



TOWNSHIP OF VERONA
COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY
MINUTES OF THE VERONA
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
OF THURSDAY MARCH 26, 2026

Meeting held in the Ballroom of the Verona Community Center @ 880 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044 @ 7:30PM

PRESENT:	
Chairperson Pearson	
Vice Chair Hyndman	
Mr. Freschi	Deputy Mayor McEvoy
Mr. Camuti	Township Mgr. O'Sullivan
Mr. Lilley	Mr. Mascera, Planning Board Attorney
Mr. Magarrell	Mrs. Carpinelli, Acting Board Secretary
Not Present: Mrs. Parker, Mr. Day, Mayor Tamburro	

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Chairperson Pearson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT - Read by Mrs. Carpinelli, Board Secretary

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Chair Pearson asks if anyone from the public would like to make a statement or ask a question – seeing none the Chairperson closes general public participation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Chair Pearson asks for a motion to approve minutes from the Regular meeting of February 26, 2026. **Vice Chair Hyndman** makes a motion; **Mr. Lilley** Seconds. All remaining commissioners vote in favor. **Motion Passes.**

Chair Pearson asks for motion to approve minutes from the Special Meeting of March 3, 2026. **Deputy Mayor McEvoy** makes a motion; **Mr. Lilley** seconds. All remaining commissioners vote in favor. **Motion Passes.**

RESOLUTIONS

- Memorialization of Resolution 2026-015:** Finding Ordinance 2026-13 amendment to Chapter 150- 7.5 and 150- 7.13 to be not inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Vice Chair Hyndman makes the motion to approve, **Chair Pearson** seconds;

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Magarrell	Y				
Mr. Day					X
Mrs. Parker					X
Mr. Lilley	Y				
Mr. Camuti	Y				
Mr. Freschi	Y				

Township Mgr. O’Sullivan	Y				
Mayor Tamburro					X
Deputy Mayor McEvoy	Y				
Vice Chair Hyndman	Y				
Chair Pearson	Y				

Motion Passes.

2. Memorialization of Resolution 2026-016: Recommending 251 ½ Grove Avenue as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, meeting criteria A,B,D, & H.

Mr. Camuti makes the motion to approve, **Vice Chair Hyndman** seconds;

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Magarrel	Y				
Mr. Day					X
Mrs. Parker					X
Mr. Lilley	Y				
Mr. Camuti	Y				
Mr. Freschi	Y				
Township Mgr. O’Sullivan	Y				
Mayor Tamburro					X
Deputy Mayor McEvoy	Y				
Vice Chair Hyndman	Y				
Chair Pearson	Y				

Motion Passes.

CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

1. Amendment of Zoning Code 150- 7.5 Permanent and Portable Swimming pools and 150-7.13 Mechanical Equipment.

Attorney Mascera updated the language of the ordinance and the revisions were proposed to the Town Council. One change was made regarding generators adding that generators will not be permitted in front yards, as well as side-yards.

Vice Chair Hyndman makes the motion to find the amended ordinance not inconsistent with the Master Plan, **Mr. Freschi** seconds;

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Magarrel	Y				
Mr. Day					X
Mrs. Parker					X
Mr. Lilley	Y				
Mr. Camuti	Y				
Mr. Freschi	Y				
Township Mgr. O’Sullivan	Y				
Mayor Tamburro					X
Deputy Mayor McEvoy	Y				
Vice Chair Hyndman	Y				
Chair Pearson	Y				

Motion Passes.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES- None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Review of Updated By-Laws

Board Discussion:

Question whether the Board Secretary has the responsibility to communicate the completeness of an application.

Recommend change to section 1:3-11(b)- to state that no Board member shall engage in any discussion or communicate any information of substance and/or merit of any application before the Board with a member of the public, except during a public Board meeting.

Also add a provision that exhibits presented during testimony and are not included in the original application, should be submitted digitally and any exhibits included as part of the application should be presented as hard copy handouts to the Board during the hearing.

Vice Chair Hyndman makes the motion to approve with aforementioned changes,

Chair Pearson seconds;

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Magarrel	Y				
Mr. Day					X
Mrs. Parker					X
Mr. Lilley	Y				
Mr. Camuti	Y				
Mr. Freschi	Y				
Township Mgr. O’Sullivan	Y				
Mayor Tamburro					X
Deputy Mayor McEvoy	Y				
Vice Chair Hyndman	Y				
Chair Pearson	Y				

Motion Passes.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation for 251 ½ Grove Avenue**

Ms. Chavan, professional planner reviews her findings of the property and gives evidence that this property qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment based on Criteria A, B, D & H.

