The applicant is subdividing an existing parcel to create a new residential building lot at the rear of the property while retaining the existing dwelling.

Due to the unusual configuration of the lot and the private status of Hoffman Drive, several bulk variances were required, including variances related to lot frontage and lot area. Mr. Headley recommended that the applicant dedicate a portion of the roadway to the City as a condition of approval, with the goal of eventually securing additional dedications from neighboring property owners and formally establishing the roadway as a public right-of-way. He explained that similar situations had occurred elsewhere in the City, where private streets were later dedicated to the municipality after development approvals were granted. Aside from the roadway issue and the associated frontage and area variances, Mr. Headley indicated that the subdivision was otherwise a straightforward residential application.

Redevelopment Amendment- Harkamal Singh, 225 W. Landis Avenue, Block 3802, Lot 7.

Ms. Hicks explained that the structure historically contained a commercial use on the first floor with a one-bedroom apartment located on the second floor. The applicant requested approval to convert the first floor into a three-bedroom apartment, resulting in a two-unit residential building. However, City staff, recommended that the property be converted into a single-family residence containing three bedrooms. The property includes a one-car garage and significant improvements have already been made to the exterior of the building, which has been rehabilitated and presents a well-maintained appearance. She explained that while the building resembles a single-family home in appearance, the property is located on a deficient lot with frontage and lot size conditions that do not conform to current zoning requirements. Due to these existing deficiencies, there are concerns regarding the intensity of a two-family residential use on the site.

Vineyards Redevelopment Plan- Block 4301, Lots 1.02, 1.03, 1.04, 1.05, 1.06.

Ms. Hicks explained that the proposed redevelopment plan is for an area previously designated as an Area in Need of Redevelopment. She reminded the Board that it had already completed the redevelopment area investigation and recommendation process, which was approved by City Council, establishing the redevelopment district. The current matter involved consideration of the redevelopment plan prepared by applicant's Planner. She explained that the draft plan had undergone multiple revisions, including comments from both planning and legal professionals, and that additional correspondence had been provided outlining proposed changes accepted by the applicant as well as issues that remained unresolved.

Ms. Hicks explained that the applicant would first present the redevelopment proposal, after which planning and engineering staff would provide comments and recommendations. The Planning Board's role was advisory in nature and that any action taken would constitute a recommendation to City Council regarding adoption of the redevelopment plan. The Board could recommend approval of the plan as presented, recommend approval to specific revisions or conditions, or recommend denial if unresolved issues prevented the plan from being consistent with the Master Plan. She noted that several substantive issues remained under review, including concerns related to building design standards, site layout, and other planning considerations.

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 May 13, 2026 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
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

RESOLUTIONS

Approval of resolutions from the May 13, 2026 board meeting.
The Chairman made a motion to approve the resolution.

Resolution #6659

John Casadia: Yes

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

Resolution #6660

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

PUBLIC HEARING

McDonalds USA, LLC – located on the northeasterly corner of Landis Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, Block 3303, Lot 19, Tax Map Sheet #33, Project No. PBA-26-00007. Preliminary/final major site plan approval to construct a 3,708 square foot (36-seat) fast food restaurant (McDonalds) along with associated site improvements.

The applicant was represented by Keith Davis, Esq. The proposal was for a new fast-food restaurant featuring a dual-lane drive-through and seating for 36 patrons within the building. In addition to preliminary and final major site plan approval, the applicant requested several variances, including relief for front and side buffer requirements, the minimum number of parking spaces, impervious lot coverage, and building line setbacks from both Lincoln and Landis Avenues. The application also included several design waiver requests, which were to be addressed during the presentation.

Jeffrey Beavan, Project Engineer, testified on behalf of the applicant. He testified that the subject property is currently occupied by a vacant former gas station. He explained that the underground storage tanks have been removed and that the site currently contains access points to Landis Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, and the adjacent shopping center. Mr. Beavan described the proposed development as a 3,708-square-foot McDonald's restaurant featuring a dual-lane drive-through and seating for 36 patrons. The site plan includes landscaping, buffering, and access improvements while maintaining access to Landis Avenue and providing ingress and egress connections to the adjacent shopping center. He explained that the dual-lane drive-through design reflects McDonald's current operating model, with approximately 70 to 80 percent of sales occurring through the drive-through. As a result, newer restaurant prototypes contain fewer indoor seats and a larger portion of the building devoted to kitchen and operational space. The proposed restaurant is expected to employ approximately 12 employees during peak hours and operate on a 24-hour basis.

He testified that 15 parking spaces are proposed, including accessible parking spaces required by code, whereas 24 spaces are required by ordinance. He stated that the reduced parking demand is consistent with the operational characteristics of modern McDonald's restaurants, which rely heavily on drive-through service. Mr. Beavan also described the truck circulation pattern for deliveries and refuse collection, noting that delivery trucks would access the site from Landis Avenue, utilize designated loading areas, and exit safely through the site. Deliveries are expected two to three times per week and would be scheduled to avoid peak hours. Regarding site design, Mr. Beavan explained the purpose of a striped pavement area intended to facilitate truck maneuvering while directing customer traffic through designated circulation routes. He further testified that the development would reduce the site's existing impervious coverage from nearly 70 percent to less than 65 percent, resulting in stormwater management improvements. The proposed drainage system includes a series of inlets and a swale designed to reduce runoff volumes and rates leaving the property. Based on the submitted stormwater analysis, the proposed development is not expected to create adverse drainage impacts on surrounding properties. Mr. Beavan also testified that the site lighting and landscaping plans were designed to comply with ordinance requirements.

He explained that the site includes numerous tree and shrub plantings, including street trees along both the Lincoln Avenue and Landis Avenue frontages as well as additional plantings adjacent to the shopping center. A landscaped buffer is proposed along Landis Avenue, with additional landscaping distributed throughout the site. The proposal does not fully satisfy the ordinance requirements for the minimum number of plantings; however, he testified that the size and configuration of the property, existing utility constraints, sight triangles, access points, and other site limitations restrict the ability to provide additional landscaping. He also testified that a waiver was requested for tree caliper measurement requirements, explaining that the proposed trees meet the standards, but are measured using a different method.

