

The Township of Haddon Planning/Zoning Board

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 5, 2026

A regular meeting of the planning/zoning board of the Township of Haddon was held on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, in the municipal building court room (2nd floor), located at 135 Haddon Ave, Haddon Township, New Jersey was called to Order by Richard Rotz.

Flag Salute

Confirmation of Sunshine Law

Roll Call

Richard Rotz	Present
John Foley	Excused
Renee Bergmann	Present
Marguerite Downham	Present
Joe Buono	Present
Frank Ryan	Present/Recused
James Stevenson	Absent
Commissioner Mulroy	Excused
Gregory Wells	Present
Meredith Kirschner	Present
Maryrita D'Alessandro	Present
Chris Jandoli	Present

Also

M. Lou Garty – Solicitor
Greg Fusco – Township Planner & Engineer
Lee Palo – Zoning Officer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Buono made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 5th, 2026 meeting and seconded by Ms. Downham. Motion carried. (Abstained: Chris Jandoli)

OLD BUSINESS: None.

Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan Amendment: Solicitor Lou Garry explained that the Board would review the Township's Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan Amendment in response to litigation and a consent order with the Fair Share Housing Center.

Township Affordable Housing Planner Tristan Harrison was sworn in.

Mr. Harrison testified that the Fair Housing Act was amended in March 2024, establishing new timelines for municipalities to comply with fourth round affordable housing obligations. He explained that the Planning Board previously adopted the Housing Element in June 2025, but the Township must now amend the plan in order to comply with the court-based affordable housing dispute resolution program.

Mr. Harrison testified that the amendment before the Board contains only the sections of the 2025 Housing Plan that are being revised, identified through underlined and stricken text.

He explained that the amendment resulted from a challenge filed by the Fair Share Housing Center in August 2025, which requested additional compliance mechanisms to address the Township's fourth round affordable housing obligation.

Following negotiations, a Consent Order Agreement was approved by the court on January 15, 2026.

As part of that agreement, the Township agreed to establish overlay zoning along Cuthbert Boulevard, specifically affecting:

- Westmont Plaza Shopping Center
- Haddon Commons Shopping Center

The overlay ordinance would permit mixed-use residential development on those sites if redevelopment occurs, provided that 20% of the units are affordable housing units.

Mr. Harrison also testified regarding updates to the Township's Affordable Housing Ordinance and Development Fee Ordinance, which repeals and replaces the Township's existing regulations to ensure compliance with updated state requirements.

Mr. Harrison testified that both ordinances implement the Housing Element and are consistent with the Township's Master Plan.

He recommended adoption of the amendment to:

- comply with the Consent Order with Fair Share Housing Center
- meet the March 15 statutory deadline
- maintain immunity from builder's remedy litigation

Solicitor Garty confirmed that the amendment had been available for public review in accordance with statutory requirements.

Board members asked questions regarding the overlay zones and infrastructure considerations.

Chairman Rotz opened the hearing to the public.

Public Comment: None.

A motion was made by Mr. Jandoli and seconded by Ms. Downham to close the public portion.

Motion carried.

Adoption of Housing Element Amendment: A motion was made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Ms. Downham to adopt the 2026 Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan Amendment and authorize the Chair to sign the memorializing resolution.

Motion approved.

ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY REVIEW

Ordinance 1479 – Affordable Housing Ordinance

The Planning Board Reviewed Ordinance 1479, which repeals and replaces the Township’s existing affordable housing regulations in order to comply with updated state rules.

A motion was made Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Wells to determine that Ordinance 1479 is consistent with the Master Plan and recommend adoption by the governing body.

Motion approved.

Ordinance 1480 – Cuthbert Boulevard Overlay Zone

The Planning Board Reviewed Ordinance 1480, which establishes the Cuthbert Boulevard Overlay Zone to implement the Housing Element and address the Township’s affordable housing obligation.

A motion was made Mr. Ryan and seconded by Ms. Downham to determine that Ordinance 1480 is consistent with the Master Plan and recommend adoption by the governing body.

Motion approved.

Following the conclusion of the Housing Element and Fair Share discussion, Mr. Ryan recused himself from the remaining applications, as he is unable to participate in hearings involving use variances.