Madam Chair asks if anyone from the public wishes to comment – seeing none

Closes Public comment

Mr. Freschi makes the motion to recommend to the Governing Body that the property 251 ½ be determined an Area in Need of Redevelopment; **Vice Chair Hyndman** seconds;

Roll Call Vote:

	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	RECUSED	ABSENT
Mr. Magarrel	Y				
Mr. Day					X
Mrs. Parker					X
Mr. Lilley	Y				

Mr. Camuti	Y				
Mr. Freschi	Y				
Township Mgr. O'Sullivan	Y				
Mayor Tamburro					X
Deputy Mayor McEvoy	Y				
Vice Chair Hyndman	Y				
Chair Pearson	Y				

Motion Passes.

2. Application 2026-01- 383 Bloomfield Avenue, Block 708, Lot 1

Attorney Mascera states that the application was deemed complete and proper notice was served.

Ms. Lisa John-Basta, of Chiesa, Shahinian & Giantomasi, counsel for the applicant, The Filoso Family, presented the application for **preliminary and final site plan approval** to construct a **four-story mixed-use building** at 383 Bloomfield Avenue, commonly known as the Hillcrest Farms property.

- **First Floor:** Approximately 4,050 sq. ft. of commercial space, including a retail nursery for Hillcrest Farms
- **Upper Floors:** 33 residential units (one-, two-, and three-bedroom units)
- **Affordable Housing:**
 - 2 units with a total of 5 special needs bedrooms
 - 1 affordable family unit
 - Total of 11 affordable housing credits

The property is located within a designated area in need of redevelopment, and the application is substantially conforming with the redevelopment plan, with limited exceptions.

Witnesses:

Paul Anderson – Civil Engineer, 40 Miller Drive, New Jersey- BS Civil Engineering Clarkson University, Principal of Anderson Consulting Services who prepared the plans.

Craig Peregoy – Traffic Engineer, 245 Main Street, Chester -BS Civil Engineering, Virginia Tech

Gregory Switzer – Project Architect

EXHIBIT A-1: Power point presentation; Paul Anderson; Anderson Consulting Services

EXHIBIT A-2: Power point presentation; Gregory Switzer, GSAPC

Paul Anderson is sworn in by Board Attorney Mascera.

He describes the property location and the existing uses. To the East and South are multi-family apartments and to the West are Single Family homes and to the North is commercial properties in the TC Zone.

Existing Conditions:

- 1.26-acre fully developed parcel
- Approximately 68% impervious coverage
- Multiple existing structures, including greenhouses, to be demolished
- Current access includes two driveways on Bloomfield Avenue and one on Park Avenue

Proposed Site Plan:

- Full site redevelopment with regrading
- One right-turn-only exit onto Bloomfield Avenue for improved safety
- New sidewalks along Bloomfield Avenue and partial Park Avenue
- 63 on-site parking spaces + 3 on-street spaces
- 9 EV charging stations (increased from initial proposal)
- 3 ADA-compliant spaces (all van accessible)

Mr. Anderson states that the application is completely conforming with the exception of one design waiver for reduced side yard buffer due to sight triangle constraints. The buffer on the eastern side is 11.5 feet where 15 feet is required.

Previously noted retaining wall variance to be eliminated through plan revision

Site Design and Circulation:

- ADA-compliant pedestrian circulation throughout the site
- Outdoor garden/display area accessible to both customers and residents
- Amenities include benches, waste receptacles, and pet waste station
- Bicycle parking provided (indoor and outdoor)

Parking and Loading:

- Designated commercial parking spaces with signage
- One loading space provided (standard size)
- Deliveries expected to be minimal (primarily small vans or box trucks)
- Coordination required for larger deliveries or move-ins using on-street spaces

Trash and Recycling:

- Enclosed trash room within building
- Use of wheeled totes (no traditional dumpster)
- Private hauler to collect 2–3 times per week (or more if needed)
- Collection to occur before 7:00 AM

Lighting:

- Dark sky compliant lighting design
- Minimal light spill at property lines (to be further reduced on east side)
- Lighting to remain on overnight for security purposes
- Shielding and landscaping will mitigate impacts on adjacent properties

Utilities and Stormwater Management:

- Sanitary sewer and water connections via Park Avenue
- Adequate system capacity confirmed
- Stormwater system includes subsurface detention and porous pavement
- Recharge not required under ordinance, though applicant is open to exploring options with Board engineer
- No anticipated adverse impact to neighboring properties

Fire Safety and Emergency Access:

- Fire access primarily from surrounding streets (no on-site truck circulation planned)
- Fire department connection located on west side of building
- Adequate water pressure and flow confirmed
- Fire flow calculations to be provided during final design as a condition of approval

Landscaping and Buffering:

- Landscaping plan includes perimeter buffers and screening
- Board discussed placement of **6-ft. board-on-board fence** and relationship to retaining walls
- Consensus direction:
 - **Eastern property line:** Fence required for buffering
 - **Southern property line:** Fence waiver recommended due to existing retaining wall and vegetation

Board Engineer Review:

- Applicant agreed to comply with outstanding comments, including:
 - Providing certification for porous pavement performance
 - Submitting stormwater modeling files for review
 - Clarifying hydrologic modeling methodology
 -
- Applicant further agreed to comply with the following:
 - Final fence and buffer design to be refined
 - Fire flow calculations to be submitted
 - Stormwater recharge feasibility to be further evaluated
 - Geotechnical Report to be submitted
 - Coordination with Board professionals required prior to final approval

Chair Pearson asks if any members of the public have questions for Engineer

Charlie Dimeck, Verona

Asks about the existing chain link fence along the Eastern side of the property and if a retaining wall is proposed.

