

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

Planning Board Minutes
Public Meeting
February 26, 2026

Chairwoman Kathryn Kwaak called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm 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: Todd Brown, John Castronovo, Barry Jacobson, Chairwoman Kwaak, Jack McNaboe, Chief Hogan, Steve Kastell, Eric Nelson, Nunzio Pollifrone, Pat Givelekian

Absent from the meeting: Barry Fisher

Also present: Richard Briigliodoro Esq, Board Attorney
Jennifer Beahm PP, Board Planner
Jordon Rizzo PE, Board Engineer
Nancy McGrath, Recording Secretary

Resolution

Consistency Review of Ordinance 2026-01 – Gaitway Redevelopment Area

A Motion was made by Chief Hogan and seconded by Mr. Jacobson to memorialize the resolution for Ordinance 2026-01 that was approved at the February 12, 2026 Planning Board Meeting.

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

Application

PFM2342A - 91 Sweetmans Ln LLC
Amended Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision Plan
91 Sweetmans Lane ~ Block 8301 / Lot 24
(*6-lot subdivision approved in July 2024, memorialized Oct. 2024)
Change in Stormwater Basin discharge

Mr. Alfieri, the attorney representing the applicant explained that the previously approved subdivision had a condition that required a direct connection to the County's stormwater system. The County ultimately did not permit that connection, which required the applicant to redesign the stormwater system. Mr. Alfieri emphasized that the stormwater management system now proposed is fully compliant with the municipal ordinance and state stormwater regulations, but it differs from the design originally approved by the board

Mr. Alfieri called Mr. Daniel T. Sehnal, P.E., Principal of Dynamic Engineering in Chester, New Jersey. Mr. Sehnal was sworn in, and his professional credentials were deemed sufficient by Chairwoman Kwaak.

Mr. Alfieri asked Mr. Sehnal to begin by orienting the Board to the location of the property and then to describe what transpired with Monmouth County leading up to the current application to change in stormwater management.

Mr. Sehnal presented the first exhibit marked as Exhibit A1 which represented a colored Aerial Map. He explained the project remains exactly as previously approved: a six-lot single-family subdivision. The overall site design, including utilities and grading, is unchanged. The only change requested is to modify the basin's discharge method.

The original plan proposed an overland discharge flowing east toward Lot 21, consistent with existing drainage patterns. In response to concerns from residents and the Board, the plan was revised to instead convey stormwater through a pipe running along the eastern property line to Sweetmans Lane, where it would connect to the county system. From there, the flow would continue east, then south along Joseph Street, and ultimately discharge through an existing headwall, maintaining the historic drainage pattern. This revised approach was approved by the Board.

The application was then submitted to the County because Sweetmans Lane is a county road, placing both the roadway and its associated infrastructure under County jurisdiction. The County rejected the proposed drainage design because they did not want to accept additional stormwater flow into their system. They also disagreed with altering the natural direction of stormwater and requested the existing drainage patterns be maintained as much as possible without increasing flow to their infrastructure. As a result, the applicant was required to revert to the original design which did receive conditional County approval, with a few minor items still to be resolved before final approval is issued.

The applicant is now requesting an amendment to allow stormwater to discharge overland to the same point where runoff currently flows. Mr. Sehnal described the existing conditions: the undeveloped site functions like a large grass-covered funnel, directing all stormwater to a single point along the eastern property line at Lot 21. From there, it continues through a swale into Lot 22, enters a headwall at Joseph Street, passes beneath the roadway, and then continues overland toward the Manalapan Brook tributary.

He noted that the current runoff is entirely uncontrolled and unattenuated, with no basins or structures to slow or treat the flow. In designing a compliant stormwater management system, engineers must account for these existing conditions, calculate flows for various storm events, and design facilities that improve water quality, detain runoff, and release it at a slower rate than occurs today. The goal of development is to create a stormwater condition that is better managed than the existing scenario.