Architectural renderings were displayed depicting the proposed restaurant and associated signage. Mr. Beavan testified that the building would include wall-mounted McDonald's signage as well as freestanding monument signs along both Lincoln Avenue and Landis Avenue. There will be additional signage associated with the drive-through including pre-browse menu boards, digital menu displays, directional signs, curbside pickup signs, and designated courier parking signs. Mr. Beavan went over the requested variances. These included a front buffer variance along Lincoln Avenue, 21.8 feet is proposed whereas 25 feet required, and a side/rear buffer variance of 1.87 feet whereas 5 feet required. Building setback variances were also requested from both Lincoln Avenue and Landis Avenue, measured from the roadway centerlines and rights-of-way. He testified that the proposed setbacks were an improvement compared to the existing conditions. The proposed design balances operational needs, traffic circulation, landscaping, and site constraints while improving the overall appearance and functionality of the property. Mr. Beavan testified regarding the requested parking variance, noting that 15 parking spaces are proposed where 24 spaces are required by ordinance based on the number of employees and seats within the restaurant. He reiterated that the reduced parking supply is appropriate because the majority of the restaurant's business is generated through the drive-through operation rather than indoor dining. The site includes parking spaces designated for curbside pickup and delivery services, which are intended to support modern restaurant operations and customer convenience. Impervious coverage, 64.9 percent impervious coverage, whereas 60 percent is required. Mr. Beavan explained that the existing site contains approximately 69.7 percent impervious coverage and that the redevelopment would reduce the amount of impervious surface while adding landscaped areas, particularly along the Lincoln Avenue frontage. He testified that the proposal represents an overall improvement to existing site conditions and results in additional green space and stormwater benefits. Mr. Beavan addressed proposed signage, applicant proposed incidental signs associated with drive-through and curbside operations, digital menu boards, pre-browse menu boards, reserved drive-through signs, curbside pickup signs, and delivery service signage. He explained that the signage package is necessary to facilitate efficient traffic flow and customer service operations and is consistent with the operational requirements of a modern McDonald's restaurant.

Mr. Beavan addressed several design waiver requests. He testified that waivers were requested for driveway separation distances and driveway widths due to the need to accommodate delivery trucks and trash collection vehicles while maintaining safe circulation patterns on the constrained site. Additional waivers were requested for internal drive-through lane widths and landscaping requirements. Regarding sidewalks, Mr. Beavan explained that the application was originally designed without sidewalks along the road frontages based on discussions with staff and the absence of existing sidewalks in the immediate area. He noted that neither the County approval nor surrounding development patterns required sidewalk installation. Mr. Beavan further testified that the addition of sidewalks would increase impervious coverage and could affect the site's stormwater management calculations. Ms. Hicks noted that municipal ordinances permit the Board to require sidewalks even where they are not required by County agencies and reiterated concerns regarding future pedestrian connectivity in the area.

Mr. Beavan explained that while several spaces are designated for drive-through pickup and delivery-related uses, those spaces are not exclusively reserved and may be utilized by customers as needed. The applicant testified that McDonald's operational experience at similar locations indicates that parking demand is significantly lower than ordinance requirements due to the predominance of drive-through service. The applicant also stated that customers unable to find parking would likely choose to use the drive-through rather than dine inside the restaurant. In response to concerns raised by Board members, the applicant agreed to reduce the maximum number of indoor seats from 36 to 32 in an effort to partially address the parking variance.

Mr. Headley reiterated concerns regarding the requested waiver from the City's tree caliper standards, noting that the ordinance's measurement requirements are intended to ensure adequate tree size at the time of planting. He also addressed the issue of sidewalks, explaining that although the County did not require sidewalks as part of its review, municipalities retain the authority to require sidewalks along County roadways. He noted that discussions with County representatives indicated that the County generally defers such requirements to local municipalities. He explained that sidewalks would improve pedestrian accessibility, support future redevelopment opportunities in the area, and contribute to the City's long-term goal of creating a more connected transportation network. While acknowledging that sidewalk installation could result in additional impervious coverage and require modifications to stormwater management calculations, he maintained that the public benefits associated with pedestrian access outweighed those impacts.

Mr. Beavan explained that the site plan had been designed based on comments received during the initial staff meeting, at which time a sidewalk requirement had not been imposed. He stated that adding sidewalks at this stage could potentially classify the project as a major development under stormwater regulations, requiring additional permitting and increasing impervious coverage, which the design had sought to minimize. As an alternative, he requested that the Board consider allowing the applicant to make a contribution in lieu of constructing the sidewalks, suggesting that the City could use such funds in the future to install an integrated sidewalk network at the intersection of Landis Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. If the

Board was unwilling to consider that option, he requested a partial waiver limiting the sidewalk requirement to the Landis Avenue frontage only, noting that the nearby bus stop was located along Landis Avenue and that there was limited redevelopment potential along Lincoln Avenue.

Mr. Headley responded that adding the sidewalk would not delay the project through additional permitting as suggested. He explained that the Planning Board had jurisdiction over the major site plan, and that sidewalk improvements along the County roadway would simply be reviewed as part of the application. He further clarified that Department of Environmental Protection permits would only be necessary if wetlands or floodplains were affected. While acknowledging that sidewalks had not been emphasized during the initial staff meeting, he noted that the requirement had been discussed several months earlier during a subsequent meeting following conversations with the County. He also expressed opposition to accepting a contribution in lieu of constructing the sidewalks, stating that such an approach would shift the responsibility for design, construction, inspection, and long-term costs to the City. He also commented on the applicant's request to limit sidewalks to the Landis Avenue frontage. While acknowledging the applicant's reasoning, he stated that he believed Landis Avenue actually had greater long-term redevelopment potential than Lincoln Avenue, citing the possibility that nearby commercial properties, including Landis Plaza, could eventually redevelop and benefit from a continuous sidewalk network. He therefore indicated that he did not support limiting the sidewalk improvements solely to Landis Avenue.

