

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
February 25, 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 February 17, 2026.

ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Michael Karp, Chairman, Class IV
Curtis Hoberman, Vice-Chairman, Class IV
Hemant Marathe, Mayor, Class I
Jyotika Bahree, Class III
Simon Pankove, Class IV
Robert Loverro, Alt. #1
Pankaj Patel, Alt. #2

ABSENT: Linda Geevers, Councilwoman, Class III
Allen Schectel, Class IV
Sue Appelget, Class IV
Anis Baig, Class IV

TOWNSHIP CONSULTANT STAFF PRESENT

Gerald Muller, Esq., Attorney, Muller & Baillie, P.C
Francis Guzik, PE, Township Engineer
Ed Snieckus, Jr., LLA, PP, ASLA, Burgis & Associates

Sam Surtees, Land Use Manager and Zoning Officer

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Karp opened the meeting for public comment on non-agenda and non-pending items.

ANDREA MANDEL, 46 Ellsworth Drive: She introduced herself as the Vice President of the Township Council. Ms. Mandel expressed gratitude to Mr. Surtees for his many years of service, noting that he possesses comprehensive knowledge about the town, from its history to every road, house, and what once existed or was planned within its 26 square miles. She remarked that replacing him will be a tremendous challenge, and he will remain in their hearts. In closing she mentioned that the Township Council had honored him with a proclamation at their last meeting.

Mayor Marathe and Ms. Mandel presented Mr. Surtees with a plaque and thanked him for his years of service.

MINUTES:

February 4, 2026

Mayor Marathe made a motion to approve the February 4, 2026 minutes; seconded by Vice Chairman Hoberman.
Approved by Voice Vote.

Abstentions: Pankove, Patel

The adopted minutes will be forwarded to the Administrative Secretary.

APPLICATION:

PB25-10 – Montessori Kids Universe

Conditional Use & Minor Site Plan

401-404 Avalon Square; Block 6.30, Lot 5.01

Property Zoned: RP-1 District

MLUL: 3/7/26

Applicant Avalon West Windsor, LLC/Montessori Kids Universe seeks conditional use and minor site plan approvals to operate Montessori school within an existing mixed-use building at W. Squared, located at 401-404 Avalon Square (Block 6.30, Lot 5.01) in the RP-1 Princeton Junction Redevelopment Plan District. This 25.44-acre tract is bounded by Washington Road and Station Drive. The school will occupy approximately 8,912 square feet on the first floor of the building, and it will also utilize a 4,450 square-foot outdoor playground. Seven dedicated parking spaces and a shared parking garage will serve this use. No changes to building height are proposed and no variances are required in connection with this application.

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

The following gave a presentation on behalf of the applicant and they were sworn in simultaneously by Attorney Muller:

Peter Flannery, Attorney, Bisgaier Hoff, LLC.

Tony Mahfoud, Owner, Montessori Kids Universe

Javier Arencibia, Architect

Chris Bowles, Applicant, Avalon West Windsor

Attorney Flannery introduced himself and explained that he was here tonight on behalf of the applicant Avalon West Windsor, LLC and the tenant Montessori Kids Universe Princeton Junction. He stated that this application was part of the final site plan that was granted back in 2021 for the overall development. He gave a brief overview of the project and explained that they are here tonight seeking minor site plan and conditional use approval for the childcare center.

Tony Mahfoud introduced himself as the owner of Montessori Kids Universe in Princeton Junction and presented their proposal for a licensed early childhood education center serving children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. The facility will operate year-round, Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM. The center is designed to include seven classrooms with a maximum licensed capacity of 132 children and approximately 24 employees during peak hours. The outdoor play sessions will be scheduled by classroom to optimize use of the 4,500 square foot playground, ensuring appropriate supervision ratios. To efficiently manage traffic flow, the school will implement a staggered drop-off schedule between 6:30 AM and 8:45 AM. Parents may utilize one of seven designated parking spaces exclusively reserved for the school, where a staff member will assist by escorting each student from the vehicle into the building. In collaboration with Avalon, additional access to retail parking spaces on the ground floor of the garage will be available for faculty and for parents who wish to remain on site longer or converse with staff during drop-off. All family vehicles entering the garage will be monitored via license plate recognition technology. Regarding food service, all meals will be prepared off-site by a catering provider and delivered individually packaged for each student. The school is actively coordinating with New Jersey DCF, who has already conducted a site visit and provided input. Full licensing will be obtained upon completion of the buildout and approval of the Certificate of Occupancy.

Vice Chairman Hoberman expressed concerns about New York City commuters making the 6:30 PM pickup due to possible NJ Transit delays. Mr. Mahfoud stated they are open to adjusting hours to accommodate parents if needed. Chairman Karp stated that most childcare centers charge fees for late pickups. Attorney Muller confirmed closing hours do not need to be part of the approval and are determined by the owner.

