

## **ALPINE PLANNING BOARD**

Alpine Borough Hall  
100 Church Street  
Alpine, New Jersey 07620

### **MINUTES**

October 28, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER/PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT:** The Planning Board, Borough of Alpine, convened in regular session on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 7:30 P.M. Catherine Parilla read the announcement in accordance with the requirements of the Sunshine Law:

In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, the notice of this regular meeting held Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 7:30 P.M. has met the requirements of the law by publication in The Record and posted on the bulletin board of the lobby in the Borough Hall, posted on the website and filed in the office of the Borough Clerk.

Note: This meeting was videotaped, as the stenographer was not able to be in attendance.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Councilman George Abad, Jr., (alternate) Keren Barbi, Carol Cochi, Brandt Cybul, Nancy Dhulipala Sandra Nudelman, Catherine Parilla, Robert Policano, Joyce Sonpal, Mayor Paul Tomasko

Staff Present: Douglas Bern, Esq., Board Attorney; Perry Frenzel, Borough Engineer; Ed Snieckus, for Borough Planner; Marti Francis, Board & Recording Secretary

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES of September 16, 2025, REGULAR MEETING:** Upon a motion by Councilman Abad, seconded by Mr. Policano and supported by the Board members, the minutes were approved.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS** The meeting was opened to the public for non-agenda items. Hearing none, the meeting was closed to the public.

The Board chair asked the applicant's indulgence to take the Board business first, leaving the rest of the meeting for the Lily Pond Estates hearing. She also stated that the meeting ends at 10:00.

#### **BILLS AND CLAIMS:**

Upon a motion by Mayor Tomasko to approve the bills and claims, seconded by Ms. Nudelman, members voted as follows: Ayes: Councilman Abad, Ms. Cochi, Mr. Cybul, Ms. Dhulipala, Ms. Nudelman, Mr. Policano, Ms. Sonpal, Mayor Tomasko, Ms. Parilla.

| Vendor            | Description                 | Acct                                                      | Inv. # | Amount   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Burgis Associates | Lily Pond Estates           | ESCROW<br>(previously<br>erroneously listed<br>as Current | 47320  | 2,080.00 |
| Burgis Associates | Lily Pond Estates           | ESCROW                                                    | 47622  | 800.00   |
| Azzolina & Feury  | Zoning Lily Pond<br>Estates | ESCROW                                                    | 80906  | 3,811.00 |
| Bern & Associates | Lily Pond Estates           | ESCROW                                                    | 11220  | 2,006.25 |
| Bern & Associates | Lily Pond Estates           | ESCROW                                                    | 11219  | 562.50   |

**COMMUNICATION:** None

*These minutes have been approved by the Planning Board.*

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Bergen County League of Municipalities: The Chief of the Palisades Parkway Police was the speaker at the recent Mayors Breakfast.

Board of Health: The next meeting is December 9.

Environmental Commission: There was a meeting on October 23, with one inspection and one follow-up visit. There is a meeting in November as well.

Building Department: The report is on file.

NJ Transit Update: The Gateway Tunnel Project may be part of the \$20 billion cut from the infrastructure budget.

COAH Update: The Fourth Round update can be given after the hearing is complete, in an Executive Session.

**HEARING (Continued): Lily Pond Estates: Zoning Approval for the overall project; Soil Moving Permit Application for Lots 25.01 through 30, plus the vacated portion of Appletree Lane; Major Subdivision for the consolidation of Lots 25.01 through 30 and the vacated portion of Appletree Lane**

Mr. DelVecchio stated that the Applicant's Engineer was present at tonight's meeting because communication had been received that there were additional questions. He asked that these questions be asked and Mr. Gimigliano be able to answer them before additional witnesses were called. Mr. DelVecchio also stated that as of today the plans have been refiled with the Bergen County Planning Board. He expects that they will be approved, as all comments have been addressed. Mayor Tomasko asked for the timeframe for approval. Mr. DelVecchio stated that the County does not provide a timeframe but that two to four weeks seems reasonable.

