

ALPINE PLANNING BOARD

Alpine Borough Hall
100 Church Street
Alpine, New Jersey 07620

MINUTES

September 16, 2025

CALL TO ORDER/PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT: The Planning Board, Borough of Alpine, convened in regular session on Tuesday, September 16, 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, September 16, 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 and filed in the office of the Borough Clerk.

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 AUGUST 26, 2025, REGULAR MEETING: Mr. Policano asked for confirmation that approving the minutes did not automatically mean that all of the requested documents had been received (he was told that it did not). Mr. Policano moved to approve the minutes of August 26, second by Mayor Tomasko. All in favor. Carried.

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 announced that she would 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. Sonpal, members voted as follows: members voted as follows: Ayes: Councilman Abad, Ms. Cochi, Mr. Cybul, Ms. Dhulipala, Ms. Nudelman, Mr. Policano, Ms. Sonpal, Mayor Tomasko, Ms. Parilla.

These minutes have been approved by the Planning Board.

Vendor	Description	Acct	Inv. #	Amount
Burgis Associates	Lily Pond Estates	CURRENT	47320	2,080
Azzolina & Feury	Zoning Lily Pond Estates	ESCROW	80783	3,779.00
Gannett	23 Tamarack Notice of Decision	ESCROW	11621307	17.60
Gannett	3 Berkery Notice of Decision	ESCROW	11621572	12.76

COMMUNICATION:**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Bergen County League of Municipalities: The main speaker at the recent meeting was Planner Joe Burgis, who spoke about the Fourth Round of the Affordable Housing process. The other speaker was Administrator of Bergen County, Tom Dutch. Councilman Abad was also in attendance.

Board of Health: Today's meeting was cancelled.

Environmental Commission: The next meeting is September 25; there are no planned site inspections as of yet.

Building Department: The report is not yet available.

NJ Transit Update: There are no major updates.

COAH Update: no report.

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 reviewed the progress so far, including that the DEP papers have been submitted, that the Engineer direct testimony was completed, and that the requested site visits had been arranged. He stated that the Engineer is available for public questions and then redirect.

Mayor Tomasko stated that the question of sprinklers was still open. The Mayor and Mr. DelVecchio discussed the matter. Mr. DelVecchio stated that it was the opinion of the applicant that they are not required but that if they are required they would be installed.

Kyle Khorozian (19 Giletta Court, Closter, Fire Chief of the Alpine Fire Department) and Charles Hoffman (1030 Closter Dock Road, Assistant Chief of the Alpine Fire Department and OEM Coordinator) came forward and were sworn in. Mr. Khorozian stated that he is familiar with the Fire Codes of the Borough. Mr. DelVecchio reserved judgment on his qualifications relating to the codes. It was suggested that Mr. Dalton, Fire Code Official, should come to the next meeting as he has a DCA license. The two gentlemen explained why they would like to see the building sprinklered, including that they save lives (the current COAH building has sprinklers). If there are no sprinklers, it is possible that the fire fighters will not be able to enter the building when they get there because the fire will already be too large and dangerous. Also, the State passed a law last year requiring sprinklers in any townhouse. The department is all volunteer and is at minimal staffing right now. Discussion. Mr. DelVecchio asked for the number of the new law and was told PL 2024 C. 42. Mr. DelVecchio restated that this issue is a building code issue and out of the Board's jurisdiction. He said again that if the Building Department requires it they will do it. He agreed to put the sprinklers in.

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Ms. Cochi asked for the rating of the walls between units and was told that they had a 2-hour burn time.

Ms. Parilla stated that Mr. Dalton no longer needed to come to the next meeting.

Mr. Gimigliano came forward, remaining under oath, to answer questions from the public and Board.

Liz Davis (42 Brenner) stated that she lives downhill from the property and that she has experienced many flooded basements and that she has reviewed the drainage plans. She asked about the slope of the drainage pipe. The Engineer explained that currently there is no drainage system and described the new system. He said that the overall plan was to slow the water down and move it into the pits and into the river and away from Appletree Lane. Ms. Davis asked questions about elevation and drainage. Mr. Gimigliano described parts of the property that will be raised, basins that will be lowered, a 4-foot retaining wall, the spread of the 5 basins, and the rationale for the plan of the water flow. Ms. Davis asked whether an independent drainage engineer will review the plans.

