MINUTES OF
PLANNING BOARD/BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
OF HIGH BRIDGE BOROUGH

Meeting Date: August 18, 2025 - **Meeting Time:** 6:30 P.M.
Meeting Location: 7 Maryland Avenue, High Bridge, NJ 08829

1. CALL TO ORDER:
This is a regular meeting of the Planning/Zoning Board of the Borough of High Bridge. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act in that a Notice was published in the Hunterdon Review and The Star Ledger on August 13, 2025. Notice of and agenda this meeting were posted on the bulletin board in the Borough Hall.

2. FLAG SALUTE: Led by presiding officer.

3. ROLL CALL:
Brosnan, present; Conroy, present; Koffman, present; Lee, present; Mart, present; Musnuff, present; Ryder, present; Suozzo, present; Yu, absent. Also, present were Planning Board Attorney Kevin VanHise, Board Planner Darlene Green, Board Engineer William Burr, Planning Board Secretary, Barbara Kinsky and 32 members of the public.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS: It is the policy of the Planning Board that all public comments on an issue shall be limited to 3 minutes per person and no person may make more than one (1) comment per subject. Comments may be made on any subject pertaining to Board issues. Comments pertaining to Public Hearings should be saved for that section of the agenda. No debating between residents. Comments should be addressed to the Chairman and Board members at the public microphone. None

5. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 21, 2025
Motion to dispense with the reading of the prior meetings' minutes:
Motion/Second: Lee/Brosnan Voice vote: 7 yes votes, motion passed.

Motion to approve July 21, 2025, meeting minutes with the amended meeting place and time for the meeting updated to 7 Maryland Avenue, High Bridge, NJ 08829 at 6:30pm. Motion/Second: Mart/Brosnan
Brosnan, yes; Conroy, yes; Koffman, yes; Lee, yes; Mart, yes; Musnuff, yes; Ryder, yes; Suozzo, yes; Yu, absent. 7 Yes votes, motion passed.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**: Continuation of Public Hearing for PBapp-01-2025 Preliminary & Final Site Plan for 100 West Main Street, High Bridge, New Jersey 08829. Block 24, Lot 16. Owner/applicant: SE High Bridge LLC.

Motion to reopen Public Hearing for PBapp-01-2025: Lee Second: Suozzo
Voice vote: 7 yes votes, motion passed.

Mr. Frederick Zelly gave a summary of the proposed project. He stated that applicant will present several witnesses to address changes to the architectural plans and the fire department's concerns. These witnesses include Christopher Class (architect), Harrison Barry (engineer), Gary Dean (traffic engineer), and John McDonough (landscape architect and professional planner). Nana Duncan, the applicant's representative, is also present to answer any questions.
Mr. Zelly noted a correction to previous testimony regarding trash removal. He confirmed trash will be collected twice a week, not daily, with on-site staff maintaining interior receptacles.

Board attorney VanHise reminded the previously sworn in professionals that they are still under oath. He then swore in Harrison Barany and John McDonough.

The applicant's architect, Mr. Class, began the testimony by outlining revisions made to the project plans in response to previous comments from the Board and its professionals.

- Sheets A1 & A2 (First and Second Floor Plans**):** Dimensions have been added for all bedrooms within designated affordable units to comply with guidelines. This revision ensures one bedroom is at least 150 square feet and all others are at least 100 square feet.
- Mansard Roof Clarification**:** Mr. Class clarified that the mansard roof on the fourth floor is designed to project from the building. This design means it does not reduce the usable square footage or footprint of the fourth-floor plan, which remains representative of the second and third floors.
- Sheet A7 (New Roof Plan): A new roof plan was added to illustrate the location of rooftop condensing units. The units will be fully enclosed by a four-foot-high perimeter screen. The screening material will be the same material as the mansard roof. The screening is designed to be invisible from the ground level. The roof is not occupiable for recreational purposes and is accessible only for maintenance via a centrally located hatch.
- Fire Department Comments: Mr. Class addressed the memo from the Fire Department dated August 14, 2025. He confirmed the building will be fully compliant with all building-related comments, noting the building will be fully sprinklered in conformance with NFPA 13 .Standpipes will be provided in all three stairwells. The project will conform to all requirements for the fire alarm control unit, fire department connections, fire service elevator, communication systems, area of refuge, knox box, and premises identification.

Questions from the Boards professionals were asked at this time.

- Board Planner Darlene Green inquired about the sound-buffering quality of the rooftop screening. Mr. Class explained that while not specifically designed for soundproofing, the standing seam metal material has a backer that will act as a barrier and naturally absorb some sound from the equipment.
- Ms. Green also expressed confusion regarding the fourth-floor plan appearing identical to the floors below, despite the elevations showing dormers. Mr. Class explained the dormers project outward from the building's face, and due to the tall roof trusses, the inward tapering off the roof occurs within the ceiling cavity, not impacting the unit's floor space.
- Board engineer William Burr asked if the plans are the same except for the few minor revisions previously mentioned. Mr. Class confirmed that aside from the minor revisions detailed, the building's footprint**,** layout, and unit count remain unchanged from the previously presented plans.

