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

Meeting Date: October 20, 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 October 8, 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, absent; absent, present; Yu, present. Regan, present (arrived at 6:34 pm)
Also present were present Board Attorney Kevin VanHise, Board Planner Darlene Green, Board Engineer, William Burr, Planning Board Secretary, Barbara Kinsky, Board Alternate Leah Epstein (not in a voting capacity) and 27 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: September 15, 2025
Motion to dispense with the reading of the prior meetings' minutes:
Motion/ Second: Lee/Brosnan Voice vote: 8 yes votes, motion passed.

Motion to approve September 15, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion/Second: Mart/Koffman
Brosnan, yes; Conroy, yes; Koffman, yes; Lee, yes; Mart, yes; Musnuff, yes; Ryder, absent; Suozzo, absent; Yu, yes. Regan, yes. 8 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 re-open Public Hearing for PBapp-01-2025: Lee Second: Brosnan 8 yes votes, motion passed.

Frederick Zelly, the applicant's attorney, began by stating that there were two witnesses scheduled for the evening. The first witness was John Ferranti, the applicant's engineer, who was being recalled to address items raised in the Board engineer's report of October 18 and the Board planner's report of October 16. The final witness for the applicant's presentation was scheduled to be John McDonough, the applicant's planner. The Board's attorney then reminded everyone that both witnesses had been sworn in at the last meeting and remained under oath.

John Ferrante, P.E., was recalled as the applicant's engineer. Mr. Ferrante addressed the following topics:

- Revised Plans: Mr. Ferranti confirmed that revised plans, as discussed at the previous meeting, had been submitted within the 10-day requirement.
- Parking Changes: Mr. Ferrante confirmed the plans reflect changes to the parking site regarding the number of spaces.
- County Sidewalks: The applicant agreed to stipulate as a condition of approval that they will comply with the county sidewalk requirements.

- Fire Access: The new plans show the new 20-foot fire access. Mr. Ferrante testified that his office had spoken with the fire chief, who indicated that this additional 20-foot-wide access on the western side of the building would be satisfactory. The applicant agreed to make final approval from the fire chief a condition of approval.
- Underground Water Tanks: Mr. Ferrante confirmed that the fire official requested two 10,000-gallon tanks. He stated that they have provided for these, one on each side of the building, and they are shown on the drawings. The applicant agreed to stipulate satisfying the fire official as a condition of approval.
- Dumpster Enclosure: The applicant stipulated as a condition of approval that the dumpster enclosure will be constructed to match the proposed building in materials, colors, etc., as was indicated at the last meeting.
- Fencing: Testimony was provided that the revised plans show the fence located around the perimeter of the site, as well as the additional four-foot fence for the pool area.
- Fire Access Lane Pavers: Mr. Ferrante stated they are proposing a "geo block" grass paved system. Catalog cuts for the systems have been provided. He described it as a reinforced grass area, so that visually it appears as grass, but it is detailed to allow for fire vehicle access. The infill is grass and topsoil, which sits over a gravel layer that provides stability.
- Patio Screening: Mr. Ferrante confirmed that screening for privacy is being provided for the at-grade patios located around the building.
- Site Accessibility: Mr. Ferrante testified that minor edits were made to the islands to meet size requirements, but the overall site plan, from an accessibility standpoint, has not changed. He confirmed the curve radii, sidewalk, and ramps are all compliant with ADA requirements.
- Stormwater Report: Mr. Ferranti stated that they did not have enough time to submit the revised stormwater report. The applicant would like that to become a condition of approval, subject to the borough engineer.
- Transformer Pad: The proposed location of the transformer is now shown on the plans and has been located as far back from the right-of-way as possible to avoid issues with sight triangles. Mr. Ferrante reiterated his prior testimony that the final transformer size and location will be determined by JCP&L, and that a pad may not be required if a pole-mounted transformer is sufficient. Mr. Ferrante testified that typical transformers are five and a half to six feet tall. He stated that the transformer will not be a problem for visibility from the stop bar. The applicant is hoping a ground-mounted transformer will not be needed, but they stipulated to satisfy the county. He noted that based on his experience, the utility company wants the transformer as close to the street as possible.
- Pool Utilities: The pool itself has not changed on the drawing; the only change is the addition of the security fence. This will ultimately be designed to the satisfaction of the construction department and the borough engineer.
- Cut and Fills: Mr. Ferrante testified that the cut and fill calculation has not been done yet. He stated this is typically done during detailed engineering, but it can be provided if the Board desires, or it can be a condition of approval.
- Landscaping & Sight Triangles: Mr. Ferrante confirmed that the revised landscaping plan will comply with requirements to keep sight triangles open. He noted again that while the plan shows street trees, the county may not allow those trees within the east Side triangle.
- Landscaping Deviations: The landscape plan has been revised to incorporate many comments, including the double row of staggered evergreens. Mr. Ferrante confirmed the applicant's intent is to modify the plan to avoid the need for any deviations, except for conflicts between county and borough requirements.
- Environmental: The applicant's attorney noted the engineer's comment about the LSRP correspondence and asked the Board's engineer, Mr. Burr if he had a specific question. Mr. Burr indicated he thought the Trident report was a new submission and warranted discussion. Mr. Ferrante clarified it was the same report discussed at the last meeting but offered to update the Board on its contents. Mr. Ferrante corrected his testimony from the last meeting. He had previously indicated his experience was only one LSRP could be on a property. He checked and found there are no regulatory requirements preventing two LSRPs, if each has very specific areas of concern. In this case, Mr. Corey Matthew (Trident) is the LSRP for soil-related areas, while CDM is the original LSRP responsible only for the groundwater area of concern.
- Soil Contamination: Mr. Ferrante testified that what remains on the property regarding environmental issues is soil-related historic fill contamination. It was determined that the site has historic fill, which contains residual contaminants.
- Engineering Controls: The property is protected by a deed notice and engineering controls. The DEP allowed a fence as the engineering control for the industrial property, and that fence is still there. A deed notice was filed with the county, which restricts actions like installing drinking water wells. Mr. Ferrante testified that the deed