Application 26-05 – Block 3.04 Lot 11 – Zone C-3 – 146 Black Horse Pike – JR Realty Holdings NJ LLC – Applicant is seeking to permit 3 concurrent uses within the existing building. With any and all variances deemed necessary to approve this application. Solicitor Lou Garty stated that she reviewed the notice provided by the applicant and confirmed that it was properly published and served in a timely manner and that the Board had jurisdiction to hear the application.

Applicant’s attorney Alexander Barth, Esq. appeared on behalf of JR Realty Holdings NJ LLC.

The applicant requested a use variance to permit three principal uses on the property, where the ordinance permits only one principal use per lot.

Exhibits Marked:

- A1: Survey and Site Plan – Donovan Surveyors, dated March 14, 2018
- Photo Array

Mr. Barth explained that the property previously received a use variance in 2018 to permit a construction office with warehouse space. The applicant now proposes to activate two front retail spaces along Black Horse Pike while maintaining the previously approved construction office and warehouse use.

The proposed uses include:

- Construction office and warehouse (existing approved use)
- Locksmith retail space
- Additional retail tenant space

The property contains 27 parking spaces, which the applicant testified is sufficient to support the proposed uses.

Property Owner and applicant Red Riley was sworn in.

The applicant testified that the proposal would promote revitalization of the commercial corridor and would not require any changes to the building footprint or site layout.

The applicant agreed to:

- remove non-compliant window signage
- remove the telephone number from the pylon sign
- restripe the parking lot and update handicap signage
- comply with the Township sign ordinance for future signage
- work with the Board Engineer regarding lighting if evening hours are proposed
- maintain a shared commercial dumpster in the rear of the property

During the Boards discussion, it was noted that all future tenants occupying the building would be required to obtain appropriate Township mercantile/business license prior to operating, and that such licensing would ensure the Township maintains record of the business occupying the property and verifies compliance with applicable Township ordinances.

The applicant acknowledged this requirement and agreed that all tenants would comply.

Chairman Rotz opened the application to the public.

Public Comment: None.

A motion was made by Mr. Buono and seconded by Ms. Downham to close the public portion.

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Wells and seconded by Ms. Bergmann to approve Application 26-05, subject to the conditions discussed on the record.

Motion approved.

A memorializing resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

Application 26-06 – Block 20.02 Lot 19 – Zone C-1 – 108 Haddon Ave - Haddon 108, LLC – Applicant is seeking a use variance relief and bulk variance relief with minor site plan approval. With any and all variances deemed necessary to approve this application. Solicitor Lou Garty stated that she reviewed the notice provided by the applicant and confirmed that it was properly published and served in a timely manner and that the Board had jurisdiction to hear the application.

Applicant's attorney Matt Madden, Esq. appeared on behalf of Haddon 108, LLC, the owner of the property located at 108 Haddon Avenue.

Mr. Madden explained that the property is somewhat unusual because it is a split-zoned lot, with the front portion located in the C-1 Commercial Zone and the rear parking area located in the Downtown Residential Zone. The lot contains approximately 25,000 square feet and includes an existing building of approximately 4,600 square feet.

The building was historically configured into four separate tenant spaces, and the applicant proposes to continue using the building in that configuration.

The applicant requested:

- Use variance relief to permit multiple principal uses on a single lot
- Use variance relief to permit accessory commercial parking in the residential portion of the split-zoned property
- Minor site plan approval
- Sign variance relief for awning signage and retention of an existing freestanding sign
- Mr. Madden explained that the proposed uses include:
 - Rita's Water Ice
 - Fili Steaks
 - one additional retail tenant (currently unknown)
 - the existing karate studio located in the rear portion of the building

Testimony

Amin Khalifa, Managing Member of Haddon 108, LLC, was sworn in.

Mr. Khalifa testified that the property was purchased in November 2024 and that the building had already been configured into four separate spaces, each with separate entrances and utilities.

He testified that he intends to rehabilitate the building and activate the currently vacant spaces. He agreed to a condition prohibiting smoke shop, hookah lounge, or THC-related retail use in the remaining tenant space, as he did not believe that type of use would be appropriate for the area.

Mr. Khalifa testified regarding the site improvements proposed as part of the application, including:

- elimination of the five parking spaces in front of the building
- closure of one curb cut along Haddon Avenue

- conversion of the front area into an outdoor seating area
- restriping of the rear parking lot
- installation of a trash enclosure
- coordination with the neighboring Severino's property regarding access easements

Mr. Khalifa testified that he had met with the adjacent property owner to discuss the easement and had reached an agreement allowing truck turning movements while permitting the front area to be converted into pedestrian space.