Javier Arencibia, Architect, gave a brief introduction and addressed topics from the technical review meeting. He clarified that the kitchen is for staff only and contains a microwave and refrigerators. Regarding the playground, he noted it is surrounded by a 5-foot aluminum fence with two egress-only gates for security that are required by the Fire Marshall. The playground area has a manhole and area drain that they considered when designing the area and the placement of playground equipment. Currently, the playground is a grass area but may be resurfaced with drainable turf that has a 6-inch layer.

Chris Bowles, Senior Manager of Mixed-Use Construction at Avalon Bay explained that he oversees tenant fit outs from design through construction. He discussed traffic flow around the promenade and noted there are 26 parking spaces in the promenade, with seven reserved for Montessori Kids Universe during operating hours. In addition to that they have a license plate reader system which allows garage access to residents and school families; there are about 72 spots available on the first floor. Residents also have dedicated parking on upper levels. The distance from the garage to the school is about a 2-minute walk. Parents cannot park all day, as a pay-to-park system with a grace period will be implemented with upcoming leases for all retailers, which will include the Montessori school. Additionally, there is two-hour parking on Nash and within the promenade, which is monitored by on-site staff.

Vice Chairman Hoberman noted a paved walkway between the building and playground. With the playground having gates locked at both ends he inquired if Avalon staff needed access along this side, to which Mr. Bowles responded that alternate routes through the garage were available. Mr. Hoberman also asked about signage compliance; Attorney Flannery confirmed an approved sign package exists, and any changes needed they would return to the board for approval. Ms. Bahree questioned site circulation for parents, and Mr. Bowles explained two monument signs direct towards the promenade, with additional storefront signs for retail suites. Mayor Marathe asked about the opening timeline and Mr. Mahfoud explained they expect operations to begin by late July or early August, targeting a September start date for students.

The Township's Planning Board Professionals were sworn in simultaneously by Attorney Muller.

Mr. Guzik, the Township Engineer, referenced his report dated February 17, 2026. He inquired about trash and recycling collection procedures, and the management of special events at the school. He also addressed the placement of a manhole cover within the playground area, observing that, according to the recreation plan, the fence separating the two sides of the recreation area would be situated directly above the sanitary sewer manhole. If there is a conflict, he suggested shifting the fence by approximately two feet in either direction. Mr. Guzik recommended adding a condition that, during construction, the fence be adjusted as necessary to maintain access to the sewer. Furthermore, he requested a condition requiring that each of the seven designated parking spaces in front of the school display a standard parking stall sign indicating they are reserved for the school during operating hours, unless this is already included in the current signage package. He confirmed that no exterior changes are planned for building entrances and walkways; however, he advised that a note to this effect be added to the plans. This measure ensures that any potential changes would trigger an assessment for barrier-free compliance. Regarding the conversion of lawn areas to artificial turf, Mr. Guzik explained that such material is highly permeable, potentially leading to increased runoff, and is regarded as nearly impervious. Consequently, he asked that a licensed professional engineer assess whether the original stormwater management report remains compliant following this modification. In conclusion, Mr. Guzik commented

that the transition from retail to school use will result in a marginal increase in projected wastewater flows, though not significant enough to warrant additional allocation from the township. However, based on tonight's testimony concerning the kitchen and outside catering, he requested that the plans explicitly indicate that the kitchen/catering station is for staff use only.

Mr. Bowles explained that retail trash and recycling are managed at a designated site behind the facility. Mr. Mahfoud noted there is no direct access from the school to the trash room for safety; staff will use the service hall, where trash will be collected. Avalon will be notified of special events in advance, and noise levels after hours will be controlled and during these events visitors will use general retail parking.

Mr. Snieckus, the Landscape Architect, Burgis & Associates, discussed the Planning report dated February 9, 2026, and the Landscape Architecture report dated February 16, 2026. He reviewed both reports and confirmed the applicant addressed all the comments.

Chairman Karp read Fire Chief Lynch's report dated February 17, 2026 into the record.

Chairman Karp opened the meeting for public comment on Planning Board Application PB25-10. There was no public comment.

Mr. Pankove made a motion to close public comment; seconded by Ms. Bahree. Approved by Voice Vote.

Mr. Loverro discussed the rise in need of second shift childcare services and asked if the applicant saw future business potential in this area. Mr. Mahfoud replied that he would support such efforts to assist parents.

Mr. Pankove stated that he liked this application as both landlord and tenant were present, agreed to the township professionals' conditions, and addressed all board questions.

Vice Chairman Hoberman made a motion to approve Application PB25-10, minor site plan and conditional use approval with conditions, 401-404 Avalon Square; Block 6.30, Lot 5.01; seconded by Mr. Pankove.

Roll Call:

Aye: Karp, Hoberman, Marathe, Bahree, Pankove, Loverro, Patel

Abstain: None

Absent: Geevers, Schectel, Appelget, Baig

Attorney Muller and the board thanked Mr. Surtees for his years of service and said he will be missed. Mr. Surtees announced that this would be Mr. Loverro's last meeting. The board members also expressed their appreciation to Mr. Loverro for his service.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2026

Chairman Karp adjourned the meeting at 7:44PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Van Clef
Recording Secretary