

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
September 16, 2026

The Regular meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chairman Karp in Meeting Room A in the Municipal Building.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, location, and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the township bulletin board, and filed with the Municipal Clerk on August 27, 2026.

ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Michael Karp, Chairman, Class IV
Hemant Marathe, Mayor, Class I
Linda Geevers, Councilwoman, Class III
Sue Appelget, Class IV
Jyotika Bahree, Class II

ABSENT: Curtis Hoberman, Vice Chairman (Absent due to
recusal on Application PB 26-07)
Anis Baig, Class IV
Simon Pankove, Class IV
Allen Schectel, Class IV
Pankaj Patel, Alt. #1

TOWNSHIP CONSULTANT STAFF PRESENT

Gerald Muller, Esq., Attorney, Muller & Baillie, P.C.
David Novak, PP, Planner, Burgis & Associates
Edward Snieckus, Jr., LLA, PPA, ASLA, Burgis & Associates
Francis Guzik, PE, Township Engineer
Quazi Masood, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer, Arora & Associates

Zuzana Karas, Land Use Manager/Zoning Officer
Lisa Komjati, Administrative Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Karp opened the meeting for public comment on non-agenda and non-pending application items. There were no comments from the public.

MINUTES

June 17, 2026

Mayor Marathe made a motion to approve the June 17, 2026 minutes; seconded by Ms. Appelget.
Approved by Voice Vote.

August 5, 2026

Ms. Appelget made a motion to approve the August 5, 2026 minutes with amendments; seconded by Ms. Bahree.
Approved by Voice Vote. Abstension(s): Mayor Marathe

LIAISON REPORT

Environmental Commission

Ms. Bahree attended the September 10, 2026 Environmental Commission meeting and the following items were discussed:

1. The Environmental Commission will host a table at West Windsor Day on September 19, and Ms. Bahree invited everyone to attend.
2. The township's watershed inventory report is being prepared. The objective is to have something similar to a traffic model, a stormwater management system so in case there is any problem that has a potential to impact stormwater in the state, it can be traced back to the source.
3. The Pollinator Garden plan has been developed, and volunteers are being gathered but no date yet for the installation. The ANJEC check for \$1,500 has been received by the township and the work has been planned out. Preliminary planting is likely to be in the spring. They need to prepare the landscape for the planting for which they shall be seeking the help of DPW and volunteers. The ANJEC will need to have a progress report by November 2.
4. The Shade Tree Commission is in the process of preparing a guidance document containing inventory of the township tree canopy. The inventory of the street trees has been completed.

Ms. Appelget asked about the Sustainable Energy Initiative in Ms. Bahree's report referenced in the August 5th Minutes. Mayor Marathe responded that mailers are being sent out from his office encouraging residents to join the program.

APPLICATION:

PB26-07 Ellsworth Realty Associates LLC

Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan

Block 5, Lot 20 & 76; 33 Princeton-Hightstown Road

Property Zoned: RP-7 District

MLUL: 9/30/26

Following recent revisions to the RP-7A Princeton Redevelopment Plan District zoning, applicant Ellsworth Realty Associates, LLC brings this site plan application to continue the modernization and upgrade of the existing mixed-use walkable village center at the corner of Princeton Hightstown Road and Cranbury Road. Applicant proposes renovating several existing buildings and constructing three new buildings: two mixed-use buildings next to the to-be relocated driveway off Cranbury Road and a residential building in the rear of the center, replacing the existing dry-cleaning building. Upon completion the center will have 26 total residential units approximately 30,823 SF of commercial space.

Attorney Muller confirmed that proof of publication is in order and the board has jurisdiction.

Ryan Kennedy, Esq., of Stevens & Lee, introduced himself as counsel for the applicant and said the presentation would cover the Ellsworth Center site plan and proposed updates. He thanked the board's professionals and current and former township staff for their assistance throughout the lengthy planning process. He explained that the project is part of the latest affordable housing plan and was developed in collaboration with the municipality to create a walkable, mixed-use development. The presentation would address the plan's affordable housing units and a site plan that fully complies with the recently revised redevelopment plan. Although the board previously approved more than 55,000

square feet of retail space for the site, the proposal has been reduced to approximately 30,000 square feet, about 5,000 square feet more than currently exists. Two mixed-use buildings will be constructed at the new corner created by relocating the driveway to align with Carlton Place. A residential building will replace the former dry-cleaning building at the rear of the site. The presentation will also cover site improvements designed to complement the three new buildings.

