

Township of Manalapan
120 Route 522 & Taylors Mills Road
Manalapan, NJ 07726

Planning Board Minutes
Public Meeting
November 13, 2025

Chairwoman Kathryn Kwaak called the meeting to order at 7:32pm with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. The salute to the flag followed.

Mr. Castronovo read the TV Disclosure Statement and took the Roll Call of the Board.

In attendance at the meeting: Barry Fisher, Todd Brown, John Castronovo, Chairwoman Kwaak, Jack McNaboe, Chief Hogan, Steve Kastell, Mayor Nelson, Nunzio Pollifrone, Pat Givelekian

Absent from the meeting: Barry Jacobson

Also present: Richard Brigliadoro Esq, Planning Board Attorney
Jennifer Beahm PE, PP Board Planner
Danny Lopez, PE, Planning Board Engineer
Nancy McGrath, Recording Secretary

Minutes for Review and Approval

A Motion was made by Mr. Fisher and Seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes from the **October 23, 2025** meeting as written.

Yes: Fisher, Brown, Castronovo, Kwaak, McNaboe, Hogan, Kastell, Givelekian
No: None
Absent: Jacobson
Abstain: None
Not Eligible: Nelson, Pollifrone

Resolutions

PPM2043 - Woodward Estates, Inc. – Extension of Time Request

Block 67 / Lots 22, 25, 32, 35.02 - Millhurst Road
Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision and Site Plan
Approved 9/22/22 Memorialized 10/27/22
Extension of Time #1 approved 9/12/24 Memorialized 10/10/24
Extension of Time #2 approved 10/23/25 Memorialized 11/13/25

Yes: Fisher, Brown, Castronovo, Kwaak, McNaboe, Hogan, Kastell, Givelekian
No: None
Absent: Jacobson
Abstain: None
Not Eligible: Nelson, Pollifrone

Application

PBE2528 - Village at St. James
Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan
Lewis Street - Block 48.01 Lot 8.04
Multi-Family Affordable Housing
10 Units – Townhouses

Mr. Steven H. Merman of the law firm of Javerbaum & Wurgaft, the attorney representing the applicant explained his client is seeking approval for preliminary and final major site plan for an affordable housing project consisting of 10 units. The property is currently owned by the municipality and will be transferred as the development progresses.

Mr. Merman called his first witness, Mr. Robert Curley of Collier’s Engineering, to provide engineering testimony regarding the site plan. Mr. Curley was sworn in and presented his educational and professional credentials. Chairwoman Kwaak accepted his qualifications as a licensed engineer and professional planner as sufficient for the purposes of testimony.

Mr. Curley explained that his firm was retained to prepare concept and site plans for the proposed development. He noted the project is part of the Township's Affordable Housing Element Plan since 2010, and that an ordinance establishing the Affordable Housing Townhome (AH-TH) Overlay District was adopted in April 2025. He was then asked to describe the site, its location, and current conditions.

Mr. Curley referenced page five (Utility plan) of the plan set submitted to orient the Board. He explained that the primary frontage is along Lewis Street and the smaller frontage on Wood Avenue will remain green open space. The property will be regraded to accommodate an infiltration basin. The proposed development consists of a single building with 10 units, each having individual driveways. A total of 27 off-street parking spaces are planned, including five EV stalls at the end of Lewis Street. The plan also includes widening Lewis Street, adding a turnaround for vehicles, and providing a designated trash storage area for the units.

Mr. Curley explained the roadway design requires a variance from the AH-TH ordinance, which mandates a 34-foot cartway width. The applicant's plans propose a 28-foot width (14 feet per half-width). Mr. Merman noted that this variance was properly advertised in the public notice. The design is consistent with Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS), which allows for a 28-foot cartway for this type of development. Because the site frontage does not permit on-street parking, all parking will be accommodated in individual driveways or at the terminus of Lewis Street.

Ms. Beahm asked about the Master Plan requirements for Lewis Street. Mr. Curley explained that the plan designates a 50-foot right-of-way but does not specify a cartway width. He confirmed that the project site does, in fact, have a 50-foot right-of-way.

