

JANUARY 20, 2026 Re-Organization Minutes

The meeting of the Wantage Township Land Use Board was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026. The meeting was held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It was properly noticed and posted to the public.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Gill invited all persons present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

REORGANIZATION

Attorney Dave Brady proceeded to administer an Oath of Office to the reappointed and members.

OATH OF OFFICE

Class I	Justin Vander Groef	12/31/2026
Class II	Joseph Konopinski	12/31/2026
Class III	Ron Bassani	12/31/2026
Class IV	Joanne Kanapinski	12/31/2029
Class IV	Jon Morris	12/31/2029
Alternate 1	Joe Greenaway	12/31/2026
Alternate 2	George Unverzagt	12/31/2027
Alternate 4	Hunter Space	12/31/2027

ROLL CALL OF THE TOWNSHIP LAND USE BOARD FOR THE YEAR 2026

PRESENT: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space
Absent: Joe Greenaway. Also present: Attorney, Dave Brady. Engineer, Tom Knutelsky. Secretary, Michelle Buskiewicz

Mr. Bassani made a motion seconded by Mr. Unverzagt, to nominate Victoria Gill as **Chairperson of the Land Use Board for 2026**

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space. Nays: None.

Mr. Bassani made a motion seconded by Mr. Bono, to nominate Jon Morris as **Vice Chair of the Land Board for 2026.**

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space. Nays: None

Ms. Gill made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bono to nominate Michelle Buskiewicz as **Secretary of the Land Use Board for 2026.**

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

Ms. Gill made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bono, to nominate Mr. Tom Knutelsky and the firm Harold Pellow & Associates as **Engineer of the Land Use Board for 2026.**

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

Ms. Gill made a motion seconded by Mr. Unverzagt to nominate Mr. David Brady and the firm Brady & Correale, LLP, as **Attorney for the Land Use Board for 2026**.

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

Ms. Gill made a motion seconded by Mr. Darmstatter to nominate Ms. Jessica Caldwell and J. Caldwell & Associates as Planner **for the Land Use Board for 2026**.

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

Ms. Gill made a motion seconded by Mr. Morris to nominate Mr. Matthew Morris from the firm H. Pellow and Associates for the Conflict Planner **for the Land Use Board for 2026**.

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.
Nays: None.

Mr. Konopinski made a motion seconded by Mr. Bassani to name the New Jersey Herald and the Sunday Herald as the **Official Newspapers of the Land Use Board for 2026**.

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

Mr. Bassani made a motion seconded by Mr. Bono to approve the 2026 and the first 2027 **Meeting Dates**.

Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

MINUTES

Mr. Unverzagt made the motion, seconded by Mr. Darmstatter, to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2025, meeting, YES, Carried.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Bassani made the motion seconded by Mr. Konopinski to approve the **Annual Resolution** provided by Mr. Brady for the year 2025. Ayes: Ron Bassani, Larry Bono, Chris Darmstatter, Joanne Kanapinski Joe Konopinski, Jon Morris, Justin Vander Groef, Michael Walther, Victoria Gill, Alternates: George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space Nays: None.

Mr. Albinson made the motion seconded by Mr. Unverzagt to approve the bulk variance for **L-2025-05 Designs By Kelmar LLC** Block 12.03, Lot 1 57-61 Beaver Run Rd

APPLICATIONS

L-2025-17

Tractor Supply

Block 44 / Lot 17

775 State Rt 23

Preliminary & Final Site Plan

Tractor Supply Company submitted a preliminary and final site plan application for their property along Route 23. The proposal includes accessory structures within an existing outdoor storage and landscape storage area. Mr. Knutelsky reported that the plans were comprehensive and well-prepared.

In the January 20, 2026, completeness review report (Page 2, Section B, Item 1), eight checklist items were identified where waivers were requested.

- Six full waivers (Items 3.01j, 3.02, 6.02, 6.05, 6.06, and 6.8B).

- Two temporary waivers for completeness purposes only (Items 6.03 and 6.04).

Mr. Knutelsky recommended the application to be deemed complete and scheduled for a public hearing in February.

A motion was made and seconded to find the application complete. The motion carried unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Discussion on D Variances

- D variances should not be treated casually.
- They are intended to address hardship or specific statutory criteria—not simply financial convenience.
- Each variance granted can set precedent, potentially affecting future applications.
- Court challenges often scrutinize the Board’s reasoning closely.
- Board members must actively ask questions during hearings.
- The record must clearly reflect the Board’s reasoning.
- Collective participation strengthens the Township’s position if litigation occurs.

Mr. Brady confirmed that courts closely review the hearing transcript. When multiple Board members articulate substantial planning-based concerns tied to the Master Plan, the Township’s defense is stronger. Past examples were discussed, including litigation related to cell towers, pipeline matters, and development applications.

Master Plan & Ordinance Review

- The Township will be reviewing and updating portions of the Master Plan in 2026, particularly commercial zones.
- Board members will have input in that process.
- Ordinances may also require updates to address recurring issues.
- Subcommittee discussions may be formed to evaluate needed changes.

Professional Guidance

Board members were reminded:

- Professionals (planner, engineer, attorney) advise, but decisions rest with the Board.
- Financial hardship claims from applicants should not drive land use decisions.
- If necessary, applications can be carried to additional meetings if the Board requires more information.

Recognition

It was noted that this marks **Joanne’s 49th year** working in Wantage Township. The Board expressed appreciation for all her service.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Bassani, seconded by Mr. Bono, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Buskiewicz ~ Secretary