Mr. Sehnal then presented Exhibit A-2, dated February 26, 2026, which is the site plan rendering for the lots, to illustrate and discuss the proposed design. He explained the stormwater from the new roadway and driveway surfaces will be collected and directed to an above-ground infiltration basin on the eastern side of the property. The basin will treat small, routine storms through infiltration and will detain larger storm events, releasing water at a slower, controlled rate than occurs today. Instead of piping the runoff to Sweetmans Lane, the basin will discharge to the same swale that currently carries stormwater through Lots 21 and 22 toward the existing headwall. The design meets state and local stormwater requirements, including reduced discharge rates, water-quality treatment, and groundwater recharge. It also lessens impacts during major storms and avoids additional tree removal that would have been required for the previously proposed pipe installation.

The existing mature tree buffer along the eastern property line will largely remain intact, with only limited tree removal needed at the two outfall locations. Those areas will be replanted with a dense mix of evergreens—such as cedars and arborvitae—to screen the basin from neighboring properties. The revised design keeps the natural drainage pattern and uses minimal new infrastructure, meeting County requirements. Although the applicant did get prior approval from the Freehold Soil Conservation District, a revised application will be submitted for updated certification.

The applicant reviewed Mr. Rizzo's engineering report and stated that the remaining technical comments can be easily addressed within the stormwater design. There were no Board Planner comments on the updated design plan. The stormwater basin will be maintained by a homeowners' association, with an operations and maintenance manual recorded as a deed restriction, ensuring long-term compliance and proper functioning.

Mr. Sehnal stated that in his professional opinion the redesign will have less impact on the neighboring properties than existing conditions because the basin will slow and reduce the rate of stormwater leaving the site. Although development creates more runoff, the basin detains it and releases it more slowly than it does today, meeting state standards. The discharge point

remains the same as the current natural flow path, which funnels into the existing swale and ultimately to the headwall, ensuring stormwater continues to follow the same route it does today.

Responses to Board questions/comments

Mr. Rizzo asked for clarification on the County-requested improvements—specifically the added pipe, stormwater inlets, and new curbing—and how these changes will capture runoff that currently flows onto the property. Mr. Sehnal explained that the County right-of-way will be slightly widened and new stormwater infrastructure added to capture runoff that currently flows freely down Sweetmans Lane. The collected water will be carried farther downstream, and the system now also captures some of the runoff that previously entered the County right-of-way. The additional impervious area created by widening the roadway is fully accounted for in the stormwater design.

Mr. Rizzo mentioned that he did attend the meeting with the County and heard directly that the County would not consider redirecting stormwater to Sweetmans Lane due to concerns it could worsen existing conditions. As a result, the County required the applicant to maintain the current drainage patterns, which the amended plan now reflects. Mr. Sehnal also confirmed that all existing structures on the property have been removed.

The County did not issue a formal denial but raised significant engineering concerns that the applicant could not resolve. The County's preference was to maintain existing drainage patterns and did not want to accept additional stormwater into their system. It was also noted that the Sweetmans Lane pipe is undersized and rejected the applicant's proposal to use two smaller pipes due to maintenance concerns.

Mr. Sehnal confirmed they are adding more evergreen trees and shrubs to replace disturbed vegetation and to improve screening around the basin. Because of the added plantings, an amended approval from the Shade Tree Commission will be required. He confirmed that all components of the stormwater system leading to the basin are included in the operations and maintenance manual and will be maintained by the HOA, along with the landscape buffer surrounding the basin. A split-rail fence with wire mesh will also be installed around the basin.

Mr. McNaboe asked the engineer to explain how the water leaves the basin heading toward Sweetmans Lane. Mr. Sehnal explained that the stormwater from the new roadway and driveways is collected through curb inlets and stone strips, routed through a pipe network in the cul-de-sac, and directed into the basin. An additional inlet also captures some off-site flow. The basin allows small storms to infiltrate into the ground and detains larger storms before releasing water through an outlet structure to a headwall on the eastern property line. From there, the flow follows the same natural swale across Lots 21 and 22 toward Joseph Street, as it does today.

During major storms, the basin will reach capacity and discharge along this existing swale, but at a reduced rate compared to current conditions. Homeowners who now see a small stream through their yards during heavy storms will see less flow, because the basin holds water longer and releases it more slowly.