Victor Anosike, Traffic Engineer, testified on behalf of the applicant. He explained that the study evaluated projected traffic generated by the proposed restaurant during weekday morning and evening peak hours, as well as the Saturday peak period. Those projected trips were added to existing and future background traffic volumes to analyze impacts at the surrounding intersections and proposed driveways. Based on the analysis, he concluded that the development would result in only minimal increases in vehicle delays at the intersections of Landis Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, as well as at the nearby Lincoln Plaza and ShopRite access drives. He testified that all intersections would continue to operate at acceptable levels of service. He testified that the proposal would retain the existing driveway on Landis Avenue while eliminating the two existing driveways on Lincoln Avenue. He stated that directing traffic through the existing Lincoln Plaza access drive would improve safety and traffic operations. He further testified that the proposed one-way internal circulation pattern represented the safest and most efficient design for the constrained site, minimizing vehicle conflicts and improving traffic flow. He also stated that the requested design waivers for driveway width, driveway separation, and drive aisle width would not adversely affect safety or circulation. He explained that the narrower exit driveway would discourage motorists from entering through the exit, while the hashed pavement area was intended solely for truck turning movements. He further noted that 10-foot-wide drive aisles are commonly accepted transportation design standards intended to reduce vehicle speeds in areas with pedestrian activity. He also addressed the requested parking variance. Although the ordinance requires 24 parking spaces, he testified that the proposed 15-space parking lot would adequately serve the restaurant. Based on studies conducted by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and McDonald's operational data, he explained that approximately 60 to 70 percent of customers typically use the drive-through rather than parking. He further stated that ITE parking demand data indicated that a restaurant of the proposed size would require only 12 parking spaces. He also clarified that his comments related to the practical reality that some patrons already visiting businesses within Lincoln Plaza could choose to visit the McDonald's as part of the same trip, either by walking through the shopping center or by driving between businesses.

Tiffany Morrissey, Professional Planner, testified on behalf of the applicant. She explained that the requested variances were primarily "C(2)" or flexible bulk variances, which require demonstrating that the benefits of granting the variances substantially outweigh any detriments and that the purposes of zoning are advanced through the overall development proposal. She testified that the property is unique because it is a former gas station located on an undersized pad site within an existing shopping center. The site currently contains three curb cuts, including two along Lincoln Avenue and one along Landis Avenue. The proposed redevelopment would eliminate the two curb cuts along Lincoln Avenue, retain the existing Landis Avenue access, and direct traffic through the existing shopping center circulation system, resulting in safer and more efficient site access. She further explained that the property's existing lot size and frontage are already nonconforming, creating design constraints that contributed to the need for the requested variances. The reduced buffer along Lincoln Avenue resulted from the location of the property line, although additional landscaped area would remain beyond the measured setback, effectively providing a buffer comparable to the ordinance requirement. She testified that the building location was necessary to accommodate safe vehicle circulation, drive-through operations, and truck movements while providing an overall improved site layout. Addressing the parking variance, she reiterated the testimony of the engineer and traffic engineer that the proposed 15 parking spaces would adequately serve the restaurant based on national parking demand studies and McDonald's operational characteristics. She also noted that bicycle parking would be provided and that some employees would arrive by bicycle or be dropped off, further reducing parking demand.

Ms. Morrissey also discussed the requested sign variances, explaining that although several signs required variances because they faced internal drive aisles rather than public streets, the overall amount of wall signage remained significantly below what the ordinance would otherwise permit. She testified that the individual McDonald's logos were relatively small and that the proposed signage was appropriately scaled to

the building while providing visibility for motorists within the shopping center and along Landis Avenue. She further explained that variances for the menu boards and reserved parking signs were necessary because the ordinance's maximum sign area was not practical for modern drive-through restaurant operations and that these signs served operational rather than advertising purposes. The development would provide numerous public benefits, including removal of a vacant gas station, reduction of curb cuts along Lincoln Avenue, improved landscaping, decreased impervious coverage, enhanced site circulation, and new private investment at a prominent gateway intersection within the City. She noted that impervious coverage would be reduced from approximately 70 percent to 64.9 percent and that additional landscaping would be installed throughout the site. In her opinion, the proposal advanced several purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law by encouraging appropriate commercial redevelopment, promoting the efficient flow of traffic, improving the visual environment through quality site design, and encouraging efficient land use. She further testified that the requested variances were specific to the unique characteristics of the site, would not substantially impair the City's zoning ordinance or Master Plan, and would not create a substantial detriment to the public good. The overall benefits of the redevelopment substantially outweighed any detriments and recommended approval of the requested variances and design waivers.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
 David Catalana: Yes
 Douglas Menz: Yes
 Thomas Tobolski: Yes
 Sandy Velez: Yes
 Nilsa Rosario: Yes
 Robert Odorizzi: Yes
 Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
 David Manders: Yes

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
 David Catalana: Yes
 Douglas Menz: Yes
 Thomas Tobolski: Yes
 Sandy Velez: Yes
 Nilsa Rosario: Yes
 Robert Odorizzi: Yes
 Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
 David Manders: Yes

Cavsel Development, LLC- located on the northerly side of Magnolia Road between S Main Road and Iris Avenue, Block 5118, Lot 42, Tax Map Sheet #51, Project No. PBA-26-00010. Minor subdivision approval to create one (1) new lot with one remainder lot.

The applicant was represented by Matthew Robinson, Esq. He testified that the applicant owns the existing L-shaped parcel, including a 20-foot-wide strip extending along Hoffman Drive. Through deed research, it was confirmed that the strip is legally connected to the parent tract. He explained that the purpose of the subdivision was to create a more practical lot configuration by dividing off the rear portion of the property into a buildable lot similar in size and shape to the adjacent lot immediately to the north, which had recently received approval from the Zoning Board. The remaining parcel would retain frontage along Magnolia Road. He explained that the proposed subdivision would require significant improvements by the applicant. Because no public water or sewer infrastructure currently exists along Hoffman Drive, the applicant proposed extending water and sewer service from Magnolia Road to serve both the newly created rear lot and the remaining parcel. The applicant also intended to extend natural gas service to the properties as part of the project. In addition, Mr. Robinson stated that the applicant was willing to coordinate with the City to dedicate the 20-foot strip comprising Hoffman Drive, together with any ownership rights the applicant possessed, in order to facilitate future public improvements.