Attorney Muller simultaneously swore in the following witnesses that may testify on behalf of the applicant:

Shawn Ellsworth, Applicant/Owner Ellsworth Village
Marina Rubina, Architect
Jeffrey Haberman, Civil Engineer
James McAuliffe, Architect
Kerry Pehnke, Traffic Consultant

Mr. Ellsworth thanked the township staff, professionals and his team for their help. He stated that this has been a terrific collaboration and everyone has been very helpful in amending the plans over the past several years and bringing them to where they are today. He reviewed the history of the property and how the project has evolved.

Jeffrey Haberman, Civil Engineer with Dynamic Engineering Consultants, was accepted by the board as an expert witness. He introduced Exhibit A-1, a color site plan showing existing conditions and proposed improvements at the Ellsworth Center, located at the northeast corner of Princeton Hightstown Road and Cranbury Road. Cranbury Road borders the site to the south, Princeton Hightstown Road to the west, and the vacant 400 Steps Redevelopment property to the north. The application covers Block 5, Lots 20 and 76. Lot 20 contains Ellsworth Village Center, while adjoining Lot 76 contains a single-family home. Both lots are within the RP-7 Princeton Junction Redevelopment Plan area, whose standards supersede the underlying zoning. The center currently has six buildings, approximately 24,000 to 25,000 square feet of retail space, and eight second-floor residential units. Access is provided by an inbound-only driveway off Princeton Hightstown Road and a driveway off Cranbury Road that connects to the road serving the 400 Steps Redevelopment Project. The project includes demolishing the single-family home on Lot 76 and shifting the center's driveway east to align with Carlton Place. Two new two-story mixed-use buildings will replace the former driveway area. Building N1, at the intersection, will contain 2,200 square feet of ground-floor retail and two second-floor apartments. The building to the north along Carlton Place will contain 3,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and three second-floor apartments. Jem Dry Cleaners, at the northwest corner of the site, will also be demolished and replaced with a three-story, 13-unit residential building. In response to the Township Engineer's concern about possible contamination from the former dry-cleaning use, Mr. Haberman said his company is the LSRP of record and submitted an August 4 letter describing its 2023 investigation. Contaminants were found, but not above NJDEP standards for commercial development, so no further action was required. Because residential use is now proposed, the applicant and LSRP must install a sub-slab vapor intrusion mitigation system that complies with NJDEP standards. At full buildout, the site will contain 30,823 square feet of retail space and 26 residential units. Six of those units will be affordable housing and distributed among the buildings. The plan complies with RP-7A bulk standards, including building and impervious coverage and setbacks, and requires no variances. Parking will increase from 87 to 105 spaces, meeting RP-7A parking standards. The total includes five ADA spaces, one electric-vehicle charging station, and five EV-ready spaces. Mr. Ellsworth also has an agreement for seven spaces on the 400 Steps property. Attorney Kennedy noted that tenant tags will distinguish residents from people attempting to park there to use the train station. Mr. Ellsworth said many

residents rely on transit, bicycles, or walking, and that younger people increasingly do not own cars or hold driver's licenses. The parking plan provides one space per unit and would be reevaluated if demand increased. Planner Novak added that an agreement with the West Windsor Parking Authority could provide overflow parking.