Ms. Parilla asked that the Board hear from the Board Engineer first. Mr. DelVecchio stated that usually the direct testimony is completed first, that he has Mr. Frenzel's report and would like to discuss the very few items to which the applicant disagrees. He did not feel that a reading of the report was necessary.

Mayor Tomasko thanked Mr. DelVecchio for bringing the professionals back to tonight's meeting.

Mr. Gimigliano remained under oath and confirmed the status of the resubmission of the files to the County and that for the most part he was in agreement with the report. Mr. DelVecchio reviewed the following items with Mr. Gimigliano. Mr. DelVecchio did not address the traffic issues, as they will be handled by another witness. Mr. Gimigliano confirmed that the sight distance is adequate, that the applicant has no issue with providing the requested signage, provided the County is in agreement, that the Demarest settlement agreement concerning access to the Demarest sewers was provided to the Board, that there was an amendment to the WQMP allowing this project to join with the Demarest sewers. Ms. Parilla asked for clarification as to Demarest's ability to receive this amount of sewerage and was told that the BCUA, Bergen County, Alpine, and Demarest were all provided an opportunity to provide comment and all were provided the projected flow. The next step in the approval process (TWA) cannot happen before Planning Board approval is received. Discussion. Mr. DelVecchio stated that the written settlement agreement with the Borough of Demarest that they will accept this sewer flow was provided to the Board Counsel. The utility authority has confirmed that it has adequate capacity at their plant. Mr. Bern stated that he has received documents from September 3 but does not have the referred-to settlement agreement. Mr. DelVecchio will send it again. The Settlement Agreement is dated 2/13/2020. Further discussion. Mr. DelVecchio confirmed that all of the flow will go into the Demarest sewers. Mr. DelVecchio asked about the suggestions concerning a bus stop and sidewalks. Mr. Gimigliano stated that there was no RSIS requirement for a bus stop or accommodations for school-age children. Ms. Parilla asked whether such things could be considered even if not required. Mr. DelVecchio said that he would need to understand the details before responding with a decision.

Ms. Parilla asked, concerning the stormwater management basin, about the pitch of pipe from one basin to another. Mr. Gimigliano explained that the system can adequately manage the water, per the studies done. Discussion about the size of the pipe and the .44% pitch (8 inches, approximately) from one end to the other. Ms. Dhulipala asked whether the nearby trees will be deprived of water and be at risk. Mr. Gimigliano explained that the nearby trees will be removed and replaced with trees appropriate to the conditions.

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Mayor Tomasko asked for confirmation that the Alpine DPW will not be responsible for leaf collection, snow removal, road improvement, etc., and was told that as this is a private development, the Alpine DPW will not be responsible for this upkeep.

Mr. Policano asked about lighting along Closter Dock Road and whether it would be distracting to drivers. He was told that the light would not spill over into the road. There is no lighting proposed along this road. He also commented that there would be about 600-800 truckloads of dirt delivered and thus a lot of weight on the road. Mr. Gimigliano explained that there will be a plan for safety and that the truckloads will be spread out over the construction. This will be handled in pre-construction. Mr. Bern stated that testimony may be asked for in relation to soil moving.

Ms. Sonpal stated that people have expressed concern about safety on Closter Dock Road. Mr. DelVecchio stated that safety measures will be addressed at the pre-construction meetings and that the truck issue will be temporary.

Ms. Parilla asked whether streets in the development will be open to residents. Mr. DelVecchio stated that this is a private community and whether there would be someone policing someone who wanders in would be up to the Home Owners Association.