David Cavagnaro was sworn in and testified on behalf of Cancell Development, LLC. He confirmed that he was a member of the company and was familiar with the proposed subdivision application. He also noted that he had personal knowledge of the property and surrounding area, having lived adjacent to the site for many years while growing up. He described Hoffman Drive as an existing fully paved roadway that has long been maintained by the City. The applicant is willing to cooperate with the City in resolving the ownership

and dedication of the roadway while recognizing that municipal services have historically been provided to the properties along Hoffman Drive. The existing one-story dwelling fronting on Magnolia Road would remain on the remainder parcel and would not be affected by the subdivision itself. He acknowledged that the dwelling contains an existing nonconforming side yard setback but noted that the condition is pre-existing. He further testified that the subdivision would create a rear lot generally comparable in size and configuration to the neighboring lot to the north, which had previously received approval from the Zoning Board. He explained that the existing frame shed located near Hoffman Drive had already been removed. The applicant's long-term intention is to demolish the existing one-story dwelling on the remainder parcel and construct a new single-family residence. As a result, the setback variance identified in the staff report for the existing dwelling would no longer be necessary once the structure is removed. He explained that the proposed replacement home would be a stick-built single-family residence intended for sale to an owner-occupant rather than for rental purposes. While acknowledging that the surrounding neighborhood contains relatively tight setbacks, the applicant stated that it is his intention to design the future home in compliance with applicable setback requirements and, if additional zoning relief were ultimately needed, a separate application would be submitted at that time.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the Planning Division's report with the applicant. Items 1 through 4 were acknowledged as informational. The applicant agreed to utilize the existing utility easement on the remaining Magnolia Road parcel to extend public water, sanitary sewer, and natural gas service to the proposed new lot and the adjacent property, eliminating the need for individual septic systems. Regarding Item 5, the applicant agreed with the report's description of the proposed lot configuration and acknowledged that the variance calculations would be based on the availability of public water and sewer. For Item 6, the applicant accepted the listed bulk variances but clarified that the requested 13.2-foot side yard setback variance would no longer be required because the existing dwelling on the Magnolia Road parcel would be demolished. Mr. Headley also noted that several required zoning standards, including minimum lot area, frontage, and related bulk requirements, would change due to the availability of public sewer and water, although variances would still be necessary. For Item 7, the applicant acknowledged the existing nonconforming conditions, including the pre-existing 3.4-foot side yard setback on the existing dwelling. Under Item 8, the applicant confirmed that a title review determined ownership rights within the Hoffman Drive right-of-way and agreed, as a condition of approval, to cooperate with the City in dedicating the right-of-way as a public street and coordinating with the neighboring property owner regarding utility extensions and any necessary easements. With respect to Item 9, the applicant agreed that Item 9A was no longer applicable because public sewer service would replace septic systems. The applicant also agreed that the project engineer would address Items 9B through 9D on the revised plans. Mr. Headley added Item 9E, requiring the revised plans to note the demolition of the existing dwelling and confirming that the previously removed shed would also be reflected. For Item 10, the applicant agreed that the project engineer would revise the plans to include all additional information requested in Items 10A through 10E. The applicant further agreed to comply with all remaining comments and conditions contained in the Planning Division review report as part of the final plan submission.

Mr. Robinson stated that the benefits that outweighed any detriments associated with the requested bulk variances. He characterized the application as satisfying the criteria for a flexible C(2) variance because the overall public benefits substantially outweighed any negative impacts.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Nilsa Rosario: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Nilsa Rosario: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes

Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

Redevelopment Amendment- Harkamal Singh, 225 W. Landis Avenue, Block 3802, Lot 7.

Ms. Hicks presented a proposed redevelopment amendment concerning a property that had historically contained a commercial space on the first floor with a one-bedroom apartment above. She explained that the current owners had been unable to lease the commercial portion of the building during the approximately seven to eight years they had owned the property. The owners initially requested permission to convert the vacant commercial space into a three-bedroom apartment, resulting in a two-family dwelling with a three-bedroom unit on the first floor and a one-bedroom unit on the second floor.

After reviewing the proposal, the professional staff determined that, based on the building's appearance, the deficient lot size and frontage, and the overall character of the property, conversion to a single-family residence would be more appropriate than a two-family dwelling. Staff therefore recommended amending the redevelopment plan to permit the building to be converted into a single-family, three-bedroom residence. Ms. Hicks noted that the exterior renovations had already been completed and that only interior renovations would be necessary to accomplish the conversion.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffery DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Nilsa Rosario: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

The Chairman entertained a motion to approve Resolution #6662. Ms. Velez so moved, Mr. Odorizzi seconded.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffery DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Nilsa Rosario: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

Vineyards Redevelopment Plan- Block 4301, Lots 1.02, 1.03, 1.04, 1.05, 1.06.

Ms. Hicks provided an overview of the proposed redevelopment plan, explaining that City staff had been working with property owner Michael O'Neill, his son, and the development team for several years to facilitate the property's redevelopment. She noted that the owner had retained numerous professionals throughout the planning process, including engineers, planners, attorneys, and other consultants, and had completed substantial demolition work on the site. She reminded the Board that it had previously approved a subdivision involving the school property and had also recommended that City Council designate the area as a redevelopment district, which Council subsequently approved. As a result, the property had officially been designated as a redevelopment area, and the current phase of the process involved consideration of the redevelopment plan itself. She explained that the proposed redevelopment plan, prepared by the applicant's planner, Tiffany Morrissey, had undergone numerous revisions through an extensive collaborative review process between City staff and the applicant's team. Board members were provided with the latest version of the redevelopment plan, together with Ms. Hicks's review comments and the applicant's written responses. She also advised the Board that an additional memorandum had been received earlier that day following discussions between the applicant's representatives and City staff regarding potential uses within the I-2 portion of the redevelopment area. She noted that a Board subcommittee had also met with the applicant's development team on multiple occasions to discuss the proposal. Although significant progress had been made, she stated that some issues remained unresolved between City staff and the applicant.

Louis Magazzu, Esq. testified on behalf of the developer. He introduced members of the applicant's team, including property owner Michael O'Neill, planner Tiffany Morrissey, and attorney Emily Gibbons. He explained that the redevelopment plan contemplated three alternative development concepts. Under each concept, the western portion of the redevelopment area would include an active adult community together with a single-family detached residential neighborhood. The remaining portions of the redevelopment area would consist of varying combinations of townhouse development, apartment housing, and expansions of the active adult community. He advised that the planner would provide additional details regarding each development concept during her testimony. Mr. Magazzu emphasized that planning for the redevelopment had been underway for approximately six years and that the redevelopment plan itself had evolved through roughly ten separate revisions. He stated that the applicant's team and City staff had devoted hundreds of hours to refining the proposal. According to Mr. Magazzu, the original concept envisioned a considerably denser and more conventional residential layout; however, through continued collaboration with City staff, the plan had been substantially redesigned to incorporate curvilinear streets, enhanced neighborhood character, and architectural and community design features intended to create a more attractive and cohesive residential development.