Borough Engineer Mr. Frenzel explained that he reviewed the report in great detail, including the slopes, volumes, current conditions, proposed conditions, the sub areas, flood paths. He asked questions of Mr. Gimigliano and involved the DEP in discussions. He stated that in his opinion the report as submitted is accurate.

Ms. Parilla stated that she thought at the last meeting they had spoken about having an independent person look at the report. Mr. Frenzel said that the Board could do that. Board Attorney Mr. Bern said that the person in question was Mr. Azzolina. Mr. Frenzel stated that Mr. Azzolina had worked with him on the review. Ms. Parilla asked Ms. Davis whether she had someone in mind for the study (she did not) and said that the Board could not stop her if that is what she wanted to do.

Andrea Abad (7 Berkery Place) began to ask a question, and Mr. DelVecchio asked whether there was a relative on the Board. Ms. Abad was then not allowed to ask her question. Mr. Cybul (Warren Lane) tried to ask a question and was also told he could not participate.

Ms. Davis asked whether Bergen County had to approve the drainage plan and was told that yes and that the DEP also had to approve it. She asked what happens when the property gets flooded and was told that this is a legal question and outside the confines of this meeting. Ms. Davis asked whether she could obtain electronic copies. Mr. DelVecchio said that he would have to see whether this was available. Ms. Davis asked whether the retention basins would have plantings. They will. Discussion. She asked about mosquito control and was told that the basins would drain within 72 hours. Ms. Parilla asked whether there was a maintenance plan. There is a maintenance manual that will be provided to the town and that it outlines inspections, etc. Mr. Bern stated that the responsibility will be transferred to the Homeowners Association.

Mr. Brandt Cybul asked whether the pond has ever flooded and asked whether a fence was planned to be put up around it. He was told that to the best of his knowledge it had not flooded and that no changes were planned.

Councilman Abad asked whether there would be testing on retention ponds and was told that there will be post-construction testing for compaction.

Ms. Dhulipala asked about the farming done and whether it involved pesticides and whether there would be testing. She was told that the farming activity was on a small scale, there was no evidence of contamination, and that no soil testing was planned.

Ed Snieckus, a partner at Burgis Associates, was sworn in. He asked about the pavers on the landscape plan. Mr. Gimigliano stated that the pavement will be uniform. The landscape architect will be able to give more detail.

Mr. DelVecchio asked Mr. Gimigliano some follow-up questions. One related to the access points to Closter Dock Road and that this access point is under the jurisdiction and that the curb cut complies with County regulations. Sight distances were also reviewed. The project complies with County site-distance regulations, and the County will verify compliance.

These minutes have been approved by the Planning Board.

Mayor Tomasko asked who besides Mr. Gimigliano will be able to answer questions about the DEP permits and the Environmental Impact Statement. Mayor Tomasko asked, related to the DEP permits, about historic preservation and whether the applicant has sought guidance concerning artifacts, specifically the Frick Mansion. Mr. Gimigliano stated that an outside consultant conducted the archeological and architectural studies for the site, worked with the State Preservation Office, and concluded that there is nothing of historical significance on the property. The findings have been sent to and accepted by SHPO. No further action is required.

Mr. Cybul asked who would be reviewing the traffic study report. Mr. DelVecchio stated that the applicant had not planned to engage a traffic expert, as traffic volumes are not a concern for the application. To the extent that the Board has questions, he will assess who could appropriately answer. Board members expressed concern about the left turn, asked whether the entrance/exit could be shifted to avoid a blind spot. Mr. Gimigliano answered that the required sight distances would be lost if the access point were to be moved.

Maria DiBiase (23 Warren Lane) asked whether a traffic light could be considered for safety reasons and said that children have to cross Closter Dock Road to board the school bus. Mr. DelVecchio stated that the County will not put in a traffic light unless the warrant requirements are met and that this application does not meet them. Ms. Parilla asked whether the town is able to request a light and was told that would be up to the town and that the application complies with the County requirements. Mr. DelVecchio stated that two pre-application meetings had been held and that revisions are being prepared to respond to the County's comments. A board member asked to see the comments. Board Engineer Perry Frenzel stated that he has the comments and that if the Board would like to see them they can be shared. Ms. Francis will share the comments before the next meeting. The comments are from the Engineering department and concern the number of lanes, extent of curbs, etc.