Ms. Dhulipala spoke about the extraordinary trees on the property and an exceptional tree near units 30-33. It is a metasquoia and is the grandest heritage tree in Alpine. It is a deciduous conifer and currently 115-120 feet tall. Before World War II, this species had believed in parts of China to be extinct for millions of years until a group of monks saved some from deforestation. In 1948, an expedition was funded, in part by Dr. Frick, to collect saplings and seeds and then shared with Harvard, introducing the species to the United States. He then brought one of these trees from his property in Long Island to the Frick Estate. This tree could live for a long, long time. Ms. Dhulipala asked that the footprint of the building be sifted to save the tree. The Engineer stated that if it can be saved this will be looked at. The building cannot be drastically moved, but perhaps it could be shifted. Ms. Parilla asked that the Board be notified when the tree is looked at. Mr. DelVecchio asked that the tree be marked (to be looked at, NOT for removal) and said that a discussion could take place at the Planning Board following. A meeting cannot take place outside of the properly noticed meeting. Mayor Tomasko asked for a commitment that the applicant will do everything possible to save the tree. Mr. Snieckus from Burgis Associates asked to be able to examine the tree and was told that as long as it was with notice and that there was no conversation, this would be agreeable. As a point of clarification, the tree is close to Building H.

Board Engineer Perry Frenzel was sworn in and stated that what he had asked for in his letter was a safe place for children to wait for the bus, not an elaborate structure. The applicant understands what is requested.

Phillip Simotas (resident and president of the School Board) asked to be shown the designated spot for the bus stop and was told there is no designated spot, as none is required. Mr. Simotas asked where the bus could stop and was told that the bus could stop anywhere, including the acceleration and deceleration lanes. There is room for the bus to enter the development. Ms. Parilla asked how many students there are currently in the school and was told 153 student in grades K to 8. Twenty-three of the students pay tuition. Mr. Cybul asked how many students take the bus to school and was told that this year there are no students taking the bus to the Elementary School.

Liz Davis (42 Brenner Place) said that her daughter had to cross the street to get on the bus.

Maria DiBiase (Warren Lane) said that children from the development will be taking the bus.

Richard Kurtz stated that without question the school bus can drive into the development, pick up the children, and leave safely.

Liz Davis (42 Brenner Place) asked about the possibility of widening the road if this left turn proves unsafe. Mr. Gimigliano stated that the Applicant is making a dedication to the County to allow for widening if needed in the future. Approximately 14 feet are to be dedicated to the County.

Mr. DelVecchio stated that Mr. Seckler, the traffic expert, is not going to talk about traffic volume and traffic levels of service because this is a permitted use at a permitted location without variance. He will speak about the movements into and out of the site. Matthew Seckler, Stonefield Engineering, 92 Park Avenue, Rutherford, NJ, was sworn in and accepted as a traffic engineering expert. Mr. Seckler has made himself familiar with the property, plans, requirements, and Ordinances involved. He spoke about the grade change on Closter Dock Road and the importance of locating the driveway location giving the correct sight distance (445 feet leaving; 325 feet entering) in either direction. He described the issues concerning entering, leaving, and stopping to turn left when someone is stopped. He described the importance of the acceleration and deceleration lanes. Concerning the RSIS, a review has shown that the design meets or exceeds the RSIS requirements. The access to and from the site will operate in a safe manner. The bus pickup spots suggested by the Board and public are good ideas. The hill signs are also good suggestions.

Appletree Lane will continue to be available to the current houses but will be vacated within the development.

Ms. Cochi asked whether a blinking yellow light could be asked for from the County. Mr. Seckler said that the widened area will make the entrance stand out.

Ms. Nudelman asked for specifics on the acceleration and deceleration lanes, and they were given.

Mr. Cybul asked about the safety, on a rainy or snowy day, of turning left into the development.

Ms. Dhulipala voiced concern about the safety of turning left out of the driveway. Mr. Seckler explained that the planned modifications will give extra feet of visibility.

Councilman Abad said that coming down the hill and making a left turn is a real concern. He said that he appreciates all of the accommodations that the applicant is trying to make, but he has been involved in accidents on that road, and this is a real concern. Discussion.

Mayor Tomasko referred to the August letter from the County about the entrance/exit for the development. He asked who is giving information to the County and if 2-4 weeks is a realistic turnaround. Mr. Seckler explained.