Question from Board members:

- A question regarding the fire chief's comment on turning radiuses for fire trucks was deferred to the civil engineer.
- A question regarding the efficacy of the sound barrier was posed. Mr. Class reiterated that the residential-grade HVAC units are not significantly loud and are set back from the roof's edge, with the screening providing an additional measure of sound containment.
- A question was asked about the recent changes made to the building plans and Mr. Class explained that the only change was the addition of room dimensions to the existing design to comply with requirements. The overall design is otherwise the same.
- A question was asked regarding how tall the roof HVAC units will be, and Mr. Class stated that the rooftop HVAC units are approximately four feet tall. The screening around them will be the same height.
- A question was asked regarding the reason for placing the common spaces at the front of the first floor. Mr. Class replied that these "active spaces" were positioned at the front of the building with larger storefronts to create the appearance of commercial/retail activity, in conformance to the area's redevelopment plan.
- A question was asked regarding the materials used for the rooftop screen for the HVAC units and if that material would be made of sound barrier materials. Mr. Class replied that it is not specifically designed as a sound barrier. It was stated that the residential units are relatively quiet and set back from the building's edge. The screen's backing materials will naturally absorb some sound, which is considered an additional benefit.
- A question was asked regarding whether paved areas that allow for 360-degree access around the building for fire apparatus will be provided since the paved areas do not currently show this This issue will be addressed by the project's engineer, who is handling the site-related comments from the fire department.

Questions from the Public:

- Lynn Schweikert from 4 Taylor Street**:** Asked about safe school routes for children living in the building. This question was redirected to the project planner. She also asked if noise from the rescue squad was being addressed and Mr. Class could not address this outside of keeping windows closed to keep neighbor noise out.
- Frank Pumillo from 22 Hillcrest Lane: Raised concerns about sewer and water capacity, as well as the electrical grid's ability to handle the additional load and the cost for any improvements or enhancements that would need to be made to the infrastructure. These questions were deferred to the project engineer and planner.
- Mike Gronsky from 129 West Main Street asked about the building's facade articulation.in the envelope. Mr. Class noted the design complies with the redevelopment plan, incorporating recesses of 12 inches (exceeding the 8-inch requirement). He also questioned the steep, nearly vertical pitch of the mansard roof, suggesting it would appear more like a wall. Mr. Class confirmed the mansard roof design is a requirement of the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Gronsky also asked about the fiber cement panel that was being utilized for rooftop screening and Mr. Class explained that: it's a durable siding material that will have the appearance of either solid color cobblestone or a composite with a wood texture. Mr. Gronsky also inquired if another style of roof was considered and Mr. Class explained that the mansard roof is a requirement of the Redevelopment plan.

- Tom Creelman from 22 Sunset Drive: Asked if the building height is still proposed to be 55 feet at its highest point. Mr. Class replied that the building's height has not changed. The redevelopment plan allows rooftop equipment and screening to extend up to five feet above the official building height without being counted. Mr. Creelman also asked if the rooftop screening is meant to hide both the mechanical units and elevator overrun. Mr. Class replied that the elevator overrun is lower than the mechanical equipment, so the screening will naturally hide it from view as well as the mechanical units. Mr. Creelman also inquired about the slope and pitch of the mansard roof. Mr. Class replied that it is almost vertical. Over a vertical distance of 14 to 15 feet, the roof projects outward only about 18 inches.
- Robert Swatsworth from 21 Cregar Road: Asked a question regarding the environmental status of the site, given its history as a manufacturing facility. This question was directed to the project engineer, who was scheduled to testify later.
- Ruby Reuter from 11 West Main Street: Asked about the value that such a large building would bring to a small town and how the sewer could be affected. These questions will be directed at the project planner and engineer.
- Lauren Hamlin from 26 Highland Avenue: Attorney VanHise confirmed with Ms. Hamlin that she was speaking as a resident and not in a councilperson capacity. Ms. Hamlin asked about how the rainwater was to be drained from the large flat portion of the roof. Mr. Class replied that although it's a "flat" roof, it is pitched at a minimum of a quarter inch per foot to direct water toward the perimeter. The water is then collected and removed from the building via external downspouts that connect to a larger stormwater management system.

At this point Board attorney VanHise recommended that the Board take a short break.
The meeting resumed and explanation was given as to the reason for the interruption. Mr. VanHise explained that due to a quorum of the governing body being present there was potential of a dual meeting taking place. Mr. VanHise recommended adjourning the hearing to September 15 at 6:30 pm to avoid legal issues. It was suggested that Council members step out to continue the meeting for the benefit of residents. The Planning Board and Council attorneys were proposed to regroup for clarity. Concerns were raised about legal advice and fair treatment.

Motion to suspend the Public Hearing for PBapp-01-2025 until 6:30 PM on September 15, 2025: Brosnan Second:Mart 7 yes votes, motion passed.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: It is the policy of the Planning Board that all public comments on an issue shall be limited to 1 minute per person and no person may make more than one (1) comment per subject. Comments may be made on any subject pertaining to Board issues. Comments pertaining to Public Hearings should be saved for that section of the agenda. No debating between residents. Comments should be addressed to the Chairman and Board members at the public microphone. NONE

8. ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn: Conroy Second: Koffman Voice vote: 7 yes votes, motion passed.
Next Meeting Date: September 15, 2025
Meeting Location: : Rescue Squad Building, 95 West Main Street, High Bridge, NJ 08829
Meeting Time: 7:30 P.M.