Concerning the Environmental Impact Study, Mayor Tomasko asked about page 24 and the Bureau of Water System Engineering approval. Mr. Gimigliano explained that this is a post-approval application—the application cannot be made before Planning Board approval is granted. Mayor Tomasko then asked about the estimate made of the increase in population due to this application (138, including 36 children). Discussion about the fact that it would mean a 25% increase in the school size and whether the school has the capacity to accept them. Also under discussion was the need for increased services as a result of this development. Mr. DelVecchio stated that the tax ratable created by the project will produce funds that will be used for the necessary services. The Mayor stated that the town had not seen a project like this and questioned whether the ratables would cover. Mr. DelVecchio suggested that the Board use caution in discussing matters that were not in the jurisdiction of Land Use, such as school expansion. Board Attorney Douglas Bern stated that concerns could be raised and the Board should have an understanding but that there is a legal settlement spelling out 40 units and perhaps a bedroom count, which generates the anticipated population increase. Discussion.

Sharon Kurtz (23 Tulip Tree Lane) stated that she was previously on the Board of Education and that tuition students were then accepted and that perhaps the School might look at returning to local students only.

Mayor Tomasko commended the professionalism shown in the Environmental Impact Study and asked whether the applicant had considered scaling back on or abandoning the project altogether and selling the entire property as one piece. Mr. Gimigliano said not to his knowledge but that the project had already been scaled back; Mr. Schepisi agreed.

Ms. Davis asked why the slope from 2B to 2D (.44%) is below the NJDOT desired slope. Mr. Gimigliano explained that the designed slope slows down the water. Discussion. Ms. Davis asked about the roadways and 100-year storms. Mr. Gimigliano stated that all of these questions were evaluated by the DEP and that there was a very good chance it was designed to handle such a storm. Mr. DelVecchio asked whether the NJDOT design requirements applied to drainage designs and was told no; the DEP storm managements regulations apply there. Ms. Davis asked why the higher (NJDOT) number would not be followed and was told that the NJDOT and DEP have markedly different goals for water diversion.

Mr. Brandt Cybul asked about the garbage collection and was told that this is a question for later in the process.

There were no more questions for Mr. Gimigliano.

These minutes have been approved by the Planning Board.

Ms. Sonpal moved to take a 10-minute break, second Ms. Barbi. All in favor. The meeting went into recess at 8:49 pm. The meeting returned to open session at 8:59 pm.

Rick Zimmer (Tapestry Landscape Architecture, 7 Argyle Road, Haskell, NJ) was sworn in and accepted as an expert.

Ms. Parilla explained that the meeting will end at 10:00.

The color-rendered version of the submitted plans (7 pages) was marked A-11. The plans were prepared by Mr. Zimmer or under his supervision; he has made himself familiar with the property and the associated ordinances.

Mr. Zimmer testified that as many existing trees as possible will be saved. Street trees will be added, as well as central trees on a strip. Foundation plantings will be made. Significant woodlands will remain along Closter Dock Road. Deer resistant materials will be used when possible. Spruces of 14-16 feet are proposed. The retention basins will include plantings and surrounding shrubs and trees. The area near the clubhouse and pool will be planted as well. In the southern end of the property, where the pond is, the existing vegetation is proposed to stay. Planting will be done at the bio-retention basin and along Frick Drive. Screening planting will be done surrounding the Frick Estate. All pages of the exhibit were reviewed. The materials proposed for the basins were specified on the Engineer's plan per the DEP regulations. Mr. DelVecchio read the requirements in the Ordinance concerning the landscape for this property. The landscape architect testified that he believed that all requirements were met or exceeded.

Ms. Dhulipala noted that the Alpine ordinance requires a 10-foot dripline and that the plans state a 5-foot dripline. Mr. Zimmer stated that adjustments will be made to meet requirements and asked whether there will be fencing around the basins. Mr. Gimigliano stated that there would be.

Discussion about the rate of growth. Mr. Zimmer stated that they were spaced to allow for growth without overcrowding.

Mr. Snieckus asked for shrubs to be planted between the evergreens for privacy and screening along Closter Dock Road. He was told that the client was amenable to working with the Planner on this request. Also, concerning the meadow, he asked about the management. Discussion. Some mowing of pathways will be allowed. The trails will be mowed pathways not gravel or mulched paths. Mr. Snieckus asked about shrubs along the retaining wall on Frick Drive, but they are not necessary because the topography will dictate that the wall is somewhat obscured from view. He requested some additional screening plantings at the end of Appletree Lane to screen the private homes. He also asked for deer protection for the trunks of new trees. Mr. Snieckus asked for more specific cultivar detail on the basin plantings. This will be coordinated with the Engineer.