The Township's Planning Board Professionals were sworn in by Attorney Muller:
David Novak, PP, Planner, Burgis & Associates
Edward Snieckus, Jr., LLA, PPA, ASLA, Burgis & Associates
Francis Guzik, PE, Township Engineer
Quazi Masood, PE, PTOE, Traffic Engineer, Arora & Associates

Traffic Engineer Quazi Masood asked Mr. Haberman to identify the walkway and bicycle route connecting the train station to the 400 Steps development and explain its ADA accessibility. Mr. Haberman said the plan includes sidewalks around the site, three bicycle-rack locations, and a public sidewalk extending along the realigned driveway to support a future connection. Ladder striped crosswalks and ADA ramps are proposed at all four corners, and a winding sidewalk farther north will connect to 400 Steps. He stated that what they designed is ADA compliant but would verify whether the existing segment where it ties into also complies.

Mr. Haberman went on to describe related improvements, including widening and striping Cranbury Road, adding a sidewalk along the frontage, and providing additional trash enclosures and loading spaces. Because the project will disturb more than one acre, it qualifies as a major development and will include stormwater-management facilities. Vehicle-circulation analyses show that fire trucks, waste vehicles, and delivery trucks can maneuver throughout the site. The site is served by public utilities, and applications for all buildings are pending with New Jersey American Water. A water main will be extended through the site to the new residential building, and the existing main beneath Carlton Place will be realigned with the road. Sanitary sewer service will extend north to the apartment building and from Cranbury Road along the realigned Carlton Place driveway. The applicant's in-house landscape architect designed plantings of varied heights, textures, and colors to enhance the shopping center and comply with the ordinance. Mr. Haberman then introduced Exhibits A-2 through A-8, which contained three-dimensional site renderings. He stated that 14-foot LED fixtures will illuminate the realigned roadway and rear residential area. Although the fixture heights comply, the applicant seeks a waiver because the average illumination of 1.5 foot-candles exceeds the permitted 0.5. Four compliant 20-square-foot wall signs are proposed for the two new front buildings. The applicant also seeks a waiver from surveying topography 200 feet beyond the property because existing data adequately identifies offsite drainage: north toward 400 Steps, from Cranbury Road to roadway inlets, and east toward Lot 15. Applications remain pending before the Mercer County Soil Conservation District and Planning Board, whose comments will be addressed as conditions of approval, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission, which requires the board's resolution before granting final approval.

Councilwoman Geevers asked whether bollards are being installed to protect pedestrians near the plaza. Mr. Haberman said lighted bollards, new curbs, and sidewalks are proposed along the frontage to improve safety near the intersection. Noting that the proposed ice cream parlor could attract families, sports teams, and children, Councilwoman Geevers asked whether fencing, wiring, or planters could be installed between the bollards to keep children from entering Cranbury Road. Mr. Snieckus explained that the bollards would create a visible boundary while preserving the pedestrian connection between the main walkway and plaza, and he suggested adding a hedge for a stronger physical barrier.

Architect Marina Rubina was accepted by the board as an expert witness. She introduced Exhibit A-3, a nine-page architectural plan depicting the interiors, exteriors, and elevations of the three new buildings and explaining how their design complements the center's existing architecture. The project will add residential units, which includes six affordable units, one of which will be wheelchair accessible. She identified the affordable units within the three buildings and confirmed that their bedroom mix and income levels meet township requirements. In response to Councilwoman Geevers, Ms. Rubina confirmed that every affordable-unit bedroom has a window, although the windows were not shown on the floor plans. She also identified potential indoor bicycle-storage areas in each building, including dedicated rooms or wall-mounted racks. Ms. Rubina then presented Exhibit A-4, architectural renderings showing proposed exterior changes intended to create a more unified appearance throughout the village center.

The Township Planning Board Professionals reviewed their reports as follows:

Township Planner David Novak of Burgis & Associates reviewed his September 10, 2026 memo. He said the project is included in the 2026 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan as a means of meeting the township's third-round affordable housing obligation. The affordable units have been distributed in coordination with the developer, all requirements are satisfied, and no variances are needed. He added that the future K. Hovnanian application for the adjacent RP-7B district should provide pedestrian and vehicular connections, compatible design, and improvements to the northern rear area for a public park. Mr. Novak confirmed that the applicant had addressed all comments in his report.

Attorney Muller referenced the Affordable Housing Committee memo and asked if there is an affordable housing studio unit. Architect Rubina clarified that although the ground floor includes a studio, the proposed affordable unit is a one-bedroom, and the studio is not included in the affordable-housing count.

