

BOROUGH OF RIVERDALE

MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Paul M. Carelli
Mayor

Abubakar T. Jalloh
Registered Municipal
Clerk



**RIVERDALE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
MARCH 26, 2026**

The Regular Meeting of the Riverdale Planning Board is opening on March 26, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.
Chairman Scott Trowse read the Sunshine Law.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Paul Carelli
Council Pres. Vincent Pellegrini
Sal Poli
Rick Malanga
Michael Reilly
Christopher Scilingo
Vice Chairman Warren Sheps
Chairman Scott Trowse
James Talerico (Alt. No. 1)

Absent: Kevin Bulger
Brendan Lynch (Alt. No. 2)

James Talerico will be sitting on the DIAS for Kevin Bulger

Also, present is John Barbarula, Board Attorney, Tom Boorady, Board Engineer and Kristin Russell, Board Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 5, 2026

Thereupon Christopher Scilingo set forth the motion seconded by Michael Reilly to approve the minutes for March 5, 2026, as written and submitted.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Scilingo, Reilly, Carelli, Pellegrini, Poli, Sheps, Trowse
Abstained: Malanga, Talerico
Nays: None
(7 Ayes – 2 Abstained – 0 Nays – Motion Carried)

March 12, 2026

Thereupon Vice Chairman Warren Sheps set forth the motion seconded by Michael Reilly to approve to minutes for March 12, 2026, as written and submitted.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Sheps, Reilly, Carelli, Pellegrini, Poli, Malanga, Scilingo, Talerico, Trowse
Nays: None
(9 Ayes – 0 Nays – Motion Carried)

HEARING CONTINUATION: Request to Carry to April 2, 2026

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1. Application No. 2025-01 / Riverdale Quarry, LLC / 125 Paterson Hamburg Turnpike / Block 12 Lot 3 & Block 13 Lot 25-28 / QRP Zone

Mr. Barbarula stated that he spoke with the applicants' attorney and they are ready to continue at the April 2nd meeting. Mr. Barbarula stated he appreciates the Board consideration with his personal matters.

Thereupon Chairman Scott Trowse set forth the motion seconded by Rick Malanga to carry the hearing continuation to April 2, 2026.

ALL IN FAVOR / MOTION CARRIED

HEARING:

1. Application No.2026-01 / FEZO INQ, LLC / 85 Newark Pompton Turnpike / Block 26 Lot 22.02 / PO Zone

James Lasala came forward on behalf of FEZO INQ, LLC which he is the sole member. He is here for a use variance request for an apartment upstairs and offices downstairs. Mr. Barbarula swore in Mr. Lasala. Mr. Lasala is the applicant and the attorney, he stated that he handed in the Site Plan from 1986, the building was approved to be converted from a single-family home to an office building. The building has been an office now for 40 years. The tenant that was upstairs is retiring and it is difficult to get office space rented. The space would be a simple one-bedroom apartment, there is a bathroom already there and it is purely interior work that needs to be done. An apartment is a practical use for the space with the Habitat for Humanity project and the property in front there building apartments.

Chairman Trowse asked about the cesspool on the property shown on the survey.

Mr. Lasala stated there is septic on the property right now, they were asked if they wanted to install sewer when it was installed but the septic system was only two years old at the time.

Chairman Trowse asked if the septic was sized to accommodate an apartment.

Mr. Lasala stated that yes and that could be a part of the permitting process. The number of occupants in the building will not change significantly by changing it to an apartment, the space is just not big enough to have more people.

Chairman Trowse asked if there was an existing kitchen upstairs.

Mr. Lasala stated no, it has to be put in.

Mr. Sheps asked if there was a full bath upstairs.

Mr. Lasala stated that it is a half bath currently, it used to be a full bathroom but he removed the bathtub to make storage space for the office tenant.

Ms. Russell asked the square footage of the ground floor.

Mr. Lasala stated about 1900 square feet.

Chairman Trowse opened the meeting to the public, no one from the public came forward.

Chairman Trowse set forth the motion seconded by James Talerico to close the public portion.

