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

Meeting Date: March 16, 2026 - **Meeting Time:** 7:30 P.M.
Meeting Location: 95 West Main Street, 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 Star Ledger and the Hunterdon Review on January 13, 2026.Notice of and agenda for this meeting has also been posted on www.highbridge.org and posted on the bulletin board in Borough Hall.

2. FLAG SALUTE: Led by presiding officer.

3. ROLL CALL:
Brosnan, present, Conroy, present, Koffman, absent, Lee, present, Mart, absent, Musnuff, present, Ryder, present, Suozzo, present, Yu, absent, Osborne, present.
Also present were Board attorney Kevin Van Hise, Board engineer, William Burr, Board Secretary, Barbara Kinsky and eight 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: January 12, 2026, and March 2, 2026.
Motion to dispense with the reading of the prior meetings' minutes:
Motion: Ryder Second: Brosnan Voice vote: 7 yes votes, motion passed.

Motion to approve January 12, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion: Ryder Second: Brosnan
Brosnan, yes, Conroy, yes, Koffman, absent, Lee, yes, Mart, absent, Musnuff, yes, Ryder, yes, Suozzo, abstain, Yu, absent, Osborne, yes. Six yes votes, one abstention, motion passed.

Motion to approve March 2, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion: Lee Second: Brosnan

Brosnan, yes, Conroy, yes, Koffman, absent, Lee, yes, Mart, absent, Musnuff, abstain, Ryder, yes, Suozzo, abstain, Yu, absent, Osborne, yes. Six yes votes, one abstention, motion passed.

Board attorney Kevin VanHise confirmed that the notice and publication requirements for this application have been met and the Board does have jurisdiction.

The applicant's attorney, Ted Carroll of Gruenberg Law office gave a brief overview of the proposed application. He explained the applicant seeks a minor subdivision and lot line adjustment.

6. PLANNING BOARD NEW BUSINESS: Public hearing for PBapp02-2025, 46/48 Main Street, High Bridge, New Jersey, 08829, Block 8 Lot 5 and Block 8 Lot 7.01 (7 McDonald Street, High Bridge, New Jersey, 08829) for Minor Subdivision/Boundary line Adjustment with "C" variance.
Owner/applicant: J G Realty, LLC.

Motion to open public hearing: Motion: Suozzo Second: Ryder

Brosnan, yes, Conroy, yes, Koffman, absent, Lee, yes, Mart, absent, Musnuff, yes, Ryder, yes, Suozzo, yes, Yu, absent, Osborne, yes.

Board attorney Kevin VanHise confirmed that the notice and publication requirements for this application have been met and the Board does have jurisdiction.

The applicant's attorney, Ted Carroll of Gruenberg Law office gave a brief overview of the proposed application. He explained that the applicant seeks a minor subdivision and lot line adjustment. The proposal involves transferring a rear portion of Lot 7.01 to Lot 5. Mr. Carroll stated that no new exhibits are being introduced; the applicant is relying on the plans and materials previously submitted to the Board.

Mr. VanHise swore in Mr. Jim Rispoli, Mrs. Regina Rispoli and Anthony DeVizio as witnesses for the applicant.

Mr. Rispoli testified that he and his wife Regina Rispoli own J G Realty, LLC and they gave a history of the property:

- Duration of Ownership**:** has owned the subject property for 24 years.
- Property Use: There is no proposed change of use associated with this application. The property has historically functioned as a barber shop/hair salon for many years, spanning several owners prior to the applicant's purchase.
- Railroad Portion**:** The property includes a section of a former rail line. The witness clarified that this land was originally leased by Matthias Apgar to Taylor Wharton. After Taylor Wharton closed in 1974, the land sat dormant.
- Acquisition of Rail Section: Approximately 22 years ago, the witness coordinated with the successors of Taylor Wharton (Komline Sanderson) to formally merge the railroad section back into the Main Street property deed.
- Property Retention: The witness confirmed that while they intend to sell the McDonald Street portion of the property, they plan to maintain ownership and operation of the hairdresser/barber shop for the time being.
- Impact of Adjustment**:** It was noted that the McDonald Street lot currently has a very small backyard and a side yard. The proposed lot line adjustment will formally provide the lot with a "nice backyard" consistent with its historical use.
- Existing Boundaries**:** The witness testified that a fence has already been in place for years marking this intended boundary, a new fence was recently installed following the submitted plans.

Board and Public Questions/comments:

- Jareth Shaw from 22 Center Street: questioned why a fence was installed approximately 4 years ago and is not on the site plan, pointed out that the current property line bisects a set of steps used by his family to access their property. Mr. Rispoli clarified that the fence was intentionally placed two feet inward from the steps to avoid interfering with the neighbor's access, despite the steps being located on the applicant's property. Counsel for the applicant explained that the current application is based on a 2021 survey. Because the fence was installed roughly four years ago (potentially post-survey or during a window not captured), it was not reflected on the engineering plans provided. The applicant confirmed that permits were obtained for the fence installation.
- A Board member expressed concern regarding the lack of a current, accurate map reflecting existing physical structures (the fence and steps)
- The Board raised questions regarding potential access easements or claims of adverse possession related to the steps, given the age of the homes and the historical usage of the stairs.

The Chairman and Counsel clarified that this portion of the meeting was strictly for questioning the applicant's witnesses, not for testimony from the public. Public comments and personal concerns would be addressed during the formal public testimony phase once the speaker is sworn in.