notice does not limit the redevelopment of the property, as long as human health and the environment are protected.

- Groundwater Status: The groundwater remediation will continue until a Classification Exception Area (CEA) is placed on the property. Mr. Ferrante believes the proposal is for natural attenuation. The CEA will have a time limit, after which the groundwater must be re-sampled. There will be a remedial action permit for soil and a remedial action permit for groundwater on the property.
- Engineering Controls: Mr. Burr asked for clarification on the new engineering controls. Mr. Ferrante confirmed the controls are improvements that will be built with the project. He explained that the DEP has minimum standards for residential sites. These engineering controls include: four inches of asphalt, six inches of concrete slab for the building, two feet of clean fill for non-hardscape areas, such as landscaped areas and a geotextile buffer layer placed to show the demarcation between the engineering controls and the existing grade. .Mr. Ferrante testified that this information will be shown on the detailed engineering and site plans when all designs are finalized. Once designs are complete, the LSRP will refile the deed notice with the county and the DEP. He stated that the current drawings show where the building slabs, asphalt, and landscaped areas are, but not the final "as built" details.
- Compliance: Mr. Ferrante confirmed the applicant believes they can comply with all standards of the development plan. The only possible exception is a conflict between the borough ordinance and County standards.
- Parking Screening: Mr. Ferrante testified that they could comply with the parking lot screening requirements. He noted that the gaps in screening are predominantly created by the driveways, which cannot be screened.
- Fencing: The existing fence will be removed and replaced by the new engineering controls. The applicant agreed as a condition of approval that details of the proposed fences will be submitted to the satisfaction of the professionals.
- Amenity Fees: The applicant stipulated that there will not be additional fees charged for parking, maintenance, or on-site amenities.
- Steep Slopes: Mr. Ferrante stated they believe what is shown on the drawing is correct, but they will stipulate making the required changes to the drawing.
- Landscaping Replacement: The applicant stipulated that any damaged landscape material would be replaced.
- Bedroom Dimensions: The applicant stipulated that they would add the bedroom dimensions to the architectural plans.
- Rounding: Mr. Ferrante confirmed this was the rounding error he had addressed previously.
- Loading Area: Mr. Ferrante testified that the drop-off area is dimensioned and believed to be sufficient for expected truck traffic, such as mail deliveries or tenant move-ins/move-outs.
- Electric Vehicle charging signs (EV): The applicant stipulated to remove most of the signs for EV.
- Tree Ordinance: The applicant stipulated to comply with the tree removal ordinance and requirements for tree protection fencing. Mr. Ferrante clarified that the plan will be updated to show the protection fence around the trees that are to be saved. The applicant will comply with the request to fix the tree species labeling.
- Buffer: Mr. Ferrante confirmed they are providing a 35-foot buffer.
- Landscaping Deviations: The applicant stipulated that they will eliminate the two landscaping deviations.

Questions from the Board's Professionals:

- Board Planner, Ms. Green provided a follow-up point of clarification on the parking lot screening deviation. She stated the deviation is not because of the driveways, but for two other reasons: 1) on the eastern side, the parking is not screened from the roadway, and 2) the center island lacks understory shrubs. Mr. Ferrante acknowledged this and confirmed they can fix those two items to eliminate the deviation.
- Board engineer, Mr. Burr, asked Mr. Ferrante to describe the perimeter fencing. Mr. Ferrante described several types of fencing. A 6-foot solid perimeter fence with an ornamental cross will enclose the property, placed strategically to help screen parking lights; while proposed as white, the applicant is flexible on color. Separately, a 4-foot ornamental aluminum fence will secure the pool area, blocking access from the emergency exit. Additionally, solid screening will be provided for at-grade patios, and the waste area fencing will be redesigned to match the building's finishes. Mr. Ferrante confirmed the applicant agrees to address all prior testimony and potential conditions, even those not yet shown in the latest plans.

Questions from the Board members:

- A Board member pointed out a discrepancy in the tree list, noting the table lists 13 Eastern Red Buds, but the diagram only shows 12. The applicant stipulated they would correct this.
- A Board member also noted that if the county does not permit any of the eight trees planned for the front of the property, the number of replacement trees and the corresponding contribution to the tree fund will have to be revised.
- A question was asked regarding whether renters will be notified of the new deed notice. Mr. Ferrante confirmed they had stipulated at the last meeting that a notice would be included in the lease.
- A question was asked if the DEP approves this lease language. Mr. Ferrante explained that the LSRP has a requirement to notify the public. This is done in several ways, such as bilingual signs on the property, notifying the 200-foot list, and notifying county health departments and the township. He confirmed the process has government supervision.
- A question was asked regarding the two new water tanks and if the pool could be considered an additional water source in case of a fire. Mr. Ferrante replied that it can be, but it is not considered as such; it is a "bonus."
- A question was asked if the building is sprinklered and if the tanks tap into that system. Mr. Ferrante confirmed the building is sprinklered. He explained the tanks were requested by the fire chief due to concerns about water main sufficiency. Mr. Ferrante reiterated that they will be conducting a hydrant flow test to determine the actual volume and pressure in the main, which will be used to design the sprinkler system.
- A question was asked regarding the perimeter fence color, noting it will run through trees. It was suggested that a white fence "stands out" and asked if a brown color wouldn't "blend in more." Mr. Ferrante replied that brown would be a good color.