In addition to the proposed improvements along Lewis Street, the application includes stormwater management facilities. The design provides for the collection of existing drainage from Lewis Street into a new inlet, which will bring it back to an infiltration basin located at the southern portion of the site. This basin has been engineered in compliance with NJDEP regulations and municipal ordinances. The overflow from the basin will discharge to Wood Avenue and continue along Wood Avenue, ultimately tying into the county drainage system.

As mentioned earlier, the proposed development consists of ten dwellings which is consistent with the municipality's Affordable Housing Element. Of the ten units, six will contain two bedrooms and four will contain three bedrooms. There is a common trash storage area planned at the northern terminus of Lewis Street. Roadway improvements will include new lighting.

During technical review (TRC), it was noted that waivers were required for curb and sidewalk installation along Wood Avenue. Monmouth County Engineering advised that due to the rural character of the area, curb and sidewalk would not be required. If sidewalks were installed, they would need to be set four feet from the right-of-way, which in this location is 80 feet wide, necessitating a 23.5-foot dedication across the site frontage. As a result, the applicant is requesting a waiver of the requirement and has agreed to contribute to the municipal Sidewalk and Curb Fund if the waiver is granted.

Another concern raised was the sight distance at the intersection of Lewis Street and Wood Avenue. The issue stems from vegetation and grading on Lot 11, which is not controlled by the applicant. Monmouth County Engineering recommended contacting the Lot 11 property owner and documenting those outreach efforts. Mr. Merman noted a letter was sent to the homeowner yesterday, but no response has been received. The applicant committed to continuing good-faith efforts to make contact to resolve the issue, with the possibility that the County may step in if no resolution is reached.

The applicant agreed that access to the storage area will be provided with a man door, in addition to the existing swing doors used for removing dumpsters.

The Environmental Commission recommended pre-wiring all dwelling units for EV charging before CO issuance, and the developer agreed. By doing this, the developer would not need the additional EV charger stalls at the end of the cul-de-sac.

The applicant will be installing perimeter fencing around the infiltration basin. The Board requested that it be a split-rail fence with anti-climbing mesh and that the design details be submitted to the township professionals for review.

Mr. Curley reminded the Board that Section 95-5.6 P(6)(a), adopted by the Township Committee in April 2025, establishes a minimum cartway width of 34 feet, with the approving

authority retaining discretion to require 36 feet to better accommodate on-street parking. He explained that their plans comply with Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) by providing a 28-foot cartway along Lewis Street—14 feet constructed on their side and 14 feet on the opposite side, creating a new roadway. He stated that the requested variance can be granted without detriment to public health, safety, or welfare and that the proposal remains consistent with RSIS cartway width requirements.

There were no further questions of Mr. Curley so Mr. Merman introduced Mr. Oliver Franklin, the project architect as the next witness. Mr. Franklin was sworn in and presented his education and professional credentials to the Board. Chairwoman Kwaak accepted his qualifications as a licensed architect for the purposes of testimony.

Mr. Franklin distributed five sheets of overall floor plans to the Board which was marked as Exhibit A1.

Sheet A2 which shows the configuration layout of the units: 10 total units - (six) two-bedroom (≈1,000 sq. ft.) and (four) three-bedroom (≈1,200 sq. ft.). Construction type will be two stories, stick-frame on slab with no basements. Each unit will include individual laundry rooms, with living spaces on the first floor and bedrooms on the second.

Mr. Franklin described the materials for the proposed building which includes cementitious horizontal lap siding with vertical batten seams (similar to Hardie board), asphalt shingle roofing, vinyl-clad windows, and paneled metal doors. Upgraded materials were selected to ensure the affordable housing project does not appear typical of such developments. Architectural features include stepped-back unit façades aligned with the street angle, varied colors on the recesses, and design elements intended to create a residential neighborhood feel rather than a continuous rowhouse appearance.

Mr. Merman indicated that he had no additional witnesses to present, and the Chair then invited the Board and Board Professionals to offer their questions and comments.

Mr. Lopez asked the applicant to consider widening Lewis Street from 28 feet to 30–31 feet to create a linear edge of pavement on both sides. Mr. Curley said they could provide a maximum of a 30-foot width across the entire frontage. Mr. Lopez asked for a revised plan with clear dimensions to show the width needed to create a linear edge of pavement on the opposite side of Lewis Street from where the townhouses are proposed.