Mr. Anthony DeVizio's licenses and credentials were accepted by the Board. Mr. DeVizio gave technical testimony to the Board.

- Project Scope: Relocation of the property line between Block 8, Lot 5(46-48 Main St.) and Lot 7.01 (7 McDonald St.).
- Adjustment Details**:** The westerly line of Lot 7.01 is being extended into the "spur" of Lot 5, adding approximately 25 feet of depth to Lot 7.01 to create a more functional backyard.
- Property Zone**:** Both lots are located within the Downtown Business Zone.
- Site Impact: No new construction, improvements, or modifications to existing buildings are proposed. There will be no impact on drainage or physical site characteristics.
- New Variance Request (Lot 5): Current Status**:** Lot 5 (46-48 Main Street) currently conforms to the 5,000-square-foot minimum requirement, measuring 6,083 square feet. Proposed Status: After the subdivision, the lot area will be 5,103 square feet. If the required county right-of-way easement is excluded from the calculation, the area drops to 4,856 square feet, necessitating a minor bulk variance for being approximately 150 square feet under the threshold.
- Lot Area (Lot 7.01**):** Currently non-conforming (under 5,000 sq. ft.); the application improves this condition by adding land from Lot 5.
- Lot Frontage**:** The application creates new compliance for Lot 7.01 regarding minimum lot frontage.
- Front Yard Setback (Main St.): The existing building on Lot 5 sits over 18 feet back. Due to the required county easement, this will change to approx. 13 feet. While technically exceeding the maximum setback allowed by code, this is an existing static condition.
- Hunterdon County Planning Board: The plans were revised to accommodate a 4.5-foot-wide easement (dedication of right-of-way) along Main Street.
- Easement vs. Fee Title**:** Mr. DeVizio clarified that the land within the easement remains in "fee title" (owned by the applicant) but is excluded from certain area calculations per county standards.
- Mr. DeVizio confirmed he did not prepare the original survey but used a 2021 document. He corroborated prior testimony that the fence in question was likely installed shortly after the 2021 survey was completed.

No questions or comments from the Board or the public.

Mr. Carroll explained that the applicant is seeking "C" variance relief under the c(1) hardship standard of *NJSA 40:55D-70*, arguing that the unique physical characteristics of the subject properties make strict adherence to the current zoning ordinance a practical hardship. Beyond proving this positive criterion, the applicant must also satisfy the "negative criteria" by demonstrating that the proposed lot line adjustment will not cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the intent and purpose of the municipal zoning plan. Counsel emphasized that because there are no proposed changes to property use, no new construction, and no physical improvements, the request is a minor administrative adjustment that maintains consistency with the existing lot configurations and uses in the surrounding neighborhood. Based on this testimony, the applicant respectfully requests that the Board grant the necessary relief to move forward with the subdivision. The testimony for the applicant has concluded.

Public Comments:

Board Attorney VanHise swore in Mr. Jareth Shaw, 22 Center Street, High Bridge

- Mr. Shaw expressed significant concern regarding a set of access steps that are bisected by the current property line as shown on the subdivision plan. He testified that these steps were established prior to 1948 and have been in continuous use by the occupants of 22 Center Street for decades. Mr. Shaw clarified that these steps provide the primary and safest access to his kitchen/front door. Other entrances include a walkout basement and a secondary stairwell in poor condition. He raised the possibility of an easement by adverse possession, noting that while the current owners (the Rispoli's) permit his use, he fears a future owner of the subdivided lot might remove the steps or bar his access.

Board Attorney VanHise swore in Mr. James Scordo who resides at 111Haytown Road, Clinton Township, NJ.

- Mr. Scordo testified that he was born in the house in question. He provided a detailed historical account of the property dating back to the post-World War II era. He testified that his father purchased the lot after being displaced from his previous barber shop location on Main Street, acquiring a warehouse originally used by Taylor Wharton for heavy castings. To convert the warehouse into a residence, his father physically relocated the building approximately seven feet and installed a patio and concrete steps to provide access from Center Street. Mr. Scordo noted that while his father may have initially believed he owned the land up to the railroad tracks, a later survey revealed a very narrow gap between the house and the property line. Despite these tight boundaries, he emphasized that the High Bridge Planning Board approved a subdivision of the lot in the late 1940s and that the property and its access steps have been in continuous, uninterrupted use since 1947 with the apparent knowledge of Taylor Wharton.

- Mr. DeVizio commented regarding the concern expressed by Mr. Shaw regarding access to steps. He stated that from the perspective of a professional land surveyor, the approval of the proposed subdivision would not legally impact any existing claims to the property based on long-term usage.

Motion to close Public Hearing for PBapp-02-2025: Lee Second: Brosnan Voice vote: 7 yes votes, motion passed.

Motion to approve PBapp-02-2025: Lee Second: Brosnan

Brosnan, yes, Conroy, yes, Koffman, absent, Lee, yes, Mart, absent, Musnuff, yes, Ryder, yes, Suozzo, yes, Yu, absent, Osborne, yes. 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 one (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: Brosnan Second: Lee Voice vote: 7 yes votes, motion passed.

Next Meeting Date: April 20, 2026
Meeting Location: 95 West Main Street, High Bridge, NJ 08829
Meeting Time: 7:30 P.M.