

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

Planning Board Minutes
Public Meeting
August 27, 2026

Chairwoman Kathryn Kwaak called the meeting to order at 7:15pm with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. The salute to the flag followed.

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

In attendance at the meeting: Barry Fisher, Todd Brown, Barry Jacobson, Chairwoman Kwaak, Mayor McNaboe, Steve Kastell, Eric Nelson, Nunzio Pollifrone, Pat Givelekian

Absent from the meeting: John Castronovo, Chief Hogan

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

Application

PBE2606 – Trinity Hill Farms
107 Taylors Mills Sub, LLC - Applicant
Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision – 8 Lot Subdivision
101 and 107 Taylors Mills Road
Block 19 Lots 28 & 30

Attorney Peter Licata of Sonnenblick, Mehr & Licata appeared on behalf of the applicant. He stated that the application before the Board is a major subdivision submitted pursuant to the lot-averaging provisions of the RE Zone ordinance. He further noted that the applicant’s team participated in a technical review call with the Township’s professionals to review and understand the applicable criteria. He then introduced the applicant’s witnesses:

- John Ploskonka, P.E., who would provide a high-level overview of the subdivision design.
- Hassan Maqsood, P.E., who would address engineering reports and technical comments.
- Jim Higgins, P.P., who would speak to the planning rationale and the lot-averaging criteria, if needed.

Mr. Licata also noted that a principal of the applicant was present in the audience but was not expected to testify.

Both Mr. Ploskonka and Mr. Maqsood were sworn in and the Chair accepted their credentials. Mr. Licata asked Mr. Johnson if he reviewed the proof of notice. He stated that he had reviewed the notice and found it acceptable.

Mr. Licata introduced the exhibits that the Board will be reviewing.

EXHIBIT A – Aerial – Existing Conditions
EXHIBIT B – Aerial - Overall Plan
EXHIBIT C – Street View - which is some Google Street imagery along the site frontage.
EXHIBIT D – Floor Plans - examples of a typical home that could be constructed on the proposed lots

Mr. Ploskonka gave an overview of the subdivision site and what the applicant is proposing.

- The site consists Block 19, Lots 28 and 30, totaling about 28 acres in the Residential Environmental (RE) Zone.
- The combined parcel measures approximately 1,600 feet deep by 750 feet wide.
- Two existing single-family homes on the property will be removed as part of the project.
- A one-acre parcel, Lot 29, containing an existing home, is excluded from the subdivision.
- Surrounding land uses include one-acre-plus single-family homes on Blair Road (east) and a Toll Brothers development on Rockingham Court (west).
- The Trinity Hill Farms subdivision is located in a three-acre zone, with proposed lots ranging from 1.3 to 6 acres.
- A new roadway, Luca Court, will run from Taylors Mills Road to the rear of the tract.
- The project complies with Township development regulations and lot-size averaging provisions.
- All lots meet or exceed minimum zoning requirements; no variances are requested.
- None of the proposed lot dimensions are less than what is required in the R-40 Zone District.
- Under the three-acre yield plan, one lot would front on Taylors Mills Road; under the variable-lot plan, all homes would front the new internal street.
- In the yield plan, wetlands at the rear of the property significantly encumber Lots 3 and 4—approximately 30% to 40% of each lot; In the variable-lot plan, that environmental impact is minimized.
- He noted that the two proposed six-acre lots could each accommodate a farmette, which is not possible under the yield plan.
- Two of the eight lots—are six acres or greater; the remaining lots consist of one three-acre lot, one five-acre lot, and four lots of just over one acre.
- The variable-lot plan meets all ordinance requirements and is the design the applicant is advancing.
- All lots will be deed-restricted against future subdivision.
- The sign proposed at the front of the property will not be illuminated. It will be installed above ground and will comply with the subdivision ordinance.
- All site lighting will meet the required standards.

Environmental

- The wetlands on the property were established through an LOI issued in 2020 and extended through 2030.
- The site contains two isolated wetlands areas and two wetlands at the rear of the property, all of which will be deed-restricted and fenced in accordance with the Environmental Commission's requirements.
- Lots 5 and 6 remain large enough to accommodate homes, pools, and potentially a farmette if desired.
- The isolated wetlands will remain; however, depending on buyer needs, the applicant may seek DEP permits to fill those areas.