Edward Snieckus, Jr., Landscape Architect with Burgis & Associates, reviewed his September 10, 2026 memo. He began by speaking about the pedestrian plaza and the detailed landscaping plan associated with that. As discussed earlier he stated that he would like to see them incorporate a hedge into the pedestrian-plaza landscaping to better define the area and separate it from the roadway. He also described the open-space plan developed with the township, which includes picnic tables, signage, and an asphalt path connecting to the loop trail. The applicant must coordinate a cost-sharing agreement with the developer of the adjacent RP-7B property. Councilwoman Geevers asked who owned that space and if DPW would have to maintain it. She later added that park hours should be established. Mr. Snieckus confirmed that the township would own and maintain the park and could establish dawn-to-dusk hours similar to other parks in town. Mr. Snieckus inquired about the irrigation waiver submitted during the construction phase of the drawings. He asked if the applicant is installing an irrigation system or manually watering the landscape. Mr. Haberman stated that the landscaping would be watered manually according to the plan's schedule; Mr. Snieckus recommended installing sleeves for a possible future irrigation system if needed. He also asked that the landscape plan note that two trees proposed across the realigned roadway, apparently on the K. Hovnanian property, may need to be phased to avoid conflicts with adjacent construction.

Quazi Masood, Traffic Consultant, Arora & Associates, reviewed his September 3, 2026 memo. He stated that the applicant has addressed all the comments in his report.

Francis Guzik, Township Engineer, reviewed his September 11, 2026 memo and went over the conditions of approval he had listed. In closing he stated after testimony tonight he doesn't have any additional questions or comments. Councilwoman Geevers asked about comment 1.06 in Mr. Guzik's report regarding a third party LSRP being hired to review test results. Mr. Guzik explained that he doesn't feel that is necessary to involve a third party LSRP because ultimately, it requires State approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Karp opened the meeting for public comment on the application. Attorney Muller swore in all speakers.

ALISON MILLER, 41 Windsor Drive: Ms. Miller identified herself as a member of the Affordable Housing Committee and thanked Attorney Muller for clarifying that the affordable unit is a one-bedroom rather than a studio. She stated that she welcomed the proposed indoor bicycle storage noting that the ordinance requires bicycle parking to be protected from weather and theft. She said each building's storage room should be lockable and limited to its tenants. Architect Rubina confirmed that the bicycle-storage areas would be indoors, locked, and reserved for tenants of the respective buildings.

JENPING WANG, 9 Scott Avenue: Ms. Wang asked whether a pedestrian crosswalk across Cranbury Road had been considered. Mr. Haberman explained that the road is under county jurisdiction, and they did not require them to do so. He noted that a safer, signalized crossing is located farther west. Ms. Wang said a crosswalk there would still benefit residents. She also asked the applicant to consider reducing the lights in the shopping center at night. Mr. Haberman explained that this is an existing condition and the lights are not on a timer but agreed they would look into it.

GUY PEARSON, 241 Fisher Place: Mr. Pearson asked about the road behind Walgreens and where it connects, noting that if it is a municipal road they would be required to have a crosswalk, and ADA compliance. Mr. Haberman clarified that Carlton Place is a private road on the applicant's property and that the intersection is under county jurisdiction. Mr. Pearson also asked where the K. Hovnanian project would be located, whether the road could handle the additional traffic, and whether parking would be sufficient after full buildout. Mr. Haberman said the project would be directly east of the realigned Carlton Place and would have another roadway coming out so there's multiple exits out. He added that the proposed parking increase complies with the ordinance. Mr. Ellsworth noted that the site was previously approved for substantial commercial use, which would generate more traffic than the proposed residential development.

SILVIA ASCARELLI, 27 Mellville Road: Ms. Ascarelli expressed support for the project and emphasized the need for secure, accessible bicycle storage. She noted that e-bikes are often used by residents without cars but can weigh about 60 pounds, making wall-mounted racks difficult to use. She encouraged the applicant to consider locked, covered bicycle pods like those being introduced in New York City, adding that secure storage would support bicycle commuting and make the property more attractive to tenants. She later clarified that e-bikes are generally safe and that reported fires have involved imported models that do not meet U.S. safety standards.