Although regulations require modeling the basin as if no infiltration occurs, on-site testing shows the sandy soils have strong infiltration capacity. When actual soil conditions are considered, the total volume of stormwater leaving the site is also reduced. In practice, much of the water will soak into the ground, meaning even less runoff will leave the basin than the conservative regulatory model predicts.

Mr. McNaboe asked the applicant's engineer to explain, in simpler terms, the difference between allowing stormwater to flow across the existing residential properties and directing it into the pipe system on Sweetmans Lane, noting that the County had already rejected piping to their road.

Mr. Sehnal explained that the preferred engineering approach is to keep the natural drainage pattern and avoid unnecessary disturbance. Installing a new pipe would require removing additional trees and disturbing the natural buffer between Lots 22 and 23, and the pipe would follow a longer, less direct route before reaching the same discharge point on Joseph Street. He added that sending more water into the County system carries maintenance risks, since sediment or debris in the pipe could cause blockages and increase flooding potential. A natural swale is less prone to these issues and allows stormwater to soak into the ground, which cannot occur in a closed pipe. He concluded that using the natural swale is more direct, creates less impact, and is environmentally preferable, consistent with non-structural best management practices.

Multiple Board members raised concerns about the reliance on directing stormwater across neighboring properties as well as depending on the off-site swales located on those properties. There were also questions if the new basin would worsen conditions during heavy storms. Another question came up regarding driveway runoff that can potentially carry oil into the basin.

Overall, the Board conveyed that they are uncomfortable with the current proposal, citing increased impacts to neighboring properties, even though the design meets state and local requirements. The Board thought a more favorable solution would be to direct the water by piping through easements on the neighboring properties.

Mr. Sehnal stated that the concerns about backyard flooding are valid and explained again that the existing flow across Lots 21 and 22 is an existing condition. He emphasized that the proposed design reduces existing flow, drains within required timeframes, and operates consistently in both storm and winter conditions. He explained that the basin includes a water-quality feature designed to capture oil before it is discharged, and that the operations and maintenance manual requires annual inspections to ensure it continues to function properly.

The applicant confirmed that the basin itself will be an easement and not have its own block and lot. Also, they will be adding a fire hydrant on Sweetmans Lane as requested by the Fire Bureau.

The recommendation was to hear all the comments, and then adjourn the application and explore alternatives such as securing easements for the pipe with the neighbor(s) and consider revising the design and return at a later date.

Chairwoman Kwaak opening the application for public comment and Mr. LaMarsh of 3 Joseph Street came forward and raised the following points/concerns:

- Concern that the proposed stormwater system is unreliable, noting repeated use of the word “*hopefully*” in testimony.
- Needs assurance that the system must function predictably, not hypothetically.
- His property routinely experiences intense rainfall during ordinary storms, not just rare “100-year storms.”
- Acknowledged the discussion of stormwater volume and stated that the project clearly increases the total volume of water being released.
- Questioned whether the development site’s soil truly matches the sandy composition described, noting that when he tries to plant a tree, he hits clay around three feet down.
- Asked whether any stormwater components rely on electricity, citing frequent power outages in the area.
- Stated that relying on a homeowners’ association for maintenance is risky, as HOAs often face funding issues when residents fail to pay.
- The plantings discussed are unlikely to survive due to the deer eating the lower half of the trees.
- Also concerned about ponding water, stagnant water and mosquito activity if the basin does not drain as intended.
- Worried about the saturated ground conditions and runoff impacting his leach field and well.
- Did not want the extra costs of a pipe running through his property if it breaks or gets damaged.
- Questioned why the fence height around the basin changed from six-feet to four-feet.
- He expressed concern about property disruption, long-term liability, and the need to consult his own attorney.

Mr. Alfieri clarified that the stormwater system does not require electricity and said the applicant will work with the Board’s professionals to revise landscaping to ensure deer-resistant plantings. Mr. Sehnal confirmed that Lot 22 is the critical property for the easement and would determine whether a piped alternative is feasible. Mr. Rizzo explained that a four-foot split-rail fence is more aesthetically pleasing and allows easier access for adults in case of an emergency.