Tiffany Morrissey, Professional Planner, testified that the redevelopment planning process began in 2022 and culminated in the proposed redevelopment plan presented in 2026 following the property's designation as an area in need of redevelopment earlier in the year. She explained that the redevelopment plan serves as an enhanced zoning ordinance and was developed through numerous meetings with City staff and the Planning Board subcommittee to ensure consistency with the City's Master Plan. Morrissey stated that the original concept contained nearly 1,000 residential units, but through revisions the proposal had been reduced to approximately 481 units, with the possibility of even fewer depending on future engineering and site design. She testified that the revised concept incorporates curvilinear streets, interconnected open spaces, pedestrian walkways, and preservation of existing campus buildings while creating a more balanced residential community.

Ms. Morrissey testified that the redevelopment plan is consistent with the City's Master Plan, specifically referencing the consistency analysis on Page 43 of the plan. She explained that the 2008 Master Plan Amendment established the Institutional Campus designation for the property and recommended adaptive reuse through age-restricted housing. She further noted that the 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report recommended the property for redevelopment designation. The proposed redevelopment plan continues those planning objectives by providing age-restricted housing, additional residential housing types, opportunities for commercial redevelopment, and preservation of existing institutional and commercial buildings.

Ms. Morrissey explained that the redevelopment plan contains four development components, consisting of three residential districts and one commercial district. The residential components include an age-restricted community with a clubhouse, swimming pool, open space, and walking paths; a single-family detached neighborhood; a townhouse neighborhood; and a flexible residential area that may be developed as additional age-restricted housing, townhouses, or multifamily apartments. She testified that the age-restricted lots were increased from 6,000 square feet to 7,200 square feet, while the townhouse section now includes a combination of 20-foot and 22-foot-wide units. The plan also incorporates extensive open space to avoid direct rear-to-rear relationships between homes.

She testified that the redevelopment plan establishes detailed design standards beginning on Page 8, which outlines the goals and objectives of encouraging private investment, promoting redevelopment, expanding housing opportunities, creating walkable neighborhoods, and strengthening the local economy. She explained that Page 10 contains new definitions specific to the redevelopment plan, including active adult communities, townhouses, apartments, multifamily dwellings, and common open space, while existing zoning ordinance definitions would remain in effect unless specifically modified.

Reviewing the residential districts, Ms. Morrissey testified that Residential District 1 (Page 18) permits estate-style single-family detached dwellings on 13,500-square-foot lots with a 100-foot setback along Landis Avenue. Residential District 2 (Page 19) permits a maximum of 150 age-restricted dwelling units on 7,200-square-foot lots with a minimum 60-foot lot width, 120-foot lot depth, staggered 7-foot and 10-foot side yard setbacks, and a minimum 40-foot building width to accommodate larger homes. Recreational amenities identified on Page 21 include a clubhouse of at least 2,500 square feet, fitness center, multipurpose room, bathrooms, swimming pool, walking paths, pocket parks, and a dog park. An additional 50 age-restricted units may be developed within the flexible portion of the site if that option is selected.

Ms. Morrissey testified that Residential District 3 provides flexibility for development as townhouses, multifamily apartments, or additional age-restricted housing. The plan permits a maximum of 170 townhouse units, 200 multifamily units, or 50 additional age-restricted units, although actual unit counts may be reduced based upon stormwater management and engineering requirements. She explained that townhouse standards include a minimum 1,700-square-foot lot, minimum 20-foot unit width, with up to 50 percent of the units permitted to be 22 feet wide with two-car garages. Additional standards include a minimum 90-foot lot depth, 25-foot garage setback, 20-foot building setback, 5-foot side yard setback, 15-foot building

separation, 20-foot rear yard setback, 12-foot deck encroachment allowance, maximum 80 percent lot coverage, and a maximum of six units per building.

For the multifamily option, Ms. Morrissey testified that buildings may be up to four stories or 50 feet in height, with a maximum of 30 units per building. At least 20 percent of the units must include attached garages. Recreational facilities include a clubhouse containing at least 3,500 square feet, fitness center, multipurpose room, bathrooms, and associated amenities, all subject to future site plan review.

Ms. Morrissey further testified that landscaping and buffering standards beginning on Page 25 require a 50-foot perimeter buffer, except for the commercial pad site where the buffer may be reduced to 35 feet. The redevelopment plan also requires a minimum of 25 percent open space, preservation of approximately 8 acres of existing trees, irrigation for all landscaping, and street trees planted at a minimum ratio of one tree per 50 feet of frontage. Additional design standards on Pages 26 through 36 establish requirements for lighting, fencing, signage, architecture, building orientation, façade treatments, rooflines, building offsets, and varied architectural elevations to create a cohesive, high-quality residential community.

Finally, Ms. Morrissey testified that the commercial district permits reuse of the existing campus buildings and development of a commercial pad site, while maintaining consistency and prohibiting incompatible uses. She concluded that the redevelopment plan incorporates the revisions requested by City staff and the Planning Board subcommittee, including eliminating the previously proposed warehouse and solar field, increasing recreational amenities, enlarging clubhouse facilities, creating gated access for the active adult community, enhancing architectural standards, requiring garages within portions of the multifamily development, preserving stormwater basins outside required buffers, and providing shared stormwater facilities and cross-access easements. She testified that these revisions produce a comprehensive redevelopment plan that is consistent with the City's Master Plan and fulfills the planning objectives established for the property.

Ms. Hicks stated that a tremendous amount of work had gone into the redevelopment plan and commended Planner Tiffany Morrissey and Matt Markovich for responding to the City's concerns regarding the quality of development. She explained that the redevelopment plan now contains detailed architectural standards, descriptive language, and illustrative photographs to better define the level of development the City expects. Hicks noted that while she had marked numerous comments throughout the document, most of her remaining concerns involved minor revisions rather than substantial changes to the single-family, active adult, and multifamily portions of the plan. She testified that the primary remaining issues involved the existing IN-2 commercial area and the proposed townhouse development. She explained that Ms. Morrissey had worked extensively to draft language limiting the permitted uses within the existing buildings. She noted that, based on prior discussions with the City Solicitor, amendments had previously been made to both the Land Use Ordinance and the Center City Redevelopment Plan to prohibit uses such as needle exchange programs, harm reduction facilities, and certain social service uses. Ms. Hicks stated that City staff had prepared revisions to the permitted uses within the IN-2 Zone, which were provided to the developer. The developer subsequently submitted an expanded list of permitted uses following discussions with the City Solicitor; however, Ms. Hicks indicated she had not yet received the Solicitor's opinion regarding whether those revisions were acceptable.

