October 20, 2026

Notice of this meeting as required by the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) has been provided by publication in the New Jersey Herald, by a posting in the municipal building at the place where public announcements are posted, and by publication on the Official Website of Wantage Township. I direct that this statement shall be included in the minutes of this meeting.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mr. Bassani, Mr. Bono, Ms. Kanapinski, Mr. Konopinski, Mr. Vander Groef, Mr. Greenway, Mr. Albinson and Ms. Gill.
ABSENT: Mr. Darmstatter, Mr. Morris, Mr. Walther, Mr. Unverzagt and Mr. Space.
ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Dave Brady, Engineer Tom Knutelsky, Secretary Michele Buskiewicz

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the July 21, 2026 meeting. There being no corrections or questions, Mr. Albinson made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Greenway.

Roll Call Vote:
Mr. Bassani – Yes; Mr. Bono – Yes; Ms. Kanapinski – Yes; Mr. Konopinski – Yes; Mr. Vander Groef – Yes; Mr. Greenway – Yes; Mr. Albinson – Yes; Ms. Gill – Yes.

APPLICATIONS

L-2026-09 – U-Haul
Block 7, Lots 2 and 13.02
205 New Jersey State Highway, Route 23
Minor Site Plan

Board Engineer Tom Knutelsky advised that the application had been reviewed and was recommended to be deemed incomplete in accordance with his October 2, 2026 report.

The applicant had also requested a waiver of the site plan requirements. Mr. Knutelsky explained that, due to proposed disturbances on the property and the proposed use of the front parking lot for a portion of the business that does not currently take place in that area, the Board Engineer recommended that the site plan waiver be denied.

Mr. Knutelsky recommended that the application be deemed incomplete and that the request for a site plan waiver be denied, with revisions to be made to the plans as outlined in the October 2, 2026 report.

Mr. Vander Groef made a motion to deem the application incomplete and deny the request for a site plan waiver. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bono.

Roll Call: Mr. Bassani, Mr. Bono, Ms. Kanapinski, Mr. Konopinski, Mr. Vander Groef, Mr. Greenway, Mr. Albinson and Ms. Gill.

L-2026-10 – Matthew Daspin
Block 13, Lot 2.02
42 Pond School Road
Minor Subdivision

Board Engineer Tom Knutelsky advised that the application had initially been reviewed in his October 1, 2026 report and was recommended to be deemed incomplete.

Additional information was subsequently submitted and reviewed. Mr. Knutelsky advised that, pursuant to his revised report dated October 13, 2026, the application was now recommended to be deemed complete, subject to the temporary waivers outlined in the completeness report.

Mr. Knutelsky explained that the applicant had provided the required information for the Board's review and would be submitting additional information prior to the November meeting. He recommended that the application be deemed complete so that the applicant could proceed with the next hearing.

The Board discussed the completeness recommendation and the additional information to be provided by the applicant.

Mr. Albinson made a motion to deem the application complete The motion was seconded by Mr. Konopinski.

Roll Call: Joanne Kanapinski, Justin Vander Groef, George Unverzagt, Keith Albinson, Hunter Space, Victoria Gill.

L-2026-08 – Scott Palmenberg
Block 159, Lots 5.04 and 5.15
15 DeGroat Road
Lot Line Adjustment

Attorney David Gray of the Gray Law Group appeared on behalf of the applicant, Scott Palmenberg. Also present was Douglas Dykstra, surveyor and professional planner. Mr. Gray advised that Mr. Palmenberg was unable to attend the meeting due to a college trip with his daughters but was available by telephone if needed.

Mr. Gray explained that the applicant owns both properties and is proposing a lot line adjustment to create a more practical configuration between the two lots. The existing property line runs close to the swimming pool and residence. The proposed adjustment would provide additional separation and privacy between the properties. The applicant also intends to sell a portion of the property to the tenant residing in the existing farmhouse.

Mr. Gray confirmed that the required notice had been provided to property owners within 200 feet and that the original green cards and proof of publication were available.

Board Engineer Tom Knutelsky reviewed his October 1, 2026 completeness report. He recommended a waiver of checklist item 3.01, relating to existing conditions and improvements within 200 feet, noting that there are no proposed disturbances and that the proposed lot line changes are internal to the existing property. He also recommended temporary waivers of checklist items 7.06 and 7.07 for completeness purposes only, with the applicant providing testimony regarding those items.

Mr. Knutelsky advised that, with the recommended waivers, the application could be deemed complete.

Mr. Vander Groef made a motion to grant the recommended waivers and deem the application complete. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bono.

Roll Call: Mr. Bassani, Mr. Bono, Ms. Kanapinski, Mr. Konopinski, Mr. Vander Groef, Mr. Greenway, Mr. Albinson and Ms. Gill.

Mr. Brady administered the oath to Mr. Dykstra. Mr. Dykstra provided his name, business address and professional credentials, confirming that he is a licensed professional land surveyor and professional planner.

Mr. Dykstra presented an aerial photograph and an overlay of the subject properties and surrounding properties. The exhibits were marked as follows:

- A-101 – Aerial photograph showing the subject property and property boundaries.
- A-102 – Aerial photograph with the proposed subdivision and lot line adjustment highlighted.

Mr. Dykstra explained that the properties are located on DeGroat Road in the western portion of Wantage Township, approximately one mile north of Beemerville.

The proposal involves subdividing Lot 5.15 into two parcels totaling approximately two acres, which will then be annexed to Lot 5.04. The resulting acreage will be approximately 6.246 acres for Lot 5.04 and 5.573 acres for Lot 5.15.