Mr. Curley confirmed a formal submission was made to the county and a review letter was received identifying several items to be addressed. The county requested a site distance exhibit at the Wood Avenue intersection but did not propose any widening along Lewis Street. The Board requested copies of the county's response letters.

There are no plans to establish a homeowners' association, as the project will begin as a rental development. The applicant, as property owner, will be responsible for maintaining the open space and stormwater management basin. Mr. Lopez stated that maintenance obligations cannot be transferred to individual rental units; the property owner remains solely responsible for site maintenance.

Since the units are designated as rentals, residents will not be permitted to make exterior improvements beyond the current plans, which include rear patios on eight units and front patios on the two end units. The developer retains control over what improvements are permitted but if it were for-sale housing, the situation might be different.

Mr. Lopez reviewed the remaining comments outlined in the engineering review letter and requested responses from the applicant's team. The following items were addressed:

- Based on projections for ten dwellings, the maximum traffic generation during AM and PM peak periods would be approximately six trips per hour through Lewis Street.
- The RSIS guidelines require five guest parking spaces. While a shared parking area is provided, most of those spaces were initially designated for electric vehicles. Earlier in the evening, it was decided that each unit will be individually wired to accommodate EV charging so that will satisfy the need for separate make-ready spaces.
- Planter box materials will be either masonry or concrete with a thin masonry finish and will serve a dual purpose to provide safety and to allow for taller landscaping for privacy.
- All site improvements reflected in the architectural plans will be incorporated into the revised site plans for review.

- The lighting and landscaping plan includes street lighting along the full length of Lewis Street.
- Perimeter plantings along the western edge, nearly 70 evergreen trees, street trees across the front and additional shrubs around the perimeter.
- The applicant will comply with the environmental commission's recommendations to adjust the diameter of the proposed trees. Any adjustments to the landscaping plan will be addressed during resolution compliance.
- No signage is being proposed for the development.
- Right of way dedication near the trash enclosure (triangular portion) will be eliminated and shown on the revised plans.
- Applicant agrees to follow the township arborist's recommendations

Chief Hogan inquired about the fire prevention review. There were three items identified- two for the architect and one for the design professional. One recommendation was to eliminate parking on the east side of the roadway, which the applicant agreed to and testified in support of.

Discussion then turned to school bus circulation. Mr. Curley presented an additional exhibit to the board, marked as Exhibit A2. It is described as a "Turning Movement Exhibit (one page), dated November 13, 2025. It shows Lewis Street running along the bottom of each illustration. One shows a garbage truck entering Lewis Street and maneuvering through the designed turnaround—the hammerhead. The second exhibit, at the lower portion, demonstrates how a Manalapan firetruck can also travel down the road, use the hammerhead, complete the turn, and exit successfully. A school bus was not depicted because the idea was that the garbage truck would be just as restrictive as a school bus. Ms. Beahm noted that if the school bus cannot turnaround it will not enter the street and schools do not provide 'spotters' to back up.

Currently, Lewis Street does not have any designated bus stops; however, this may change once the project is completed. Discussion centered around the possibility of a school bus stop at the corner of Lewis and Route 522 (Wood Avenue) and how children from Lewis Street would safely access it. While curbs and sidewalks are not currently proposed along the entire west side of Lewis Street, the applicant could consider extending the sidewalk to Wood Avenue if permission is obtained from the owner of Lot 11. Since the right-of-way extends into Lot 11, sidewalks could alternatively be installed there with township authorization, eliminating the need for the property owner's consent. Mr. Merman will reach out to the school board as the project progresses if necessary.

Chief Hogan asked about the construction type for the project. Mr. Franklin confirmed the units will be combustible, single-family structures built on slab and the fire protection will comply fully with code requirements.

Mr. McNaboe noted that EV charging stations will be "make-ready" within the individual units; however, this does not provide actual charging capability until a unit is installed. He recommended designating at least one visitor parking space for EV charging so visitors will have a means to charge their vehicles.

The trash enclosures are designed to accommodate two eight-cubic-yard dumpsters—one for garbage and one for recycling—with the assumption of twice-weekly collection. No provisions have been made for how bulk items will be handled.