Ms. Hicks testified that her greatest concern was the proposed townhouse section. She explained that throughout discussions with the applicant and the Planning Board subcommittee, City staff consistently emphasized that the property represents one of the most desirable and prominent development sites in Vineland and should be developed with an upscale residential product. While she believed the single-family homes, active adult community, and multifamily apartments met that objective, she stated the proposed 170 townhouse units did not. She explained that the townhouse design originally consisted entirely of 20-foot-wide units, similar to those constructed at Kings Crossing and more recently approved developments on Walnut Road. She described those projects as typical three-story townhouses with one-car garages, bonus rooms on the first floor, living space on the second floor, and bedrooms on the third floor, stating that such units did not reflect the quality of development envisioned for this site. Although the applicant agreed during subcommittee meetings to increase the end units to 22 feet in width with two-car garages, Ms. Hicks questioned whether those dimensions would realistically accommodate functional garages and adequately sized living spaces. She stated that she had requested floor plans to verify room sizes and garage dimensions but had not received them. Ms. Hicks cited prior development experience in which advertised one-car garages proved too small for standard vehicles, resulting in garages being used only for storage rather than parking. Ms. Hicks further expressed concern with the proposed townhouse lot dimensions, specifically noting the proposed 20-foot rear yard setback, of which 12 feet could be occupied by a deck or patio, leaving only approximately 8 feet of usable rear yard. Although the redevelopment plan relied on adjoining common open space to supplement private yards, Ms. Hicks stated that she did not believe the proposed townhouse layout reflected the higher-quality residential product the City sought for this location. She explained that despite the applicant's position that larger townhouse units might not be marketable, recent developments demonstrated that 20-foot-wide townhouses were selling quickly. She maintained that the City should require a higher standard for this property and stated that, because staff and the applicant had been unable to

reach agreement regarding the townhouse component, the issue would ultimately be for the Planning Board to determine in deciding whether to recommend the redevelopment plan to City Council.

Mr. Headley stated that he had two remaining issues with the redevelopment plan. His first concern involved the proposed stormwater management system and the interconnectivity of the stormwater basins throughout the development. Mr. Headley explained that, from an enforcement and long-term maintenance perspective, he believed each development component should maintain its own separate stormwater management system, including the single-family, active adult, townhouse, and multifamily sections. He stated that because the State continues to increase municipal responsibilities for both public and private stormwater facilities, maintaining separate systems would simplify future inspection, maintenance, and enforcement responsibilities.

Mr. Headley stated that his second concern involved the proposed townhouse development. He explained that, although the townhouse area occupies less land than the single-family and active adult neighborhoods, it represents a relatively dense residential component. As a result, he believed it was important that the redevelopment plan establish sufficient design standards to ensure an acceptable quality of life for future residents. He testified that those standards should include adequate building separation, appropriate side yard setbacks, wider dwelling units, functional rear yard space, and overall site design that provides residents with usable outdoor areas. Mr. Headley noted that while townhouse residents may not require large rear yards, providing only approximately 8 feet of usable yard behind a 12-foot patio or deck within the proposed 20-foot rear yard setback was insufficient, particularly for young families. He further explained that the redevelopment plan is intended to serve multiple generations, with apartments and townhouses accommodating younger professionals and first-time homebuyers, estate homes serving traditional families, and the active adult community serving older residents. He stated that every residential component should be designed to the same high standard. Mr. Headley noted that significant improvements had been made to the active adult neighborhood through its curvilinear street system and enhanced community design, and that similar attention had been given to the single-family and multifamily sections. He recommended that the townhouse component achieve the same level of quality through larger dwelling units, suggesting 24-foot-wide end units, 22-foot-wide interior units, increased separation between buildings, and incorporation of the additional dimensional recommendations. He stated that the numerical standards recommended by staff were not intended to make development unnecessarily difficult but were based upon professional planning and engineering judgment regarding the type of residential product appropriate for one of Vineland's premier redevelopment sites. He further stated that recent townhouse developments demonstrated market demand for standard products, but this redevelopment should establish a higher benchmark for residential development within the City.

Ms. Hicks agreed with Headley's comments, emphasizing that Vineland's character differs from more densely developed urban communities. She stated that residents purchasing upscale housing in Vineland expect larger living areas, functional garages, and more open space surrounding their homes. Ms. Hicks noted that upscale housing should be defined not only by upgraded finishes but also by generous room sizes, usable yard space, and overall site layout. She expressed continued concern that the proposed townhouse standards, including the 15-foot building separation between three-story townhouse buildings, did not provide the level of openness and quality expected for the development.

Mr. Magazzu responded first to the comments regarding the stormwater management design, stating that the applicant respectfully disagreed with the recommendation to separate the stormwater management systems for each development section. He testified that it is common practice for developments to establish easements and shared maintenance responsibilities for stormwater facilities and that a unified stormwater management system would provide better long-term oversight and ensure that all stormwater basins are properly maintained by the responsible entity. He also addressed the discussion regarding permitted uses within the existing institutional buildings. He explained that, after meeting with the City Solicitor, the applicant worked collaboratively with Planner Tiffany Morrissey to revise the permitted use list. He stated that several uses identified as inconsistent with the City's vision for the redevelopment area had been removed from the proposed redevelopment plan, including mental health outpatient facilities, intensive outpatient treatment, residential treatment programs, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, behavioral health residential treatment facilities, adolescent residential treatment centers, and trauma/PTSD residential programs. He indicated that the revisions reflected the concerns expressed by the administration and were intended to ensure compatibility with the proposed age-restricted community.

Mr. Magazzu emphasized that the applicant had reached agreement with City staff on the principal objectives of the redevelopment plan, particularly the age-restricted community. He noted that the overall development had been substantially revised from the original concept by significantly reducing the number of residential units, redesigning the street network, creating a greater sense of community, and incorporating many recommendations made by City staff. He acknowledged that these revisions increased development costs while simultaneously reducing the overall profitability of the project because fewer residential units would be available for sale.