Ms. Beahm stated that if the isolated wetlands are not filled, they must be protected through a conservation easement, not merely fencing. Fencing may be required, but it does not replace the need for a deed-restricted conservation easement. The applicant therefore has only two options: pursue DEP permitting to fill the wetlands or place them in a conservation easement. Mr. Ploskonka agreed to take this under advisement and will address this matter with the applicant.

Mr. Maqsood began his testimony by outlining the design waiver relief requested for the application. As noted earlier, there are no variances associated with the project, but several technical design waivers are required.

- Three waivers involve disturbing steep slopes to install stormwater utilities and construct the roadway.
- Another waiver is needed because grading will change existing contours by more than three feet to create level building areas.
- A waiver from Section 95-8.3C is requested for Lot 30.04, which is under 80,000 sq. ft.
- The seasonal high-water table would normally prohibit a basement, but a basement is proposed.
- Mr. Maqsood confirmed the waiver relates to the depth from original grade to the water table and that the required two-foot separation will be maintained with some fill.

- He reviewed Section 95-8.13L, noting that 30-foot drainage easements are required, but irregular easements are proposed.
- Easement widths vary to cover stormwater piping, access drives, and basins, but remain adequate for maintenance.
- A full 30-foot easement is provided for the sanitary sewer.
- Minimum easement widths are approximately 15 feet in some areas, particularly near 10-foot access drives.
- Mr. Rizzo stated he had no objection to the proposed easement widths.

Mr. Maqsood stated Section 95-9.3 permits a maximum street grade of 8%, while the proposed roadway reaches 8.33% for a short distance.

- He explained the 8.33% road grade is necessary due to the steep hill and helps minimize cut and fill.

- He reviewed the final waiver for landscaping. The ordinance requires two shrubs and one tree per 1,500 sq. ft. of open area. Full compliance is not feasible given the preserved wooded areas.

Proposed landscaping includes:

- 56 street trees
 - 24 shade trees
 - 20 ornamental trees
 - 220 perennials
 - Additional ground cover and ornamental grasses around the basins
- He noted the applicant has worked with the township's landscape expert and will continue addressing her comments.
 - He added that the site has a valid LOI for five years, protecting the wetlands line.
 - The subdivision follows lot-size-averaging standards. Lot-size averaging is preferred because it keeps development away from the rear wetlands.
 - It also preserves most of the wooded area on Lot 30.08, reduces disturbance compared to the yield plan, and shortens the roadway by 200–300 feet, reducing impervious coverage.
 - The applicant will comply with all non-lookalike architectural requirements and provided sample floor plans illustrating typical homes for the subdivision.
 - Luca Court is proposed as a public municipal roadway, while all stormwater basins and related facilities within the roadway will be owned and maintained by the homeowners' association.
 - Wetlands will be protected through conservation easements, which will be clearly marked with posts and fencing.
 - There is no stream corridor encroachment from the nearby brook onto the site, and this will be noted on the plans.
 - Landscaping and lighting: will work with the township's landscape and tree expert to adjust and fine tune the landscaping as needed, and the lighting plan will comply with any outstanding technical requirements.
 - Off-site improvements along Taylors Mills Road include a right-of-way dedication to a 40-foot half-width along Lots 30.01 and 30.08. The plan proposes roadway widening to a minimum 20-foot edge-of-pavement half-width, along with new shoulder striping, curb installation, and sidewalk. They will also tie into stormwater infrastructure from one of the basins to Taylors Mills.

Mr. Maqsood provided a brief stormwater summary.

- Most of the site drains toward the southern wetlands, with a smaller portion draining toward Taylors Mills Road.
 - Stormwater is managed through seven infiltration basins: five smaller basins that flow to a large rear basin, and one front basin that reduces peak flow toward Taylors Mills.
 - The overall stormwater design meets all current NJDEP major development requirements.
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- All proposed lots will comply with the 6% habitable floor area requirement.
 - The applicant agreed to provide the additional hydrant requested.
 - A revised turning template for fire apparatus will be submitted.
 - All lots will be served by public water (American Water) and public sewer (WMUA).
 - Approvals are required from WMUA, the Freehold Soil Conservation District, and the Monmouth County Planning Board.
 - Submissions have been made to FSCD and Monmouth County; both requested additional information, which will be provided after the public hearing.