Questions from the public:

- Mark Loozen, 9 Timbercroft Road: asked if the twin elliptical culvert is the main drainage discharge point, which Mr. Ferrante confirmed is one of two main discharge points. Mr. Loozen then questioned whether the applicant had verified if the existing county culvert's capacity was sufficient to handle the new stormwater management system's operation. Mr. Ferrante replied that the revised stormwater report has not yet been submitted but will be a condition of approval. He assured that, as part of the design, they must check the capacity of any downstream system they tie into and that the final report will comply with all NJDEP and township requirements.
- Attorney William Caldwell, attorney from Annandale: Mr. Caldwell stated he was present on behalf of Mr. Al Schweikert, 90 Mine Road. Mr. Caldwell cross-examined Mr. Ferrante, primarily challenging the project's density calculation. Mr. Caldwell argued that Mr. Ferrante couldn't confirm compliance (22.79 units/acre) without knowing the ordinance's definition, and suggested the calculation was flawed by omitting a right-of-way dedication. After significant procedural debate about whether this prior testimony was open for cross-examination, the Chairman stopped that specific line of questioning but permitted Mr. Caldwell to call his own expert to dispute the density. Mr. Ferrante also clarified that the applicant is seeking only one potential deviation (for street trees) and estimated "less than five" site plan deviations. He confirmed the fire access lane is not in the 35-foot buffer, he reiterated the stormwater report will be a condition, and deferred questions about potential contamination under the existing foundation of the building to the LSRP, Corey Matthews.
- Tom Creelman, 22 Sunset Dr.: raised concerns about a perimeter swale, arguing its very flat 0.7% slope combined with landscaping would impede water flow and flood neighbors, especially since the property is being raised. The Board's engineer agreed the swale "absolutely has to be addressed" but felt it could function with revisions. Mr. Creelman expressed concern that the applicant wanted to make it a "condition of approval". Mr. Creelman also questioned if the twin pipes were sized for a 25-year storm and noted a past grading issue, which Mr. Ferrante said he would correct if it existed. When asked why the LSRP wasn't present, the applicant's attorney clarified they had only agreed to submit the LSRP's letter, not to have him testify.

Mr. John McDonough was reminded he was still under oath and was accepted by the Board as an expert licensed planner.

Prior to his general planning testimony, the applicant's attorney asked Mr. McDonough to address the fiscal issues raised in the Board Planner's report regarding the Community Impact Statement. Mr. McDonough stated that based on Rutgers demographic multipliers, the 98-unit development is projected to generate a total population of about 198 people, including approximately 10 public school-age children (ages 5-18). He calculated the municipal costs as follows:

- School Costs: At a per-student cost of about $15,000, 10 students would cost the school system approximately $150,000.

- Municipal Costs: He calculated the per-capita cost for municipal services (public works, administration, etc.) to be about $100 per person. For 198 (or 200) people, this would be another $20,000.
- Conclusion: Mr. McDonough testified that the project will be a strong fiscal net positive for the community. He stated that while the total municipal cost is projected to be less than $200,000, the financial agreement will likely double that figure and certainly exceed $350,000.

The applicant's attorney requested Mr. McDonough's general planning analysis, which he described as a standard review. Mr. McDonough commended the Board for designating the difficult site as an area in need of redevelopment, noting that this status provides the incentive to reverse stagnation and eliminate an eyesore. He testified that the project fully conforms with the goals and regulations of the 100 West Main Redevelopment Plan adopted by the Borough council. A primary public benefit is the inclusionary housing component, which he explained helps the community meet its court-mandated constitutional obligation to provide real units under current fourth-round rules. Clarifying the Board's role at this site plan stage, he noted the task is to review the application for consistency with the Redevelopment Plan. Mr. McDonough observed that this project has clearly followed an inclusive process where the applicant refined elements like landscaping and fencing in response to board and public feedback.

Mr. McDonough reviewed the application for compliance.

- Use: The application fully conforms with the designated use regulations.
- Density: The project rests on solid footing regarding density, complying with the threshold of twenty-three units per acre based on the underlying zoning definition of gross acreage.
- Form Controls: All physical parameters, including building height, lot coverage, and setbacks, meet the required standards.
- Parking: The application satisfies all parking requirements.
- Design Deviations: The applicant is no longer requesting design deviations and has committed to implementing requested changes regarding screening height and the use of true year-round evergreens.
- Tree Replacement: To address a calculated shortfall of trees, the applicant proposes that the planned evergreen conifers should count toward the requirement, with any remaining deficit satisfied through a contribution to the tree fund.
- County Regulations: Regarding potential issues with front trees caused by county rules, he noted that safety considerations must outweigh tree placement and questioned the Board's ability to impose standards controlled by an outside agency.