Attorney Muller asked Mr. Guzik whether separate outdoor e-bike storage was needed. Mr. Guzik said the decision should be left to the applicant based on whether indoor storage can be provided safely and is feasible given the property's space and cost constraints. Councilwoman Geevers expressed concern about e-bikes being stored in apartments and asked whether approval could require downstairs or outdoor storage, possibly through a lease restriction. Mayor Marathe said the issue extends beyond this application and suggested that the Township Council

consult with the Fire Chief regarding this. Mr. Guzik explained that lease terms are the applicant's responsibility, not the townships and that Fire Chief Lynch may enforce only state law and township ordinances. He added that the Fire Chief had not raised this issue in connection with other residential projects in recent years. Chairman Karp noted that the applicant might independently prohibit in-unit bicycle storage to prevent damage to hallways and walls.

SILVIA ASCARELLI, 27 Melville Road: Ms. Ascarelli said that carrying a 60-pound e-bike up and down stairs would require considerable strength and not many people are able or would want to do that, so she did not expect it to be an issue.

Mr. Ellsworth thanked the speakers for their comments and acknowledged that needs are changing. He said the property has adapted over the years and that the suggestions could help further improve the center and make it an even better place to live and shop, but he doesn't believe this should be made a condition of approval.

Ms. Bahree asked whether traffic from the K. Hovnanian development when completed would use Carlton Place to access Cranbury Road. Planner Novak said no application had yet been submitted, but the concept plan included in the township's housing plan proposes a separate driveway, so the development would not rely solely on Carlton Place.

Chairman Karp read Chief Lynch's September 10, 2026 memo into the record.

Chairman Karp entertained a motion to close the public hearing. Motion to approve by Ms. Bahree; seconded by Mayor Marathe. Approved by Voice Vote.

Attorney Muller confirmed that the applicant would provide bicycle storage inside each building, and Mr. Haberman agreed. Attorney Muller then reviewed the application's conditions of approval.

Chairman Karp entertained a motion to approve Planning Board Application PB26-07 Ellsworth Realty Associates, LLC Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan with conditions. Motion to approve by Ms. Bahree; seconded by Councilwoman Geevers.

Roll Call:

Aye: Bahree, Appelget, Geevers, Marathe, Karp

Nay: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Patel, Schectel, Pankove, Baig,

Recusal: Hoberman

BREAK – 8:50 PM to 9:01 PM

ORDINANCE REFERRAL FROM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

Ordinance 2026-17

An Ordinance amending the Bulk and Use standards of the RP-1 Zoning District (Block 6, Lots 54, 55.01 & 76) of the Township Code of West Windsor (1999)

Planner Novak summarized the ordinance changes. Parking was reduced from 0.7 to 0.5 spaces per unit, consistent with residential site improvement standards for assisted living, and the ordinance language was revised from the version

previously reviewed by the board. The ordinance establishes 733 family units and 170 additional senior housing units, consistent with the Fourth-Round Housing Plan and Settlement Agreement. He noted that this is only the first step, as the applicant must still appear before the board with their site plan application. In closing he stated that this is not inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Chairman Karp asked why the 170 units were designated as senior housing rather than assisted living and expressed concern that they would be age-restricted. Mr. Novak cited the ordinance, which requires the senior housing units to be assisted living units. Attorney Muller explained that the Fourth-Round Plan has been approved by the court and compliance with the plan is contingent on these 170 units being approved.

Chairman Karp entertained a motion for adoption of Ordinance 2026-17 as it is not inconsistent with the Master Plan. Motion to approve by Ms. Bahree; seconded by Ms. Appelget.

Roll Call:

Aye: Bahree, Appelget, Geevers, Marathe, Karp

Nay: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Patel, Schectel, Pankove, Baig, Hoberman

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Karp adjourned the meeting at 9:12 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Trish Van Clef

Recording Secretary