Addressing the multifamily component, he explained that the apartment concept was introduced in response to discussions with the City regarding a growing housing need. He stated that the apartments were intended to serve younger professionals and recent college graduates who may earn good incomes but are unable to purchase homes immediately due to student loan debt. He testified that the redevelopment plan was designed to provide high-quality apartment living as an alternative housing option while maintaining the overall quality standards expected throughout the redevelopment area. He further stated that considerable effort had been devoted to developing detailed architectural narratives and illustrative images within the redevelopment plan to establish clear expectations regarding the appearance and quality of future development. He explained that these standards were intended to ensure that both the City and future developers shared the same understanding of the level of architectural quality required for the project.

Finally, Mr. Magazzu acknowledged the Planning Board's remaining concerns regarding the townhouse component and stated that the applicant had continued working to address those issues. He explained that the proposed townhouse design was based on guidance received from experienced residential developers and market consultants regarding the type of product that could be successfully marketed in Vineland while still meeting the City's objective of creating a high-quality residential community.

Ms. Morrissey responded that the applicant was willing to modify the townhouse standards to address the City's concerns. She testified that the applicant agreed to increase the end townhouse units to 24 feet in width and the interior townhouse units to 22 feet in width. She explained that while the applicant could not provide floor plans at this stage because a builder had not yet been selected, the redevelopment plan could require that detailed floor plans be submitted with the future site plan application. Morrissey stated that those floor plans would demonstrate that the proposed two-car garages are fully functional and that the interior room sizes meet the quality standards expected by the Planning Board. She further testified that the applicant was willing to increase the minimum building separation between townhouse buildings to 20 feet. She explained that the original 15-foot separation was based upon the anticipated need for exterior fire suppression equipment, which generally projects approximately 5 feet from the building wall. She stated that if the building separation were measured from building wall to building wall rather than from the fire suppression equipment, the applicant could accommodate the requested 20-foot separation while still allowing room for any required fire suppression infrastructure. Addressing the rear yard concern, Ms. Morrissey explained that although the individual townhouse lots would contain approximately 20-foot rear yards, with up to 12 feet permitted for a patio or deck, the townhouse lots intentionally back onto common open space rather than other private rear yards. She testified that rear yard fencing would not be permitted, allowing residents to utilize the adjoining common open space maintained by the homeowners' association. Morrissey stated that the effective usable open space extends well beyond the private lot line because of the required open space areas and perimeter buffers incorporated throughout the townhouse neighborhood. She testified that she did not yet know whether exterior fire suppression rooms would ultimately be required, as that determination would depend upon the final building design, water pressure, and applicable construction code requirements. She explained that the redevelopment plan was drafted to provide flexibility by allowing for the possibility of the equipment if required, while recognizing that future engineering or technological solutions could eliminate the need for exterior projections.

Ms. Morrissey also noted that the redevelopment plan functions as an overlay district requiring execution of a formal Redeveloper's Agreement with the City before development can proceed. She explained that the agreement provides another mechanism for ensuring the quality of the project and allows the City to impose additional requirements beyond those contained within the redevelopment plan itself.

Mr. Magazzu added that the redevelopment plan establishes only the overall framework for future development and that substantially more detailed plans would be required during the subsequent site plan approval process. He explained that discussions regarding permitted uses within the existing institutional buildings would continue with the City Solicitor before consideration by the governing body, while the Planning Board would retain full authority during site plan review to evaluate building elevations, floor plans, architectural details, garage layouts, and other design features. He stated that the applicant simply sought to advance the redevelopment plan to the next stage so those detailed design elements could be developed with a selected builder.

Mr. Headley stated that although the applicant had indicated the design could improve further, approving reduced standards now could effectively concede those issues before it is known whether such concessions are actually necessary. Mr. Headley questioned whether establishing standards such as 7½-foot side yard setbacks before determining the final fire suppression requirements would unnecessarily limit the Board's ability to require greater building separation if the fire suppression equipment ultimately proves unnecessary. He stated that he remained concerned about preserving the City's ability to achieve the highest-quality townhouse development possible on what all parties agreed is one of Vineland's premier redevelopment sites.

Michael O'Neill, Developer, addressed the Board's ongoing concerns regarding the proposed townhouse development. He acknowledged that concerns about townhouse communities in Vineland had existed since the beginning of the application process, noting that many smaller townhouse developments had eventually become rental communities after the original owners moved out. He stated that this pattern had not been successful in several existing developments and understood why Board members were seeking larger units. Mr. O'Neill advised that the applicant was willing to revise the proposal by increasing the width of the interior townhouse units to 22 feet and the end units to 24 feet. He stated that this represented a significant improvement over the originally proposed 20-foot-wide units and addressed comments previously made by Ms. Hicks regarding the desirability of wider units. He confirmed that the applicant would accept the revised unit widths as a condition of approval. He emphasized that the proposed townhouse community differed substantially from existing townhouse developments in the City. He explained that the design incorporated shorter building groupings, numerous open spaces between buildings, walking trails, and recreational amenities rather than long uninterrupted rows of units. He stated that considerable effort had been invested by the applicant's team and City staff in creating a higher-quality residential community. Addressing the requested setback relief, he explained that the reduced setbacks affected only approximately six locations and resulted primarily from the placement of fire suppression system components. He stated that, in most instances, adequate space existed on the opposite side of the buildings to accommodate maintenance and access, and he did not believe the issue would create any significant functional deficiencies within the development. Mr. O'Neill further noted that a review of comparable townhouse developments throughout South Jersey found that most developments consisted entirely of 20-foot-wide units. He stated that the applicant was voluntarily exceeding that standard by proposing 22-foot and 24-foot-wide units and requested that the Board work with the applicant regarding the limited setback relief and the use of shared stormwater basins. He explained that many prospective townhouse buyers prefer limited private yard areas in exchange for low-maintenance living and access to larger shared open spaces. He stated that the development would include extensive open space, walking trails, and recreational amenities while minimizing individual yard maintenance responsibilities. Regarding stormwater management, Mr. O'Neill explained that the site's topography naturally directed runoff toward common drainage areas, making some shared basins unavoidable. He noted that a basin near the front of the property would serve both the executive homes and the commercial portion of the development, while basins in other areas would primarily serve individual neighborhoods. He reiterated the applicant's request that the Board waive the requirement prohibiting shared stormwater basins, explaining that the applicant would continue working with City staff during site plan review as detailed engineering plans were prepared.