Chair Pearson asks if any other members of the public wish to ask a question – Seeing none, closes public comments.

Witness:

Craig Peregoy – Traffic Engineer is sworn in by Board Attorney Mascera

Mr. Craig provided responses to questions raised by the Board regarding traffic circulation, loading, deliveries, and parking.

- **Loading and Vehicle Maneuvering:**
Smaller vehicles such as sprinter vans, step vans, and box trucks are capable of utilizing the proposed loading space. Larger trucks are not anticipated to use this area.
- **Residential Moving Operations:**
Typical apartment moves involve 14–17 ft moving trucks, which can fit within standard parking spaces. For larger trucks, tenants would coordinate with building management to temporarily reserve spaces along Bloomfield Avenue.

- **Deliveries:**
Routine deliveries (e.g., food, package services) are expected to occur similarly to existing conditions along Bloomfield Avenue, with drivers utilizing available street parking rather than entering private property.
- **Trip Generation (Retail/Restaurant Use):**
Traffic estimates were based on standard Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) data.
 - A full restaurant use would generate equal or less weekday traffic than general retail.
 - Outdoor seating was not included in calculations due to its limited size and seasonal use.
- **Sight Distance:**
Adequate sight distance exists at Park Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue. Supporting calculations will be provided and added to the plans.
- **Delivery Vehicle Clearance:**
The rear drive aisle provides approximately 12 ft clearance, sufficient for standard delivery trucks (e.g., UPS vehicles at ~11 ft height).
- **On-Street Parking Enforcement:**
Enforcement of designated parking spaces would fall under county jurisdiction.
 - No current ordinance exists for reserving on-street parking for specific businesses.
 - Signage may be used; however, formal enforcement would require ordinance adoption.
 - It was suggested that enforcement may not be necessary unless issues arise.
- **Designated Parking Spaces:**
Three on-street spaces created by eliminating curb cuts are proposed to count toward parking requirements.
 - Debate occurred regarding whether these should be formally designated for commercial use.
 - The Board generally supported counting the spaces toward parking compliance but expressed concern about formal designation and enforceability.
- **Traffic Impact:**
 - Peak hour trips are estimated at approximately 56 trips, below the 100-trip threshold typically considered significant by NJDOT.
 - Traffic generation is likely overestimated due to increased remote work and proximity to public transit.

Signal Impact:

The development is not expected to significantly impact nearby traffic signal operations. Future county signal upgrades may improve conditions

Board Discussion:

- Questions were raised regarding:
 - Real-world traffic patterns versus modeled projections
 - School traffic impacts
 - Potential underestimation of project traffic impacts
- The applicant's traffic study was reviewed by an independent consultant and deemed acceptable with minor clarifications.

Chair Pearson asks if any members of the public wish to ask questions – Seeing none closes public portion.

Due to time constraints: **A motion was made by Vice Chair Hyndman** to: Extend testimony until 10:30 PM and extend the meeting until 10:45 PM for voting purposes. **Mr. Magarrell** seconds. All other commissioners in attendance voted in favor. **Motion Passes.**

Witness:

Gregory Switzer, Project Architect, GSAPC, is sworn in and accepted as an expert in architecture.

Mr. Switzer provides Building Design Overview of primary and secondary frontages. Design intent is to avoid blank facades and promote pedestrian engagement consistent with redevelopment goals.

He also describes the Floor Plans and Landscaping Plan.

Board Questions:

Den vs. Bedroom Labeling: A labeling error was identified and will be corrected.

Convertible Spaces Concern: The Board requested design measures to prevent dens from being converted into additional bedrooms.

Rod Iron Railing:

Initially considered for removal due to potential zoning conflicts

Applicant expressed desire to retain it

Board indicated it may remain subject to compliance or variance if required

Retaining Wall Height: Will be reduced from 4.5 ft to 4 ft to comply with ordinance requirements.

Sustainability: The building is not pursuing LED certification but incorporates similar material and design practices

Chair Pearson asks if any members of the public wish to ask questions – Seeing none closes public portion.

Action required: Additional coordination required between engineers on outstanding technical items.

Application carried to next regular meeting on April 23, 2026, 7:00pm no new noticing is required.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Not Necessary

Deputy Mayor McEvoy makes the motion to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Dolores Carpinelli

Verona Township

Planning Board Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: Meeting minutes are a summation of the hearing. If you are interested in a verbatim transcript from this or any proceeding, please contact the Board Office at 973-857-4773