Mr. Dykstra reviewed the existing improvements on both properties. Lot 5.04 contains the original farmhouse, garage, silo and shed. Lot 5.15 contains a residence, garage, swimming pool, concrete parking area and associated driveways.

He explained that the residence and improvements on Lot 5.15 are located toward the rear of the property due to the cross-slope and limited practical building area. This configuration resulted in longer driveways and additional impervious coverage.

The existing impervious coverage is approximately 10.7%, where 10% is permitted. The proposed adjustment will reduce the impervious coverage by approximately 5.9%, bringing the property closer to compliance.

The proposal will eliminate the existing frontage variance, although relief will still be required for impervious coverage. The existing farmhouse is also approximately 1.1 feet short of the required 80-foot front yard setback, with an existing setback of approximately 78.9 feet. The existing silo and shed are pre-existing nonconforming structures, and the proposed lot line adjustment will not affect those conditions.

Mr. Dykstra confirmed that no additional improvements are proposed and no easements will be required.

The Board discussed the existing stormwater pond and drainage. It was noted that the proposed configuration will place the pond entirely on one lot, eliminating the need for drainage easements that may have been required under other configurations.

Mr. Gray further explained that the proposed property line was designed to provide a natural buffer between the properties and generally follows an existing stone wall and the contours of the property. He also clarified that the applicant intends to sell the property to the existing tenant, who has resided in the farmhouse with his family for many years.

Mr. Knutelsky confirmed that, if approved, the lot line adjustment would be accomplished by deed rather than by plat. Mr. Gray confirmed that this was correct.

There being no further questions from the Board, the public portion of the hearing was opened and subsequently closed.

Mr. Vander Groef made a motion to approve the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bono.

Roll Call Vote:
Mr. Bassani – Yes; Mr. Bono – Yes; Ms. Kanapinski – Yes; Mr. Konopinski – Yes; Mr. Vander Groef – Yes; Mr. Greenway – Yes; Mr. Albinson – Yes; Ms. Gill – Yes.

BOARD DISCUSSION / OLD BUSINESS

The Board discussed the Township's recently adopted short-term rental ordinance and the potential for public opposition.

Members discussed the purpose of the ordinance, including protecting the Township's residential and agricultural character while establishing regulations for short-term rentals. The Board noted that the ordinance was developed after reviewing regulations in other municipalities and consulting with the County. The discussion included the decision to establish a six-acre minimum rather than the previously considered ten-acre minimum, as well as annual registration, fees and renewal requirements.

Members acknowledged that enforcement may be challenging due to the Township's reliance on State Police rather than a municipal police department. The Board discussed the importance of having an ordinance in place to address complaints and provide a basis for enforcement.

It was noted that public comments and concerns regarding the ordinance may be raised at an upcoming Township meeting. Members acknowledged that the ordinance may be amended in the future if necessary, while maintaining certain protections considered important to the Township.

ENGINEER'S REPORT / PROJECT UPDATES

ShopRite Liquors – Route 23

Mr. Knutelsky provided an update regarding the ShopRite Liquors project. He advised that the applicant was working toward obtaining a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO), potentially by the end of the month.

The Board discussed the status of the project, including the completed paving, remaining drainage inlet aprons, installation of stop signs and ADA signage, and restriping of the parking areas.

Mr. Knutelsky noted that the applicant had made certain drainage improvements and that the building generally appeared consistent with the previously approved renderings, including the proposed materials and architectural details.

The Board emphasized that the property would not be permitted to open until all outstanding safety requirements were completed. Outstanding fees, taxes, escrow balances and other required payments would also need to be addressed before a TCO could be recommended.

The Board also discussed the temporary construction trailer and the need to ensure that it does not remain on the property indefinitely. It was noted that the parking associated with vacant tenant spaces may be considered in connection with the temporary trailer arrangement. The matter is being addressed with the applicant.

Additional discussion included the remaining awning installation and lighting along the Route 23 side of the building. The applicant is continuing to seek tenants for the available commercial space.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Board discussed the existing requirement that applicants be current on their property taxes before an application is heard.

Members also discussed the possibility of including outstanding Fire Official violations or fines as part of the administrative review process. It was suggested that these items be addressed before an application is forwarded to the Land Use Board so that applications are not scheduled until all required payments and compliance items have been satisfied.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was opened to the public.

Frank Areutle, 28 Newman Road, appeared before the Board with questions regarding tree clearing and potential development taking place on property behind his residence.

Mr. Areutle explained that he had observed trees being removed and understood that the property owner may be considering developing the property for multiple homes.

Board members discussed the general location of the property and explained that no formal application had been submitted to the Land Use Board at this time.

Mr. Bassani explained that the property is located within one of the Township's designated hamlet areas under the Master Plan. He noted that the area had previously been considered for a senior housing development consisting of 55-and-over cluster housing as part of the Township's affordable housing planning.

The Board explained that the owner of the property is currently discussing a potential revised development concept with the Township Committee. Any new proposal would require the submission of a new application to the Land Use Board, and the appropriate public notice would be provided.

Mr. Areutle also asked about the proposed development's potential water and sewer arrangements. Members explained that the details were still being discussed and that the proposal could change as the planning process moves forward.

The Board acknowledged his concerns and advised that additional information would become available if and when a formal application is submitted.

There being no further comments from the public, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Bassani made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Konopinski and carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Buskiewicz
Land Use Administrator
Township of Wantage