The Board stated that the easement could be drafted so that all responsibility for any pipe repairs would fall on the HOA, not Mr. LaMarsh. They also asked Mr. LaMarsh to provide his contact information to the applicant’s attorney so they can discuss the easement, and noted that if he ultimately does not want the pipe, he should communicate that clearly so the Board can proceed accordingly.

The recommendation was to adjourn the application until the applicant can discuss with Mr. LaMarsh (Lot 22) and return at a later date. The applicant chose March 26th for their next

hearing to give them time to reach out to Mr. LaMarsh to discuss the possibility of an easement on his property.

Mr. Briigliodoro then stated the matter will be carried to the Board's March 26th meeting at 7:00 p.m for the continuation of this case. Members of the public who wish to hear the continuation of the application should return at that time and no further notice to the public in required.

A final point was brought up that the new homes will be on septic and well just as the existing homes but there is public water for the fire hydrant.

Chairwoman Kwaak opened the meeting to the public for non-agenda items. No one came forward, so the public portion was closed.

Amendment to the Manalapan Township Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

Ms. Beahm explained the Township's previously adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan from June, noting that it included extensions of expiring deed-restriction controls for Tracy Village, New Beginnings, and Knob Hill, totaling 197 credits. Woodward Estates Phase II contributed 51 senior credits, and two assisted-living facilities (Acela and Mira V) provided Medicaid-bed credits. The original plan submitted to the court totaled 269 credits against a 252-unit obligation, creating a 17-unit surplus.

New state legislation introduced "micro-requirements," including a mandate that 25% of the obligation be satisfied with family rental units. While the Township's extensions were all family units, they were for-sale, not rental. To comply, Woodward Estates agreed to convert its senior project into a family rental development, providing 63 rental credits.

The Township completed program mediation and reached settlement with Fair Share Housing Center. The program judge recommended certification of the amended plan to Judge Grasso Jones. With the amendment, the Township will remain compliant and protected for Round 4 through 2035.

Chairwoman Kwaak opened to the public for questions and/or comments. No one from the public came forward so she closed public.

Mr. Briigliodoro explained that the purpose of this action is to adopt the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan as presented in the document and outlined by Ms. Beahm this evening, and to memorialize the accompanying resolution, as the Board is working within a March 15 deadline.

A motion was made by Chief Hogan and seconded by Mr. Jacobson to approve and to memorialize the amendment.

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

Ordinance 2026-03 – Consistency Review

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT FEE ORDINANCE IMPLEMENTING THE FOURTH ROUND HOUSING PLAN ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN

After being sworn in by Board Attorney, Richard Briigliodoro, the Board Planner, Ms. Beahm explained that this ordinance is the Affordable Housing Ordinance, which is a model ordinance provided by the State as part of the affordable-housing compliance process. It includes legislative intent, definitions, affordability-assistance provisions, bedroom-distribution requirements, development-fee standards, and the roles of the Municipal Housing Liaison and Administrative Agent—all consolidated into one ordinance.

The ordinance is required under the Township's settlement agreement and is directly derived from the adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. She stated that, in her professional opinion, the ordinance is substantially consistent with the Master Plan.

Mr. Jacobson made the Motion and it was Seconded by Mr. Brown, that this ordinance is substantially consistent with the Master Plan.

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

Ordinance 2026-04 – Consistency Review

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 95 (DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS), ARTICLE V, ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS, OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANALAPAN, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY A MENDING AH-WE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DISTRICT

Ms. Beahm explained that the second ordinance presented at tonight's meeting stems directly from the amended Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. The Township was required to modify the zoning for the Woodward Estates property to permit a family-rental development, which differs in configuration from the previously approved senior project. This zoning amendment is a direct implementation of the Township's fair-share obligations, and Ms. Beahm stated that it is also substantially consistent with the Master Plan.

Mr. Jacobson made the Motion and it was Seconded by Mr. Brown, that this ordinance is substantially consistent with the Master Plan.

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

Chairwoman Kwaak noted that the next meeting is March 12th at 7pm. Chief Hogan made the motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:11pm.

Nancy McGrath
Recording Secretary