Mr. Franklin confirmed that Units 1C and 2C will have first floors designed to meet ADA accessibility standards, including compliant bathrooms, doors, and entries. Also, grading and driveways will be ADA compliant.

Mr. McNaboe mentioned there is a church not far from the project and might be looking to connect to the sewer line. He asked the applicant's engineer to reach out to the church to let them know they will have an opportunity to connect. He emphasized that once the road is paved it cannot be reopened so it makes sense to make the connection prior to topping off the road.

The Board expressed concerns that the current parking configuration—two spaces per unit plus seven guest stalls—may not be sufficient to handle overflow situations, such as households with more than two vehicles or increased demand during holidays. Mr. Curley reminded the Board that the applicant remains compliant with the adopted ordinance. Mr. Merman added that they will further examine the property to identify additional usable space, though the size of the infiltration pit limits opportunities to expand. While reducing the number of units was suggested,

it was stressed that any change to the unit count would directly affect the township's affordable housing obligations and compliance.

The Board asked about the building material colors and patio dimensions. Mr. Franklin explained that the design features include cool gray tones and whites. He also confirmed there will be on-grade patios (not decks) at roughly 7x12 feet and the plans will be updated accordingly.

Other questions and comments from the Board and the applicants team:

- The Board asked if patios for the two end units (Buildings 9 and 10) could be relocated to the rear for greater privacy, given their proximity to guest parking and the dumpster.
- Mr. Curley explained patios were placed in the front to avoid interfering with natural north-south drainage. He noted additional yard inlets could be installed, making relocation to the rear possible.
- The Board questioned the 300-foot distance from Unit 1 to the dumpster enclosure and the feasibility of residents carrying trash that far.
- Mr. Merman explained the original design included individual unit trash enclosures, but they were removed due to space constraints. He acknowledged the concept may be revisited to address Board concerns and potentially free up space at the end of Lewis Street.
- Mailboxes will be in a central location near Unit 9.
- Planter boxes described earlier are designed as a crash barrier. The Board asked the applicant to provide calculations to the professionals.
- There are no plans to install lighting around the infiltration basin, though it will be fenced as previously noted. The Board suggested that some level of illumination be considered to alert people to the presence of standing water for safety reasons.
- Access to the basin will be restricted and limited to maintenance purposes, preventing unauthorized entry.
- The project cannot be limited exclusively to veterans; however, certain financing sources may include provisions related to veterans, which will be explored as the project advances.
- The Board asked for clarification about the commitment to unit sizes for affordable housing requirements. It was explained affordable housing requires at least 20% of units be three-bedroom, no more than 20% be one-bedroom, and the remainder two-bedroom. Overall, bedroom distribution is regulated under affordable housing requirements.

Mr. Nelson commented that the units are small, about 1,000 square feet across two floors, with limited space for large gatherings. School buses will continue to stop at the corner of the dead-end street, as they do now in other locations. Privacy concerns for front patios are minimal since they face only one or two neighboring houses, and the street will remain quiet because it is a dead-end street. Overall, while residents may have company, the scale of the units limits the ability to host large events. Also trip generation will be modest with a ten-unit development.

After a ten-minute break the hearing resumed at 9:18am.

Mr. Lopez asked the applicant's engineer to clarify responsibility for trash removal. Mr. Curley stated that the intention was for the township to be responsible for trash removal. Mr. Lopez said that this should be reviewed with the township to confirm their willingness, adding that, in general, private haulers are preferred over township services.

Mr. Lopez also asked Mr. Curley to review the stormwater management plan. The proposed plan adds drainage along Lewis Street, directing water into an infiltration basin that will improve water quality, recharge groundwater, and reduce peak storm events. An overflow pipe will connect to Wood Avenue and tie into an existing county cross drain near the Matchaponix Creek tributary.

Mr. Lopez said one of the review comments state the project does not currently meet the 100-year storm peak runoff reduction rate and requested revisions to ensure compliance with township and state regulations. Mr. Curley clarified that offsite water from the west was not properly excluded from the calculation and that onsite stormwater reductions do meet requirements. The applicant further assured the Board that all other technical comments in the engineering report will be addressed.