ALL IN FAVOR / MOTION CARRIED

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Jill Hartmann, was sworn in by Mr. Barbarula. Ms. Hartmann stated the qualifications as a Professional Planner, Chairman Trowse accepted Ms. Hartmann as a Planner. Ms. Hartmann handed out exhibit A1, a packet (6 pages) including an aerial of the property and surrounding properties. This property is location in the Professional Office District; it includes the lots on Newark Pompton Turnpike. The building is a two-story residential style building that was converted to a professional office. There was a rear addition on the property of 808 square feet that was approved and constructed in 1985. On page one, it shows the subject site and surrounding uses, page two shows the subject site, page three through five shows the adjacent properties, page six shows the property across the street. Exhibit 2 shows the Habitat for Humanity site that is to the north of the property. The apartment is about 650 square feet; there is a small bedroom and there is a half bath which will be expanded to a full bath. There is a larger room that will be an open concept with the living room and kitchen. There will be two parking spaces in the front that will be for the apartment and access to the apartment will be from the front entrance and the office entrance is from the back of the building. All of the renovations proposed are interior with no exterior work. There are two existing non-conforming conditions that were approved in 1985 for the front yard set back of 42.68 feet where 50 feet is required and the side yard 14.4 feet where 50 feet is required this is not on the side that has the driveway. The one-bedroom apartment requires 1.8 parking spaces where there will be 2 available. The proposed mixed office is not permitted in the Zone, it requires a D1 variance. The site is a unique in its location, this is a mixed neighborhood in uses, this is a conforming lot and it can be changed without having the change the exterior of the building. The positive criteria based off the Master Plan and stated in the 2023 Lan Use Plan, Newark Pompton Turnpike allows for professional practices and business offices uses and consideration of residential uses. According to the Redevelopment Plan the building and parking lot will have no visual impact or changes to the exterior and in accordance with PO Zone. With regarding to the MLUL it supports goal A and C. Presently the building covers 50% of the lot which is a requirement of the zone and that will remain. Propose E, the vacant second floor will provide living accommodation that is consistent with the surrounding area. Purpose G, the creation of the small one bedroom will provide a more affordable unit, while not affordable housing, for someone. The negative criteria would have no substantial detriment to the public good, Zoning Plan and Master Plan.

Ms. Russell stated that she agrees that the look of the building is residential, there will be no changes to the exterior and the request makes sense. It will not change the character of the area aesthetically or activity since it is just one unit. The Borough did just write a Redevelopment Plan for residential next door.

Mr. Poli asked if there could be signs out front for the two residential spaces.

Mr. Lasala stated he could do that.

Mr. Barbarula stated that he still has to satisfy construction department.

Mr. Malanga asked about the entrance to the apartment.

Mr. Lasala stated that the front door goes right up to the apartment. There is a door for the office but that will remain locked.

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Chairman Trowse opened the meeting to the public, no one from the public came forward. Chairman Trowse set forth the motion seconded by Michael Reilly to close the public portion. ALL IN FAVOR / MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Barbarula stated that if the Board is to vote favorably the motion would be for a waiver from the site plan that was approved in 1986, additional the condition would be a dedicated parking signs for residents only. With the conditions and the statement, the Board can decide to approve or deny the use variance acknowledging that there are 2 preexisting non-conformities; c variances in front yard 42.6 feet where 50 feet is required and side yard 14.4 feet where 15 feet is required which are both existing and reacknowledged at this time.

Thereupon Rick Malanga set forth the motion seconded by James Talerico to approve the application with the conditions stated and a secondary condition that the septic be proven adequate for the space.

**ROLL CALL: Ayes: Malanga, Talerico, Poli, Reilly, Scilingo, Sheps, Trowse
 Abstained: Carelli, Pellegrini
 Nays: None
 (7 Ayes – 2 Abstained – 2 Nays – Motion Carried)**

Board Attorney John Barbarula is stepping down from the next application and Board Attorney Blagoja Petreski is stepping in.

Vice Chairman Warren Sheps stepped down from the DIAS he received a 200-foot letter for the application.

2. Application No. 2025-14 / 7 Federal Place / Melaine Berlinger / Block: 26 Lot: 14 / R7.5 Zone

Melaine and Jason Berlinger came forward, Mr. Petreski swore them in. Ms. Berlinger stated that use to live in Jefferson and they wanted to be close to work and family, they purchased this home in August 2025. The renovation will require two variances and a soil and erosion grading plan in the backyard.

Mr. Berlinger stated that the first variance is for the front porch and they want to extend over to the addition on the side. The second variance is for the driveway and the back portion would be 3 feet from the property line where 5 feet is required and the front of the driveway would be 6 feet from the property line.

Chairman Trowse asked for Mr. Boorady’s comments.

Mr. Boorady stated that the main house is staying they are adding to the left and right side of the home, adding a front porch and they are moving the driveway from the left to the right making it a bit wider and adding stormwater management to send to the back. The lot is conforming to what is needed is the zone, the lot a large in the back, from an architectural standpoint it would not make sense to add to the back of the house. Originally, on the plan the driveway had 0 feet

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Chairman Trowse asked if the Board Secretary heard from Patawaran, the Board Secretary stated she has not heard back from Patawaran or 26 Oak Street.

The Board Secretary stated that she reached out to Mr. Schepis for the Curly's Application and they will not be ready to return on April 23, 2026 they would like a new hearing date in May. The Board assigned a hearing date of May 28, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT:

Thereupon Chairman Scott Trowse set forth the motion seconded by Sal Poli to adjourn the meeting.

ALL IN FAVOR / MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:31PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Stephanie Colella, Planning Board Secretary

*****NO VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS OF THESE PROCEEDINGS WITHOUT EXPRESSED PERMISSION FROM THE BOARD*****