Questions from the Board's Professionals:

- Board Planner, Ms. Green asked for clarification on the density calculation. Mr. McDonough confirmed testimony that the county is requesting an easement, not a right-of-way. He testified that based on the definition of "lot area," the easement remains part of the total lot area, and therefore the project complies with the density requirement.

Questions from the Board members:

- Mr. Brosnan put on the record a clarification, stating that Mr. McDonough's testimony that the Board found the redevelopment plan consistent with the master plan was not accurate. He cited Ordinance 2024-034, which was titled "despite inconsistency with Master Plan," and noted the board had recommended the density be reduced. Mr. McDonough accepted the clarification but noted that "the governing body adopted the redevelopment plan".
- A question was asked regarding asked about affordable housing bonus credits. Mr. McDonough explained the half-credit for redevelopment sites and the one-credit for affordable units, noting you cannot take both bonuses.
- A question was asked regarding making a monetary contribution toward a sidewalk to support the "Safe Routes to School" initiative, as the site is close to the train station. Board engineer, Mr. Burr, clarified for the Board that the Redeveloper's Agreement already includes an allowance of up to $300,000 as necessary towards the Borough for improvements of the sidewalk or any special improvements are needed to the water or sewer system.
- A question was asked regarding whether steep slopes were included in the density calculation, like easements. Mr. McDonough replied yes, stating the statute has the word gross density in there.

Questions from the public:

- Keith Milne, 4 MacArthur Street: questioned if the Board knows if duty regarding voting with its own minds. Mr. McDonough replied that the Board operates strictly within a legal framework and there is good guidance from the courts. Mr. Milne also asked a question regarding how the site plan changed from a previous plan for 30 units with commercial space to 98 units. The Chairman clarified that the question about the change in unit count really should be addressed to Council, because they're the ones that made a new redevelopment plan. Mr. Milne also

asked how it is approved when we're sitting here in front of the Planning Board requesting approval. Mr. McDonough responded that there is an approved Redevelopment Plan that was adopted by the governing body.

- Nicole Longo, 13 Dennis Avenue: asked if the tree plan was revised to avoid contributing to the tree fund. Mr. McDonough replied that the landscape plan has been updated.
- Bill Anderson, 100 East Main Street: asked for clarification regarding what 98 units means. Mr. McDonough replied that 98 units refers to the number of apartments, not the number of bedrooms. Mr. Anderson also asked if the building would be 15 stories in height and Mr. McDonough replied that the building would be four stories.
- Angel Bell, 53 East Main Street: asked for clarification if the project was approved or waiting for approval, and if it is not approved then asked the Board to consider the impact of disturbing the ground that is environmentally concerning. The Chairman explained that the Redevelopment Plan is approved, the application to build the building has not been approved.
- Attorney William Caldwell, from Annandale: Mr. Caldwell resumed his cross-examination of Mr. McDonough. Mr. Caldwell asked if the community impact statement was published on the website and Mr. McDonough stated that he was not sure. Mr. Caldwell asked if the applicant is seeking a PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) program. Mr. McDonough stated he didn't know the details but explained that a PILOT is an option for redevelopment areas and is certainly in the community's interest to consider a PILOT program given the project's low school-age population projection. Mr. Caldwell revisited the issue of the Redevelopment Plan and its consistency with the Master Plan. Mr. McDonough stated his opinion that the Redevelopment Plan was adopted in accordance with the procedural and substantive standards of law by the governing body. Mr. Caldwell asked Mr. McDonough to expand on "baked in" regarding the density definition. Mr. McDonough clarified this was his "vernacular" for "including." Mr. Caldwell asked how a tree with a 2–3-foot root ball could be planted in the required 2 feet of clean fill without "going into contaminated soil." Mr. McDonough replied, that is an LSRP question. Mr. Caldwell's follow-up suggesting the LSRP should be present to answer was objected to, and the objection was sustained. Mr. Caldwell asked if moving the trees back behind the county right-of-way would have any other impact on the plan. Mr. McDonough replied that there would not be any impact. Mr. McDonough confirmed he agrees with Mr. Ferrante's testimony regarding the fire access lane not taking away from the 35-foot buffer. Mr. Caldwell's attempt to re-ask how the unit count went from 30 to 98 was again objected to, and the objection was sustained.
- Mark Loozen, 9 Timbercroft Road: asked for clarification of building height and if this conforms to the Borough's ordinance. Mr. McDonough clarified that it conforms to the "Redevelopment Plan regulations that are in effect and governing this site right now. In response to a follow-up, a Board member clarified that this property has nothing to do with our Transit Village application or designation.
- Tom Creelman, 22 Sunset Drive: questioned the proposed building's height and setback. He noted the 53-foot-tall building is set back 59 feet from the right-of-way, creating a one-to-one ratio that results in a sharp, 45-degree angle view of the four-story structure if trees are not present for screening. Mr. McDonough accepted the order of magnitude of this mathematical observation. Mr. Creelman also asked, how does a building of this size and scale act as a gateway to the community, as stated goal of the Redevelopment Plan? Mr. McDonough replied that the redevelopment plan explicitly permits a building of this specific height, coverage, and style, the analytics that are tied to the public policy statement and measurable standards that go towards that have already been established.

The Chairman called for a 5-minute break at this time and the recording was stopped.