- A Treatment Works Approval (TWA) from NJDEP will be required for the sewer main extension.

Questions/Comments from the Board and Professionals

Applicant confirmed they are providing sidewalk and curb along the frontage of their property. Mr. Rizzo stated a variance is not necessary for the retaining wall because once part of the frontage is dedicated to the Township, the front property line moves inward, putting the wall in the public right-of-way. Because of that, no variance is needed, but the governing body must approve the wall's construction.

Mr. Nelson questioned how the applicant planned to ensure that the existing trees left in place would not later be removed by homeowners. Mr. Ploskonka said perhaps deed restrict or conservation or preservation area but would have to discuss with the applicant's attorney.

Mayor McNaboe asked for clarification on ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Mr. Maqsood confirmed that the Township will own the roads, while the HOA will be responsible for maintaining the basins as well as the stormwater piping and related infrastructure located within the roadway.

Mr. McNaboe mentioned the lack of sidewalk along Lot 29, which would leave the eight new homes disconnected from the existing sidewalk network. Mr. Maqsood explained there is only a narrow 2-3 foot strip between pavement and the right-of-way, with utility poles and trees, making sidewalk installation impossible without acquiring additional right-of-way. The sidewalk will resume immediately after Lot 29 and connect to the existing sidewalk near Rockingham Court. He noted the road will be widened along their frontage, but Lot 29 cannot be widened because it is not part of their property. Mr. McNaboe asked whether the applicant had contacted the property owner. Mr. Ploskonka said he would reach out to the owner of Lot 29 to see if they could obtain additional right-of-way to make the sidewalk continuous.

Mr. McNaboe asked whether the proposed six-acre "farmette" lots could qualify for farmland tax assessment. Ms. Beahm explained that they could not, because each lot contains wetlands and the house area must also be excluded, leaving fewer than five farmable acres. As a result, the development would not be eligible for farmland assessment, and no farming activity would be required.

Chairwoman Kwaak asked whether the applicant would be matching the Blair Court retaining wall. Mr. Rizzo clarified the applicant is proposing about a 3.5-foot wall and will look appropriate. The wall is necessary to accommodate the curb and sidewalk due to steep slopes and tree preservation.

Mr. Licata confirmed the post-and-rail fencing along the conservation easement will be part of the common element maintained by the HOA. The conservation easements will also be monumented but the fences will ensure a visible boundary.

Chairwoman Kwaak also asked whether the applicant would also be checking for underground storage tanks. Mr. Ploskonka replied that their environmental consultant from Dubois is already addressing a minor arsenic finding with DEP and will also handle the investigation related to any underground tanks.

Ms. Beahm recommended installing post-and-rail fencing with anti-climbing mesh around all stormwater basins to address the Board's concerns about children entering those areas.

The applicant agreed to follow the fire departments recommendations for two fire hydrants as well as revising the turning template to for the fire truck.

Mr. Ploskonka explained that the isolated, man-made irrigation pond on Lot 30.07 is currently dry and classified as isolated wetlands with no buffer. They plan to seek DEP permits to fill that pond and a second isolated pocket, while the two rear wetlands will remain as conservation areas. They stated DEP approval is expected because the areas are already defined in the LOI and filling them is permitted by rule.

The proposed homes are 4,500–5,000 square feet, and the stormwater system is designed to accommodate 2,500 square feet of future impervious backyard amenities. Any increase beyond that would require additional engineering or basin modifications. Mr. Rizzo recommended a condition of approval requiring review and stormwater adjustments for anything over 2,500 square feet, and the applicant agreed. After some discussion, Ms. Beahm recommended

working with Mr. Rizzo's office to establish a more realistic backyard amenity area and confirm that the drainage system will still function properly. Mr. Licata agreed to that approach.

The applicant is not seeking a habitable FAR variance for any of the lots. It was noted that the smaller lots would only permit about a 3400 square feet of habitable floor area under the 6% RE-zone standard, which the applicant used as the more conservative requirement. They discussed how basements, garages, and certain walkout conditions factor into FAR calculations. It was clarified that if a future homeowner exceeds the permitted FAR, they would need a use (D) variance from the Zoning Board. Mr. Maqsood asked whether FAR could be averaged across lots, but Ms. Beahm advised that applying the 6% limit to each lot individually—was appropriate and should remain.