Chairwoman Kwaak opened the floor to public comment. Members of the public then came forward to ask questions and provide input, with each individual sworn in prior to offering testimony on the application

Mr. Thomas Schwerthoffer – 9 McBride Road, Manalapan

The applicant was asked to confirm the requirement for occupancy on rental properties per bedroom but did not have an immediate answer and agreed to follow up. Assuming that two occupants per bedroom applies, he estimated that the potential number of children per unit—two in a two-bedroom and four in a three-bedroom—resulting in approximately 22 to 24 children across the development. He asked about bus access and traffic impacts to intersection. He raised concerns about sight lines and stopping distances along Route 522, particularly near the crest of the hill about 250 feet from the intersection. It was noted that with multiple cars exiting or queued to enter, traffic backups and safety issues could occur.

In response, Mr. Curley indicated the project does not involve modifying the intersection of Lewis Street and Wood Avenue and it is an existing condition even though more trips are generated from the new project. Mr. Schwerthoffer thought that this was something the applicant should look into. Mr. Merman interjected stating none of the witnesses are traffic experts and therefore could not provide testimony on that specific issue.

Ms. Beahm clarified that since the project is a permitted use, offsite traffic impacts cannot be evaluated. She emphasized that such considerations are not allowed under the law and therefore fall outside the scope of review. If this were not a permitted use, the situation would be different, but in this case offsite traffic is outside the scope of review.

Another concern Mr. Schwerthoffer raised was about the adequacy of parking, noting that with 27 spaces, families in three-bedroom units with teenage drivers could quickly exceed capacity. Concerns were raised that signage and ticketing would not resolve overflow issues, as residents and visitors are likely to park on Lewis Street regardless, creating an unmanageable parking situation. Mr. Merman responded that the project provides sufficient parking in compliance with ordinances and RSIS standards.

Mr. Briigliodoro commented that the questions are appreciated but many of them are speculative and concern potential future scenarios that the applicant cannot reasonably address. The applicant has stated that the intent is to post “No Parking” signs. If those signs are disregarded and vehicles park in prohibited areas, enforcement becomes a matter for the police department. Mr. Briigliodoro stated the Board will determine the appropriate weight to give to all testimony presented this evening, including comments from members of the public.

Ms. Beahm repeated that the application is a permitted use under current zoning and must be reviewed within that framework. She understands the parking concerns but the residential parking standards are governed by RSIS, which the application complies with and cannot be altered. She also reiterated that the project is part of the town’s state-mandated affordable housing plan and must be accommodated as required by law.

Mr. Schwerthoffer raised concerns about the decibel levels of noise from garbage trucks using front-end loaders and asked the applicant to address this concern. Mr. Merman stated the inquiry falls outside the scope of direct examination. They are willing to review the matter, but cannot provide an answer at this time.

Eric Sparks – 106 Wood Avenue (Lot 11)

Mr. Sparks asked about the references to his hedges in prior testimony regarding sight lines from Lewis Street onto Wood Avenue. The applicant clarified they were only willing to trim back shrubs if needed and were not seeking to take any portion of his driveway. Mr. Sparks maintained that the hedges were not the issue, and that the real visibility concern stemmed from the hill when exiting Lewis Street. Mr. Merman explained the county engineer told them to document communication with the owner of Lot 11. If the mound of dirt is the septic mound, obviously it cannot be removed. The applicant just needs Mr. Sparks permission to enter the property to evaluate the site and report findings back to the county. Mr. Merman said further discussion may continue and no resolution was expected this evening.

Gregory Hodge – 100 Wood Avenue

Mr. Hodge’s questioned how the street could be widened, noting a utility pole on one side and no available space on the other. He expressed doubt that the driveway or roadway could be expanded beyond its current width. Mr. Curley explained the utility poles will be relocated; at present, they are the right of way. They will be moved back and repositioned so that they fall between the proposed driveways. On the project side, a half-width of 14 feet will be established and then expanded, as discussed with the Board Professionals, to achieve to achieve a minimum overall width of 30 feet, with a straight edge running the full length of Lewis Street.