The applicant's attorney, Mr. Zelly, stated that the applicant rests their case. He provided a summary, stating that the application complies completely with the Redevelopment Plan and should be approved. He acknowledged the one potential deviation regarding the county. He reminded the Board that the project fulfills three key community benefits:

- getting rid of the eyesore.
- providing state-mandated affordable housing.
- performing the environmental cleanup.

The Chairman announced that at this time would be the public comment period. It was suggested that a three-minute time limit be used per person. Mr. Caldwell, attorney for Mr. Schweikert, raised a procedural objection. He stated that the Municipal Land Use Law requires anyone who testifies to be under oath. He also objected to the three-minute time limit for an interested party. The Board's Attorney, Mr. VanHise, responded that limiting comments is common practice and within the permissible bounds of the Board, if the procedure is laid out ahead of time. The Chairman stated that while

there is a three -minute time limit there will be latitude. He also confirmed the Board's practice to swear in all speakers during the public comment period.

- Michael Gronsky, 129 West Main Street: Mr. Gronsky was sworn in. He stated he was providing his opinion and read a letter he had prepared, which was entered into the record as Exhibit P-1. His letter reiterated concerns from the August 18 meeting regarding footings, foundations, and geotechnical issues. He stated his belief that the site conditions and the size of the structure would require extensively engineered deep footings and deep pilings. He noted the new Borough Hall at 97 West Main Street was "downsized due to the site filling materials. He warned that any "extensive excavation or deep foundation pilings could widen the contaminated site and potentially contaminate deep subsurface limestone formations and aquifers that travel outside the borough. He stated his opinion that before any approvals are forthcoming, the developer must be required to perform all necessary tests and provide assurances that this development will not unleash an environmental disaster.
- Keith Milne, 4 MacArthur Street: Mr. Milne was sworn in and endorsed Mr. Gronsky, calling the 98-unit project a "huge," "planned disaster." He urged the Board to "vote what you believe," citing concerns that the development would extensively disturb the site, "destroy" the area's aesthetics and traffic, and he dismissed the applicant's planner's "ludicrous" estimates of anticipated pupils. Milne concluded by opining that the project "doesn't fit in with this town" and creates a worse problem.
- Mark Loozen ,9 Timbercroft Road: Mr. Loozen was sworn in and expressed strong opposition to the proposed building, stating that while he would support an attractive two-story structure, the current four-story plan is gigantic and inappropriate for a small town. He viewed the design as showing extreme disrespect to the townspeople, arguing that its construction would signal the end of High Bridge as a small town. Mr. Loozen asserted that the proposed solution is worse than the original problem and suggested it would be preferable to leave the site undeveloped until a respectful plan emerges. He concluded by urging the Board to reject the proposal without delay, warning against accepting promises of future compliance, and demanding they cease efforts to urbanize High Bridge.
- Tom Creelman, 22 Sunset Drive: Mr. Creelman was sworn in and restated his objection that necessary stormwater management revisions should be fully reviewed immediately, not merely made a condition of approval. He argued that simply because 98 units are permissible does not mandate their construction. Creelman suspected the density increased from 8 to 23 units per acre solely to make the project cost-effective for the developer, asserting that this constituted spot zoning. He considered the project arbitrary and done exclusively for the private interest of the developer. He noted the plan includes 156 bedrooms and found the traffic engineer's report, which projected only 25 cars exiting in the morning, to be unbelievable. He strongly urged the Board to either reject the proposal entirely or mandate a significant reduction in its scale.
- Nicole Longo, 13 Dennis Avenue: Ms. Longo was sworn in and stated she supports the property's cleanup and revitalization. Regarding demolition, she requested strict controls, real-time air monitoring, and immediate notifications if safety thresholds are exceeded. Her primary concern related to stormwater management, as her home is located at the bottom of the hill behind the property; noting a past flooding issue and the site's nearly 60% impervious coverage, she worried about flooding risks from any maintenance lapse. She requested an independent hydrology review and annual, rather than five-year, stormwater reporting. For landscaping, while appreciating the new fence, she noted it fails to block views, headlights, or winter noise once leaves drop. She asked the Board to require replacement trees be continuous evergreens of meaningful size, planted on-site first, with tree fund contributions only allowed for what truly cannot fit.
- Carol Creelman, 22 Sunset Drive: Ms. Creelman was sworn in and expressed concern that the Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) was absent for cross-examination, finding it highly suspect that this issue was addressed solely through a letter. She asked the Board to seriously consider this missed opportunity before deciding. Second, after attending many meetings, she observed that excellent questions raised by the public had not been addressed in the modified plans, and she urged the Board to factor this lack of response into their final judgment.
- Mr. Caldwell, attorney for Mr. Al Schweikert, called Peter Stack, a Licensed Planner. Mr. Stack was accepted as an expert witness by the Board. He raised significant procedural and legal challenges, arguing the application is not ready for final approval due to unresolved contingencies that would be negotiated outside the public forum. He also noted procedural issues, including the borough's website displaying an outdated redevelopment plan. Stack further critiqued the Community Impact Statement, stating it would be void if the applicant uses a PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) since such payments bypass school funding. His main argument focused on density and jurisdiction:

- Density Challenge: Stack calculated the proposed density as 23.538 units per acre by excluding a 6,000 sq. ft. county easement from the usable lot area, arguing it acts as a right-of-way that should not be included.
- Jurisdiction Claim: Since 23.538 exceeds the 23 units/acre maximum, this creates a (d-5) density variance. Stack asserted the Board lacks the power to grant this specific variance from a redevelopment plan, meaning it does not have jurisdiction to approve the 98-unit project. This argument was immediately contested by the Board Planner, who pointed out that the ordinance's definition of "Density" explicitly includes "streets, easements and open space portions of the development," suggesting that the easement should be included. Mr. Stack maintained that the definition should "make sense," arguing that including land over which the developer has no control, such as land under a public street, is illogical for a density calculation.
- Stated the application is not ready for final development due to numerous contingencies that would be negotiated outside the public forum if preliminary and final approval were granted simultaneously.
- Mr. Stack challenged the legality of the Redevelopment plan's adoption process. He argued that the plan was improperly compared to the 2011 Re-examination Report; instead, the law required comparison to the 2013 Master Plan Land Use Plan Element. He noted that the 2013 Master Plan had specifically recommended against a redevelopment study until the full extent of site contamination was discovered and further recommended a C1 commercial zone for the site, not residential use.
- The applicant's attorney objected, stating that Mr. Stack's testimony concerned a past decision (the plan's adoption) and was not relevant to the current hearing. The Board's Attorney, Mr. VanHise, agreed, confirming that the 45-day statutory period to challenge the redevelopment plan's adoption had passed, meaning the plan was "presumptively valid," and the board was legally "constrained by that plan." Following a lengthy legal discussion, the Chairman sustained the objection, concluding this line of testimony.

Questions from the Board's professionals:

- Board Planner Green asked Mr. Stack to confirm his conclusion that the ordinance phrase "street right of way" includes the "easement" the county is taking. Mr. Stack replied that his thinks this is because that's the way the county does it. Ms. Green and Mr. Stack discussed the two different definitions. Ms. Green noted that the definition of "Lot Area" includes the word "usable," which Mr. Stack's argument relied on. However, she pointed out that the definition of "Density" explicitly states, "The permitted number of dwelling units per gross acre of land, including streets, easements and open space portions of the development."

Questions from Board members:

- A Board member asked Mr. Stack to confirm his argument that the project "over density" and the Board does not "have the ability to grant a density variance." He clarified that while the borough has the authority to define density, his opinion is that the interpretation must "make sense," and including land under a public street does not.
- A Board member asked if the 2013 Master Plan was amended to change the "commercial only" recommendation to "mixed use." Mr. Stack replied, "The land use plan element was not amended."

Questions from the Applicant:

- The applicant's attorney (Mr. Zelly) stated, "in the interest of time," he would not cross-examine the witness.

Questions from the public:

- Mark Loozen, 9 Timbercroft Road: Mr. Loozen asked Mr. Stack if steep slopes are also supposed to be removed when calculating density. Mr. Stack replied that the applicant did remove an area for steep slopes, but in his opinion, "that's not related to density."

Mr. Caldwell stated he had no further witnesses.

Motion to close Public Hearing for PBapp-01-2025: Koffman Second: Brosnan 8 yes votes, motion passed.

Mr. Vanhise reviewed the list of conditions of approval. He stated that most of the conditions were set forth in the technical review letters form the Board engineer and Board Planner. The additional conditions are:

- The applicant will provide display area on the property to commemorate the historic use of the property.
- Trash pickup will be scheduled during normal business hours.
- Site plans will be updated to show school bus stops as coordinated with the Board of Education.

- The sidewalk and multi-purpose path along West Main Street will be coordinated with the county and board professionals.
- The applicant will perform a post-construction night lighting test, with results reported to the Board Engineer.
- The deed notice for the contaminated site will be updated based on the "as-built" conditions.
- Any plants damaged due to snow removal will be replaced.
- Plans will be updated to show the JCP&L transformer pad with screening details.
- A stormwater maintenance report will be submitted.
- The plans will include the underground water storage tanks, the depressed curb, and the emergency services stabilized grass lane.
- Parking lot islands will be adjusted.
- During site demolition, the applicant must provide notice to the municipality if perimeter monitoring sensors detect any air quality issues.
- A site visit shall be conducted to identify and denote any additional tree preservation details.
- The applicant must mark the trees for removal, and this must be confirmed by a walk-through with the Environmental Commission to ensure older trees are protected.
- The applicant must provide notice of the demolition plan and the estimated start date to the 200-foot list.
- A board member asked about the request for both preliminary and final approval and if the board could grant only preliminary. The Board's Attorney, Mr. VanHise, explained that the board could choose to grant preliminary only. If they did, the applicant would have to comply with all requirements and then return for another public hearing to seek final approval. A board member noted that since the applicant is required to comply with all conditions as a matter of law, granting both preliminary and final approval at the same time was acceptable.