The applicant agreed to have the garages prewired for EV charging stations.

Mr. Kastell asked whether the project could avoid having an HOA and reduce the number of infiltration basins. Mr. Rizzo explained that this is a DEP requirement and that HOA's are also required to maintain them.

Mr. Kastell was also concerned about the proposed roadway exceeding an 8% grade and how that might affect safety in bad weather. Mr. Maqsood explained that while Manalapan's standard is 8%, the NJ Residential Site Improvement Standards allow up to 8.33%, which is commonly used statewide. He noted the design keeps driveways from becoming too steep. If needed, the road grade could be reduced to 8%, but doing so would require cutting the hill more and would make the first few driveways steeper. After some discussion, the applicant agreed they would try and get the grade down to 8% or lower.

Parking will be allowed on both sides of the street and each home will have long driveways and large garages, providing plenty of on-site parking in addition to the roadway.

Testimony concluded and Chairwoman Kwaak opened the application for public comment.

Christine Tantum – 102 Taylors Mills Road

Ms. Tantum questioned whether the basins would truly prevent runoff from affecting nearby homes. She noted her basement began showing moisture after past development and is skeptical that all displaced water will be captured, asking how much runoff the basins will actually contain and whether any could still reach her property.

Mr. Maqsood explained that the basins are required by strict state stormwater regulations, which mandate reducing runoff below existing conditions and sizing facilities using future rainfall projections. Their design keeps drainage patterns the same and directs only a small portion of the 30-acre site toward Taylors Mills Road, where a large basin ties directly into existing stormwater infrastructure rather than discharging over land.

Mr. Rizzo added that the basins are infiltration basins with sand bottoms, designed so stormwater soaks into the ground rather than flows off-site. While overflow structures exist, the basins are primarily intended to infiltrate water, and the underlying soils have been tested to ensure they drain properly.

No other members of the public came forward to speak so public comment was closed. There were additional questions from the Board regarding what the homes might look like. Mr. Licata had the developer, Travis Mascitelli, provide testimony on the plans for the new homes.

After he was sworn in, he explained the development will have a consistent architectural style. Buyers will get design options, but only within a controlled range to maintain a unified look and avoid drastically different house styles. The examples shown were only to illustrate the general aesthetic, and that all homes will match the character of the surrounding neighborhood. His plan is to develop all eight lots on his own but did mention a lot or two might be developed by a separate builder.

Mayor McNaboe stressed that the development must not drag on for many years, noting past situations where roads remained unfinished for a decade because individual lot owners built slowly. He explained that the road cannot be deeded to the Township until it is fully capped, and utilities must be installed before capping—meaning any delayed home construction could leave the road unfinished and create long-term maintenance and safety issues. He emphasized that unfinished roads, open trenches, and utility complications are difficult for the Township to manage and that the applicant's uncertainty about whether all eight homes would be built at

once was not reassuring. He urged the applicant to complete the project efficiently to avoid prolonged disruption.

Testimony concluded and the outstanding items were summarized:

- Sign detail is to be provided - The sign is not to be illuminated
- Mr. Mascitelli reaffirmed commitment to building all eight homes and completing the road so it can be capped and deeded to the Township without long delays.
- Concept Engineering agreed to work with Mr. Rizzo to address remaining grading concerns and add any necessary inlets.
- Also committed to analyzing and attempting to reduce the roadway grade from 8.33% to below 8%.
- Mr. Ploskonka will approach the Lot 29 homeowner to request cooperation for installing sidewalk and curbing across that frontage. Challenges include steep slopes, utility poles, and potentially needing retaining walls.
- Concept Engineering will apply for permits to fill the two isolated wetlands on Lots 30.06 and 30.07, allowing those areas to be graded and excluded from the conservation easement.
- The applicant’s team will approach the township committee regarding the retaining wall being proposed.

Chairwoman Kwaak stated that, given the number of outstanding items, preliminary approval might be more appropriate. The Board members agreed, and she then asked for a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. Kastell and seconded by Mr. Fisher to approval a Preliminary Major Subdivision approval

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

No one from the public came forward for any non-agenda items. Chairwoman Kwaak closed public.

Chairwoman Kwaak stated that the next meeting is set for September 10, 2026.
A motion was made by Mr. Brown to adjourn at approximately 9pm.

Nancy McGrath
Recording Secretary