Mr. Policano asked whether the walls and signs are out of the sight area. Mr. Seckler said that the proposed walls are out of the sight area.

The meeting was opened to the Public for questions of Mr. Seckler.

Sharon Kurtz (Tulip Tree Lane) asked whether there have been accidents on Closter Dock Road and whether this is something new with this project. Discussion. People spoke about accidents on the road. Mayor Tomasko explained that monthly police reports are made to the Mayor and Council and that Closter Dock Road and Route 9W are the roads with the most accidents in town.

Carolina Park said that she has seen two accidents in a month.

Mr. DelVecchio asked that questions be kept to the testimony of the traffic engineer.

Maria DiBiase stated that information can be requested from the Police. Ms. Parilla asked whether he requested it. Mr. Seckler stated that the Police Chief reviewed the application and thus he did not ask the Police Department.

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Gregory Pappas (20 Dogwood Lane) asked for the daily volume of traffic. Mr. Seckler said that average traffic for a week day for both directions was 10,000 vehicles (7,000 over the summer day).

Liz Davis (42 Brenner Place) asked how long it takes a fully loaded tractor trailer coming down the hill at 55 MPH to stop. Mr. Seckler said that it would be more than for an average car but that their sight distance was better. Ms. Davis asked whether a left turn lane would be helpful. The answer was that this was a County decision. Discussion.

The meeting was closed to the Public.

Mr. Frenzel explained that several issues were raised during previous sessions: For the DEP permit processes, applications and proof of filing have been reviewed, and all is in order. Concerning the State Historical Preservation Office, a report has been received from Langan Engineering, the local expert. A previous report was rejected; a supplemental report was accepted on 7/23/25: There are no further architectural or archeological studies necessary, and the 1980s renovation of the mansion was so thorough that the current building is not eligible for inclusion in the New Jersey or Federal Registry of Historic Places. The applicant filed the plans to the County after Mr. Frenzel wrote his review; Mr. Frenzel will be in contact with the County. The TWA can only be signed after the Planning Board gives approval. Concerning traffic, studies show that the peak hour for the week is on Saturday and comprises 32 trips in and out in that hour.

In response to the Board's concerns and comments about the Stormwater Management Report (and those of the public), the report has been put out for a third-party review. Mr. Frenzel met with Menlo Engineering, which is performing the analysis, specifically the area of Appletree Lane and Brenner Place.

Mr. DelVecchio stated that any further review of the drainage reports undertaken by this Board puts it in breach of the settlement agreement entered into between it and the party. He said that he has accommodated Mr. Frenzel's review with his staff and his experts even though that was not anticipated in the settlement agreement. To hear that a third party has been brought in is concerning to him. He read from page 16, paragraph I of the settlement agreement. Mr. Bern stated that this is a review for informational purposes. Ms. Parilla asked whether this is an additional review; this is a third-party review specifically of the area mentioned. Mr. DelVecchio stated that the applicant never agreed to an additional review, that the Board took a vote over his objection. As it was inhouse, the applicant let it go, but to hear that it has grown into something more is concerning.

Ms. Parilla asked what is still being waited for. Mr. DelVecchio said that approvals can be conditional upon approvals of other agencies but that the Board is not able to wait until those approvals have been received. The other approvals needed are the TWA and water extension, but they cannot happen before the Planning Board acts.

Paul Grygiel (70 Hudson Street, Ste 5B, Hoboken, NJ) was sworn in and accepted as a licensed planner. He confirmed that he is familiar with the property, neighborhood, requirements, and Ordinances related to this project and that the application is fully compliant with all of them. He was involved in the rezoning of the property through the proceedings. He has been involved since 2019. The project complies with the bulk standards and design requirements. He is not aware of any municipal requirements with which the project does not comply.

Mayor Tomasko asked whether Mr. Grygiel or Mr. Zampolin was aware of other townhouses that were 7,000 square feet in size.

The meeting was opened to the public. Mr. Grygiel explained a bit about what he does as a planner.