Motion to approve PBapp-01-2025: Lee. Second: Brosnan

- Mr. Brosnan (Yes): Stated that the Board is a quasi-judicial body, not one for "opinion-based judgments." He said the facts show the site is "by right" and conforms to the redevelopment plan. He noted that while he does not appreciate a 98-unit building, it is conforming, and the applicant has been accommodating. He stated he hopes this is the highest density structure in the borough for many generations.
- Conroy (Yes): Concurred with Mr. Brosnan. She stated her biggest concern from the beginning has been the "environmental cleanup" and that she "sincerely hopes the applicant will take every possible precaution as peoples lives will be affected.
- Mr. Koffman (Yes): Echoed the previous comments, stating the Board's role is not to make subjective emotional assessments but to determine if the plan complies with what our redevelopment plan stipulates. He said the applicant demonstrated compliance and that the board must have some trust in our professionals to work with the applicant on the final adjustments.
- Mayor Lee (Yes): Stated she could not say it better than what was already said and thanked the applicant for answering the legitimate concerns about cleanup.
- Mart (Yes): He stated that "from a personal perspective, I do wish it was something smaller, but his personal opinion is not the basis for judgment. He felt the density calculation issue was appropriately addressed by council and that he must trust that part of why we have a DEP is to ensure the cleanup is done lawfully.
- Chairman Musnuff (Yes): He noted he has lived in town for 38 years and that building has been vacant the entire time." He cited the extraordinary cost of cleanup (at least $600,000) and argued that this density is what makes the project feasible. He stated that if only 20 or 32 units were allowed, we could be looking at that building for another generation. He concluded the plan meets the redevelopment district with no variances, save the minor county tree issue.
- Suozzo (Yes): Stated that he believes the application meets all requirements and complies with redevelopment plans
- Regan (Yes): Stated that her background as an environmental cleanup project manager for the Army gives her a different perspective. From what she has reviewed, everything checks the box she also has faith that what's going to come of this is not going to lead us down a path that would not put High Bridge in its best interest.

Eight 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.

- Keith Milne, 4 MacArthur Street: Stated that most of the Board "didn't really like it, but you voted for it anyway." He accused the Board's engineer and attorney of "advocating for this application and guided this Board way too much. Board Member Conroy responded to Mr. Milne, stating, "Every single person sitting at this table has tremendous integrity, including our professionals and no one here is being told how to vote.
- Tom Creelman, 22 Sunset Drive: Expressed his disappointment and stated that he was really hoping the Board would grant only preliminary approval, "especially with so many people expressing concerns.
- Carol Kreelman, 22 Sunset Drive: Asked if the modified or revised plans would be available on the website for the public to see. The board clarified that the Resolution, be and will have all the conditions of approval, and once approved by the Board and then posted on the website. The full plans are available for review in the office.
- Board Member Brosnan: Suggested to the Board to recommend that the Council address the communication breakdown regarding public documents and have a specific spot on the website to access these documents.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**: Motion to adjourn: Koffman/Second: Lee Voice vote: Eight yes votes, motion passed.
Next Meeting Date: November17, 2025
Meeting Location: Rescue Squad Building, 95 West Main Street, High Bridge, NJ 08829
Meeting Time: 7:30 P.M.

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

NOMINATION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2026

NUMBER: PB01-2026 **ADOPTED: January 12, 2026**

WHEREAS, the Borough of High Bridge Planning Board takes nominations and elects a Chairman annually; and

WHEREAS, having taken nomination at this reorganization meeting and votes were counted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge does hereby approve the nomination of _____ as Chairperson for the year 2026.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary
Barbara Kinsky

Vice-Chairperson

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

NOMINATION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2026

NUMBER: PB02-2026 **ADOPTED: January 6, 2026**

WHEREAS, the Borough of High Bridge Planning Board takes nominations and elects a Vice-Chairman annually; and

WHEREAS, having taken nomination at this reorganization meeting and votes were counted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge does hereby approve the nomination of _____ as Vice-Chairman for the year 2026.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary
Barbara Kinsky

Chairman

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
CONTRACTED PROFESSIONALS FOR THE YEAR 2026

NUMBER: PB03-2026 **ADOPTED: January 12, 2026**

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2007, the "New Jersey Local Unit Pay-to-Play" Law, *N.J.S.A.* 19:44A-20.5 et. seq., became effective; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of High Bridge has a need to award certain professional contracts for services required by the municipality in calendar year 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Pay-to-Play Law permits such services to be acquired through two processes, including the "non-fair and open" process as defined in *N.J.S.A.*19:44A-20.7 on those contracts where it is anticipated that the total cost will exceed $17,500.00; and

WHEREAS, the public good and interest of the citizens of the Borough of High Bridge will best be served by the "non-fair and open" process to secure experienced professional services, rather than the "fair and open" process of awarding a contract to the lowest bidder; and

WHEREAS, the Borough C.F.O. has determined and certified in writing that the value of each of these professional services may, in the aggregate, exceed $17,500.00; and

WHEREAS, each professional will be required to first complete and submit a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which will certify that the said professional consultant and their firm have not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the previous one year, and that their contract will prohibit the said professional consultant and their firm from making any reportable contributions through the term of the contract.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge, County of Hunterdon and in the State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The following 2026 professional contracts shall be awarded under the "non-fair and open" process:
   - Attorney, Mason, Griffin & Pierson, Kevin Van Hise
   - Planner, Colliers Engineering & Design (formerly known as Maser Consulting)
   - Engineer, Colliers Engineering & Design (formerly known as Maser Consulting)
   - Princeton Hydro

2. The said professionals, prior to securing such contract, shall execute and file with the Clerk of the municipality, a 2026 Business Entity Disclosure Certification pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 19:44A-20.8 and the CFO shall provide a Determination of Value to be placed on file with this Resolution.

3. Each Contract is awarded without competitive bidding and the Board and Borough Clerk are authorized to execute Contracts for these professional services.