Mr. O'Neill estimated that approximately 30 to 40 percent of the townhouse units would be 24 feet wide, with the remaining units being 22 feet wide. He explained that buildings containing four units would have approximately 50 percent of the units at 24 feet, while larger buildings would have a lower percentage. He noted that not every purchaser desired a larger two-car garage configuration and that the proposed mix would provide a variety of housing options. He further stated that the original concept for the development was to provide housing opportunities for residents at different stages of life, allowing individuals to move from smaller homes to executive homes and eventually to age-restricted housing without leaving the community. He also noted that increasing the standard townhouse width from 20 feet to 22 feet would allow for functional three-bedroom floor plans while providing visual variety throughout the development.

Ms. Hicks questioned whether additional open space could be created by moving the townhouse buildings farther from the property lines to satisfy the required setbacks.

Mr. Headley had the same thought. Increasing rear yard depths would require recalculating the project's overall open space requirements. He noted that while the additional area might appear to be open space, it would effectively become private yard area associated with individual units rather than usable common open space. He explained that the current design intentionally maximized shared recreational space for residents.

Mr. O'Neill acknowledged that some building layouts would necessarily change as the plans were revised but emphasized that the plans remained conceptual. He explained that detailed engineering, stormwater management design, and final architectural layouts would continue to evolve throughout the site plan review process. He stated that the applicant had already committed to the revised townhouse widths and was willing to continue working with City staff on the remaining design issues. He noted that the City Solicitor would also have an opportunity to review and refine the language of any conditions of approval. He emphasized that the project would return before the Planning Board for detailed site plan review, at which time the Board would have the opportunity to evaluate the final engineering plans, stormwater management system, open space calculations, and architectural details.

Mr. O'Neill explained that Mr. Headley had expressed concerns about the long-term maintenance of shared basins because homeowner associations often fail to maintain them properly, creating enforcement issues for the City. He stated that the applicant proposed a master homeowners association responsible for maintaining all common facilities, including any shared basins. He argued that, from the City's perspective, staff would only need to contact a single homeowners association regardless of whether the basin served multiple residential sections.

Mr. Headley explained that his concern was not engineering design but enforcement. He noted that many homeowner associations meet infrequently and that obtaining approval for repairs can be time-consuming. He expressed concern that shared facilities involving multiple associations or multiple residential sections could further delay maintenance, potentially exposing the City to regulatory enforcement if stormwater facilities were not maintained properly.

Mr. O'Neill responded that the applicant's proposed master homeowners association would remain responsible for maintenance regardless of which residential section contributed runoff to a particular basin. He stated that the City's enforcement efforts would still be directed toward a single responsible entity.

Mr. Headley reiterated that his concern was ensuring prompt corrective action whenever maintenance issues arose. He explained that delays caused by internal association approval processes could complicate enforcement, particularly if multiple parties became involved in determining maintenance responsibilities. The discussion concluded with additional comments regarding whether stormwater basins serving commercial and residential portions of the development should remain separate where practical, with further review to occur during the site plan approval process.

Mr. O'Neill explained that while individual homeowners would maintain their own lawns, all common areas, including stormwater facilities, would be maintained by the homeowners' association. He noted that the commercial portion of the development already discharged stormwater into an existing basin and that the proposed residential development would continue utilizing portions of the existing stormwater system rather than constructing an entirely new drainage network. He stated that the site's topography naturally directed runoff toward those existing facilities, making some shared basins unavoidable. He further explained that although the commercial component would have separate maintenance responsibilities for its property, it would contribute toward the maintenance of any shared stormwater basin receiving runoff from the commercial site. He stated that the precise basin configurations would ultimately be determined during final engineering design, but anticipated that only a limited number of residential sections would share facilities with the commercial area.

Following additional discussion, the Chair commented that the Board had spent considerable time discussing the various issues and suggested summarizing the items that had been agreed upon before taking action.

Ms. Morrissey summarized the proposed conditions of approval. She stated that the applicant had agreed to:

- Increase the townhouse widths to 22-foot interior units and 24-foot end units.
- Submit detailed townhouse floor plans during site plan review showing room layouts and dimensions.
- Provide windows on the end townhouse units to improve architectural appearance.
- Maintain 7½-foot side yard setbacks and a minimum 20-foot building separation, exclusive of any required fire suppression equipment, with staggered building placement where necessary.
- Limit the permitted land uses in accordance with the memorandum previously submitted to the Board.
- Permit shared stormwater basins, with additional maintenance and enforcement provisions to be addressed in the Redeveloper's Agreement.
- Provide a traffic impact study during the site plan review process, as required.

Ms. Morrissey also noted that the applicant would continue working with City staff to incorporate all agreed-upon revisions into the redevelopment plans.

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

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffery DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Nilsa Rosario: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
David Manders: Yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephen Lewis, a member of the public addressed the Board regarding a previously approved data center. He questioned whether a recently constructed building had been erected in a location different from that shown

on the originally approved plans and asked whether construction could proceed before approval of a subsequent amended site plan.

Ms. Moscillo explained that the matter was not before the Planning Board for public hearing and that the Board was therefore unable to review photographs or make findings regarding the project.

Ms. Headley explained that staff generally inspects projects near completion to verify compliance with approved site plans, while construction permits and inspections are administered by the Construction Official's office. He stated that his most recent inspection of the site had occurred in December, when the project was nearing completion of Phase I and beginning Phase II. Based upon his observations, the portions of the project visible above ground appeared to conform to the location approved under the second amended site plan. He further explained that the project had received multiple site plan approvals. The original approval was subsequently amended, and a third amended site plan application remained pending before the Planning Board. He clarified that the building currently under construction appeared to correspond with the previously approved second amended site plan rather than the pending application.

Mr. Lewis also asked about a proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage tank shown on the pending site plan.

Ms. Headley confirmed that the LNG storage tank appeared only on the currently pending application and had not yet been reviewed or approved by the Planning Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman entertained a motion to adjourn.

Roll Call:

John Casadia: Yes
David Catalana: Yes
Jeffrey DiMatteo: Yes
Douglas Menz: Yes
Thomas Tobolski: Yes
Sandy Velez: Yes
Nilsa Rosario: Yes
Robert Odorizzi: Yes
Elizabeth Arthur: Yes
David Manders: Yes

TIME: 10:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Perez
Planning Board Secretary