He also questioned how the garbage truck will navigate the street. Mr. Curley explained that the project will include a hammerhead turnaround, as shown on Exhibit A2, showing that a full-size garbage truck can maneuver the space. He added that the design also accommodates fire trucks but acknowledged the fire truck will still need to back-up.

Mr. Hodge concluded by saying that his family has traditionally parked along Lewis Street during holidays, but the proposed apartments would remove that option. Having lived there for decades, he questioned where they could park once the project is completed. Mr. Merman acknowledged the concern but stated that it was not a question he could answer.

Kathleen Johnson Gardner – 105 Wood Avenue

Ms. Johnson-Gardner raised concerns about rising property taxes and the Board clarified that tax assessments are handled by the tax assessor.

She asked who will screen the occupants for the rental units and expressed concerns about potential disturbances (crime, drugs, noise) within the affordable housing development. Currently, the neighborhood is largely senior citizens and a very quiet street.

Ms. Beahm explained the applicants must be income-qualified through the Township's administrative agent and placed into a lottery system. Also, management companies typically conduct additional screenings, including background checks, on prospective tenants. If renters violate the rules or regulations, they can be kicked out of the apartment. She also stated that affordable housing does not inherently equate to crime or disorder and said there are many successful projects that she has been involved with and the wait list for these homes is extremely long.

Ms. Johnson-Gardner also asked whether tenants would be allowed to have dogs in the rental units, specifically questioning if pit bulls would be permitted.

Mr. Merman explained that rules and regulations for the units have not yet been established, as the project must first go through the approval process. He also mentioned the applicant's representative is present and taking notes and these issues will be addressed as the project moves forward. They will take into account the health, safety, and welfare of both residents and neighbors.

Ms. Johnson-Gardner expressed interest in connecting to the public sewer, noting her proximity to the church referenced earlier.

Christopher Shay – 54 Bamhollow Road, Middletown, NJ

Mr. Shay asked about snow removal and how that would be handled. The Board explained that snow removal is the responsibility of the municipality, not the applicant. He also raised concerns about residents needing to walk to the dumpster during snowstorms. Mr. Merman responded that the dumpster location will be reconsidered as part of redesign discussions, but specific scenarios cannot be predicted.

Demond Sparks – 98 Wood Avenue

Mr. Sparks asked questions to get a better understanding of the exhibits. He raised questions regarding the stormwater basin and outlet release. It was confirmed that the outlet would discharge onto Wood Avenue and flow east. Discussion followed about sidewalks, with Mr. Curley noting the location in front of Lot 11 still needs evaluation, but any sidewalk would remain within the Lewis Street right-of-way. As far as EV stations, again it was determined the units will be pre-wired for EV. Seven parking stalls are proposed at the turnaround area, which will also accommodate emergency vehicles. Mr. Curley confirmed existing sanitary and water lines on Lewis Street will be tied into, with drainage flowing down Wood Avenue past the McBride inlet.

No one else from the public came forward so Chairwoman Kwaak closed the public portion of the application.

Mr. Merman stated that due to the lateness of the hour and the remaining work he is requested the matter be carried to the next the next available meeting. It was determined that the matter will be carried to the January 8th, 2026 reorganization meeting for scheduling, avoiding the need for re-notice.

The Board made some additional comments before the meeting was adjourned.

- Consider the potential use of the proposed right-of-way dedication, which the township declined, as a pocket park.
- Assess the potential for neighboring properties to connect to the sewer.

- Besides just posting “No Parking” signs, perhaps paint the entire curb yellow, and on the pavement just put down “No Parking This Side.”
- A question was raised about whether the existing parking restriction opposite the development is still necessary given the wider roadway discussed tonight. Originally the applicant was proposing only a pavement edge planned on the opposite side. The applicant would need a determination from the fire bureau if the no parking restriction could be lifted.

Mr. Briigliodoro officially announced the application will be carried to the January 8th, 2026 reorganization meeting and no further notice to the public is required.

Chairwoman Kwaak opened the floor for non-agenda items; none were raised. The meeting concluded with holiday wishes, noting this was the only meeting for the month.

The next Planning Board Meeting will be December 11th at 7:30 PM

Nancy McGrath
Recording Secretary