4. A notice of this action shall be published in the Borough's legal newspaper.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary
Barbara Kinsky

Chairman

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

SELECTIONS OF NEWSPAPERS FOR PUBLICATION OF LEGAL NOTICE

NUMBER: PB04-2026 **ADOPTED: January 12, 2026**

WHEREAS, P.L. 2025, c. 72 requires that starting March 1, 2026, municipalities publish their public notices on the municipal website;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge, county of Hunterdon, public notice will be available at www.highbridge.org starting March 1, 2026, in compliance with P.L. 2025, c. 72

BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge, County of Hunterdon, in the State of New Jersey that pursuant to the N.J.S.A. 40:53-1 et seq., the Hunterdon Review and the Star Ledger be designated as the official newspapers.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary
Barbara Kinsky

Chairman

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

NOMINATION OF BOARD SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR 2026

NUMBER: PB05-2026 **ADOPTED: January 12, 2026**

WHEREAS, the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment require a Board Secretary, and

WHEREAS, Barbara Kinsky is qualified to be Board Secretary, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment require a Deputy Board Secretary, and

WHEREAS, Adam Young is qualified to be Deputy Board Secretary,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge in the County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey that Barbara Kinsky is hereby appointed as Planning Board and Board of Adjustment Secretary and Adam Young is hereby appointed as Deputy Planning Board and Deputy Board of Adjustment Secretary.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary
Barbara Kinsky

Chairman

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

PLANNING BOARD MEETING DATES FOR THE YEAR OF 2026
& REORGANIZATIONAL 2026 MEETING

NUMBER: PB06-2026 **ADOPTED: January 12, 2026**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act (Ch. 231, P.L. 1975) provides for the giving of annual notice by public bodies of the time, date and location of the regular meetings of such public body to be held during the succeeding year, and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act (Ch. 231, P.L. 1975), hereinafter referred to as the Act, authorizes a public body to make certain other determinations and take certain other actions in conformance therewith.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Borough of High Bridge, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. Regular meetings of this Board shall be held during the 2026 calendar year and the 2026 reorganizational meeting at 7:30 pm at the Rescue Squad Building 95 West Main St., High Bridge, NJ, New Jersey, on the following dates:

a. The third Monday of each and every month **except for** January, February and May. Those meetings will be held on January 12th, for reorganizational meeting and regular meeting, February 23rd, and May 11, 2026. The full set dates for the Planning Board/Board of Adjustment meetings is as follows:
b. January 12, February 23, March 16, April 20, May 11, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16 and December 21 of 2026.

2. Copies of this Resolution and any revisions or modifications thereof, certified to be true copies by the Secretary of this Board, will be disseminated and distributed as required by the Act as follows:

a. Posted and maintained throughout the 2065 calendar year on the bulletin board at the High Bridge Borough Hall.

b. Mailed, emailed, or hand delivered to the newspaper designated as the official newspaper of the Borough and public notice will be available at www.highbridge.org starting March 1, 2026, in compliance with P.L. 2025, c. 72

c. Filed with the Clerk of this Municipality.

d. Mailed, emailed, or hand delivered to such other persons as may be entitled thereto under the terms of the Act and this Resolution.

3. Pursuant to Section 14 of the Act, the Clerk of the Municipality is hereby authorized and directed to mail such notice as may be required and authorized under the Act to any person requesting the same providing that person has first complied with the following term and condition:

a. Any and all requests for notice under the Act shall be made in writing as an OPRA request.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary
Barbara Kinsky

Chairman

RESOLUTION
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
COUNTY OF HUNTERDON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

COMPLETENESS DETERMINATION

NUMBER: PB07-2026 **ADOPTED: January 12, 2026**

WHEREAS, on January 13, 2022, the High Bridge Planning Board ("The Board") proposed amendments to the Borough Council to Chapter 145, Article VI, §§ 605, 606 and 607 of the Borough Code regarding the review of applications before the Board for completeness; and

WHEREAS, previously, the Board was charged with determining completeness of applications under the above referenced section of the Borough Code;

WHEREAS, this procedural step for completeness review has become both unduly burdensome to the Board and unnecessarily expensive at times to certain applicants with the need to have each member of the Board review the full contents of an application prior to it being heard; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2022, the Borough Council introduced Ordinance #2022-004, which amended the applicable code sections above to reflect that **"the Board, a subcommittee of the Board, the Board's professionals, or a designee or designees of the Board"** is to be responsible for completeness review of applications before the Board; and

WHEREAS, upon introduction, the Borough Clerk has provided to the High Bridge Borough Planning Board pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-26a a copy of said ordinance and a request for said Board to conduct a consistency review of said ordinance with the High Bridge Borough Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, at its meeting on February 28, 2022, the Board reviewed the Master Plan along with the proposed ordinance and found that it was consistent with the goals of the Master Plan for the Borough; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2022, the Borough Council formally adopted Ordinance #2022-004; and

WHEREAS, the Board held discussions at its regularly scheduled meeting on March 21, 2022 to determine who will be responsible for reviewing applications for completeness based upon the amendments to the Township code above.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the High Bridge Borough Planning Board as follows: Pursuant to Ordinance #2022-004, the Board has determined that completeness of Planning Board and Board of Adjustment application be determined by_____.

_____ _____

Planning Board Secretary, Barbara Kinsky