Mr. Khalifa also testified regarding the proposed awning signage, explaining that he proposes a continuous awning along the building façade with individual signage sections for each tenant in order to maintain a consistent appearance.

Filippo Sparacio, Owner, Fili Steaks was sworn in.

Mr. Sparacio testified that he will operate Fili Steaks, a take-out style sandwich shop specializing in cheesesteaks.

He testified that the proposed hours of operation would be:

- Tuesday through Sunday: 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Monday: closed

Mr. Sparacio stated that the business would employ approximately two to three employees at a time, with peak activity during the lunch period.

He testified that deliveries would be made by box truck, typically during early morning hours, and that deliveries would be received at the rear of the building.

Mr. Sparacio also testified that the business will include an oven for warming sandwiches but will not bake bread onsite, and that the business will utilize the shared trash enclosure proposed for the property.

Patrick McGee, Owner of Rita's Water Ice was sworn in.

Mr. McGee testified that he is the franchise owner of Rita's Water Ice and previously operated a Rita's location nearby.

He testified that the business is a seasonal, family-oriented operation serving water ice, custard, and related products.

Mr. McGee stated that the business operates seven days per week during its seasonal period and would typically be open:

- 12:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- 12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day

He testified that the business would generally employ:

- one employee during slower daytime hours
- two employees in the afternoon
- up to four employees during peak evening hours

Mr. McGee testified that peak activity typically occurs between 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., with additional activity when children leave school during the afternoon.

He further testified that Rita's would receive:

- one weekly dairy delivery
- one weekly supply delivery
- Both deliveries would occur during daytime hours and would be received at the rear of the building.

Rami Nassar was sworn in and accepted by the Board as an expert in engineering and professional planning.

Mr. Nassar reviewed the site plan with the Board and described the proposed improvements, including:

- elimination of the front parking spaces
- creation of a pedestrian outdoor seating area
- installation of decorative planters
- restriping of the parking lot
- retention of the existing freestanding sign for the karate studio
- installation of awning signage for the front tenants

Mr. Nassar testified that the site provides adequate parking for the proposed uses and that the project will improve the appearance of the property.

He testified that the applicant agreed to address comments from the Board Engineer, including:

- restriping of parking spaces
- ADA access improvements
- coordination regarding lighting
- installation of bollards or other protective elements where necessary

Mr. Nassar testified that the requested variances satisfy the positive and negative criteria, noting that the project will revitalize a long-vacant building and advance the goals of the Township's Master Plan for the Haddon Avenue.

The following exhibits were marked into evidence during the hearing:

A-1 – Site Plan prepared by Rami Nassar

A-2 – Aerial Photograph of the Property

A-3 – Fili Steaks Proposed Sign Rendering

A-4 – Rita’s Water Ice Proposed Sign Rendering

A-5 – Easement Documentation

Chairman Rotz opened the hearing to the public.

Public Comment: None.

A motion was made by Mr. Wells and seconded by Mr. Jandoli to close the public portion.

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Ms. Bergmann and seconded by Ms. Kirschner to approve Application 26-06, including the requested use variances, minor site plan approval, sign variances, and related waivers, subject to the conditions discussed.

Motion Approved.

A memorializing resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

Two resolutions from the prior meeting were presented for adoption:

- 25-33 – 338 Westmont Ave
- 26-01 – 312 Crestwood Ave

A motion was made Ms. Downham and seconded by Mr. Wells to approve the resolutions. (Abstained: Jandoli). Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Rotz opened the meeting to the public.

No members of the public came forward.

A motion was made by Mr. Jandoli and seconded by Mr. Wells to close the public portion.

Motion carried.

ZONING OFFICER REPORT: Zoning Officer Lee Palo reported that the next meeting is expected to include one residential application and three commercial applications.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Planning/Zoning Board is scheduled for April 2, 2026

The Board discussed the June meeting date due to the Township Pride Parade and agreed to move the meeting to June 9, 2026 subject to proper notice.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Planning/Zoning Board, a motion was made by Ms. Downham and seconded by Mr. Buono adjourning the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 pm.