Liz Davis (42 Brenner Place) asked why, if the Engineer and public brought up concerns about stormwater management, the applicant would not entertain further review to make the situation more safe. Ms. Parilla and Mr. Bern referred to the restrictions of the settlement agreement.

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Ted Novack asked about the traffic flow; Mr. Seckler repeated the information he had previously given.

The meeting was closed to the public.

Ms. Parilla asked the architect, who remained under oath, the difference between a basement and a cellar. It has to do with whether it is a story or not. In order to have a legal bedroom in a basement you need to have an egress window.

Mayor Tomasko asked about previous 7,000-square foot townhouses. Mr. Zampolin explained that some of the Bellaire Townhouses are close to 6,000 square feet. Mayor Tomasko voiced concern about the impervious coverage, as well as whether a unit would re-sell.

Richard Kurtz explained that there are townhouses of different sizes and that only a few of them are 7,000 square feet.

Discussion about the units that have basements.

The meeting was opened to the public for questions of the architect; hearing none it was closed.

Mayor Tomasko asked who the builder will be. Mr. DelVecchio does not have the answer to that question. Mr. Kurtz stated that several builders have been interviewed and that they are close to choosing one. He said that they need a builder that is pristine.

The meeting was opened to the public for comments.

Phil Simotas said that he also represented that Board of Education and was told that he was not able to do so. He could speak for himself, which he did. The school budget is very tight, while trying to maintain high achievement standards. Increases are restricted by the state to under 2% without having to go before the public. The number of additional children the school can accommodate will be a function of which classes they go into. If a class goes above a certain number, an additional class is required. The school will have to come before the town if more than a 2% increase is required. One reason that has been avoidable so far is that additional sources of revenue have been available, including renting space to a nursery school and taking in tuition-paying (non-Alpine) students. The impact on the school is unknown.

Gregory Pappas (Dogwood Lane) asked about the impact on the Police and Fire Department, vehicles, and other areas.

Mr. Kurtz stated that The Woodlands, 24 townhouses similar to what he hopes will be built in Alpine. Fourteen units have been sold and include 2 children so far. He reminded everyone that they agreed to put in sprinklers. He said that the people who have bought at the Woodlands are lovely. He did not think it would cost a lot of money to the town and that it was a nice ratable.

Mayor Tomasko thanked Mr. Kurtz for the information. He pointed out that the Demarest complex does not have an affordable housing component. He also stated that the cost of services inevitable outpace the income of ratables. Discussion.

The meeting was closed to the public.

Ms. Sonpal commented that the 23 students who are paying tuition bring in close to \$500,000.

Discussion about whether the Board was ready to come to a vote. Mayor Tomasko asked that the Board be allowed to wait for the County Planning Board approval before taking a vote so that the Board could learn whether the County felt it was safe. Mr. DelVecchio stated that having the first application rejected as incomplete was routine. The Board was polled and agreed that they felt it was prudent to wait until the November meeting before voting. The Board Attorney also stated that in the past the Board has been

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presented with a list of conditions; this can be prepared before the next meeting. The resolution would be subject to a Developers Agreement. Ms. Parilla asked the applicant whether they would agree to wait until next month.

Mr. Jeff Kurtz asked why the traffic situation has not been addressed before now. Discussion about steps that have been taken.

Mr. DelVecchio stated that he needed five minutes to speak with his client. He returned and stated that he and the applicant would agree to extend the time the Board has to act until November 12, not in order to await the County approval but in order to give the Board a chance to digest the information. He stated that he will ask for a vote on November 12 whether the County has replied or not. He stated that he is making this statement so that there are no surprises on November 12. He also asked Mr. Bern to share the list of conditions in advance of the November 12 meeting, to which Mr. Bern agreed. No further public notice will be required.

Mr. Policano moved to go into Closed Session, second Ms. Cochi. All in favor. Carried. The meeting did not go into Closed Session. It was decided that the Closed Session will take place at the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Upon a motion by Mayor Tomasko, seconded by Ms. Cochi and supported by all in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marti Francis, Recording Secretary