Ms. Davis (42 Brenner Place) asked about the maintenance of the retention basins. Mr. Gimigliano explained the requirements outlined in the Maintenance Manual. The Board Attorney stated that these are new DEP requirements. Ms. Nudelman asked whether they will become the responsibility of the HOA and was told they will.

Ms. Dhulipala asked what measures had been planned to ensure the trees' survival. Discussion. The specific plans have not been set.

Ms. Davis asked how many trees are being cut down and asked about the Tree Ordinance. The Board Engineer explained that the Tree Removal permit had to be submitted and that tree replacement requirements were included. Ms. Dhulipala stated that the trees slated for removal had to be clearly marked with ribbon to allow the Environmental Commission to inspect properly.

The Mayor stated that it is clear that the applicant had gone to great lengths to revegetate in due course; he asked whether it was safe to say that when everything is finalized down the road people on the road would not be able to see the buildings. Mr. Zimmer stated that he felt the plans would accomplish that.

Robert Zampolin, Architect for the applicant, (187 Fairview Avenue, Westwood, NJ) was sworn in and accepted. The plans were created by him or under his supervision. The exhibit constitutes 24 sheets. Mr. Zampolin is familiar with the property, through visits, as well as with associated ordinances. Most of the exhibits are mounted sheets of what the Board received. There are 9 market-rate buildings, 1 COAH building, a clubhouse, and the entrance guardhouse. Some buildings have basements. Some have master bedrooms on the upper floor, some on the lower. The buildings vary in the number of units. There are several balconies. There may be some attic spaces for storage in the units that do not have basement. The distribution was explained.

The COAH building, which runs parallel to Closter Dock Road, has 2 3-bedroom, 5 2-bedroom, and 1 1-bedroom units. The exterior of all residential buildings have a uniform theme, regardless of whether they are COAH or market rate. The interiors will be different.

6 (numbered R-1 to R-6) sheets dated 4/22/2025 were marked A-12. The exterior of the buildings differs from the plans in that they will have stone and stucco rather than brick. There will be a stone veneer with a stucco finish. The trim is composite. The entry porticos are in limestone. The renderings showed the various unit designs and were reviewed.

Ms. Cochi asked whether any of the buildings are ADA accessible. Mr. Zampolin explained that as of now they are considered single-family homes. Homeowners could add ramps.

Ms. Dhulipala asked about blasting. Mr. Gimigliano stated that there is no blasting expected, but there may be rock removal.

Mayor Tomasko asked what the building height is. Mr. Zampolin stated that they fall below the allowed building height, at about 32 feet.

Councilman Abad asked about the dormers in the renderings and was told that they were for decoration only. Also, he was told that elevators would go to the basements. Discussion of the depth of garages and basements.

The meeting was opened to the public for questions to the Architect.

Mr. Snieckus asked for confirmation that the COAH units will conform with all of the affordable housing requirements per the Ordinance. He was told that they will conform. He also asked whether the Administrative Agent will be paid by the developer to market the units and was told that this is correct. He asked whether the COAH units have outside patios and was told that the plans do not show any but that there are doorways.

Ms. Parilla asked whether there was a rendering of the COAH unit. There is not one, but there is an elevation. The COAH units are in a simpler building.

Mr. Schepisi stated that when the development was planned to be much larger, the affordable units were to be interspersed. Now that the development is smaller, the COAH units are in their own building.

Everyone in the condominium development has access to the clubhouse.

On the market-rate units the air conditioning units will be on separate pads to the rear. The market-rate units will have generators.

The meeting was closed to the public.

Mr. DelVecchio stated that the Project Planner is intended to be the final witness. Mayor Tomasko asked that the Board Engineer create a follow-up letter to prepare for the next meeting. Mr. Schepisi asked that it be shared with the applicant as well. Ms. Parilla asked that the County traffic notes be addressed.

These minutes have been approved by the Planning Board.

The next meeting is October 28; this matter will be carried without further notice. Mr. DelVecchio agreed to extend the time during which the Board can act through the October 28 meeting.

One more site visit was requested. Mr. DelVecchio agreed to try to arrange that.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon a motion by Councilman Abad, seconded by Mr. Cybul and supported by all in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marti Francis, Recording Secretary