MINUTES

PLANNING BOARD

TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

Regular Meeting

September 9, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 PM by Chairman Craig Johnson.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that the meeting was being held in conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice of this meeting has been posted on the Township website and sent to the newspaper of record. The Agenda has also been posted on the Township website and bulletin board at the Municipal Building at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting. The Agenda items will not necessarily be heard in the order listed and the meeting will not continue substantially past 10:30 PM.

Roll Call:

Members present were Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hall, Ms. Rountree, Ms. Kingsley, Mr. Harris, Mr. Kraut, Mr. Couto and Mr. Sternheim. Mr. Robertson, Board Attorney, Michael Mistretta, Township Planner, and James Lyle, Board Engineer, were also present.

Adoption of Minutes:

August 19, 2026 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Couto, to adopt the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 19, 2026 as presented. The voice vote was 8-0.

Adoption of Resolution:

App.#SP-2-26: The Connell Company, 800 District Drive, Bl. 4102, L.1 (MU-Zone)
Proposed installation of a new blade-type sign (15' high x 3.25' wide) projecting from the façade of the entertainment building to be known as 800 District Drive. The sign is for a bowling alley business at The District at The Park. Relief is needed from various sections of Section 6.3.5.1.L. of the Municipal Land Use Procedures Ordinance. Approval for the development known as The District at Connell was granted by the Planning Board on 9/21/2022 and memorialized in a resolution adopted 11/2/2022.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the Resolution.

A motion was made by Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Kraut, to adopt the above Resolution as presented. The roll call vote was 4-0 with Mr. Harris, Mr. Kraut, Mr. Couto and Mr. Sternheim voting in favor and none opposed.

New Application for Review:

App.#SP-5-25: Lockhern Property II, LLC, 458 Springfield Ave., Bl. 702, L. 4 & 6
Proposed 33-unit mixed-use residential building (4 stories and garage) and associated site improvements.

Mr. Robertson advised that Ms. Rountree will recuse herself from the hearing of this application.

Ms. Rountree left the meeting (7:35 pm).

Peter Flannery, attorney for the applicant, advised that the applicant is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval for the proposed three story multi use development which will include 33 apartments, 7 of which will be affordable, commercial space and parking. He noted that the Redevelopment Plan dated 9/10/2025 and the Redevelopment Agreement approved in June of 2026 provide various rights and obligations with respect to the development.

Eric Keller, traffic and civil engineer, was sworn, provided his educational and professional background and was accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Keller presented Exhibit A-1 – existing conditions aerial and described the existing conditions, location of the subject property and the single-family home and three-story office building that will be demolished for this development. He advised that the property is not located within the flood hazard area and contains 17,424 square feet of impervious coverage. Mr. Keller presented Exhibit A-2 – site plan rendering of Terrace II, Exhibit A-1 with proposed building and landscaping superimposed. Mr. Keller stated that the proposed development is fully compliant with the development plan and is a three-story, 33 unit apartment building with 510 square feet of retail space. The building will have 26 market units and 7 affordable units and will have a total of 7,246 square feet of amenity space. He presented Exhibit A-3 – colorized version of the site plan showing the amenity space.

Mr. Keller reviewed the site plan indicating the location of the dumpster, walkway from Springfield Avenue to Sherman Avenue and streetscape improvements consistent with Township standards and with Terrace I. He also reviewed the parking which consists of 37 spaces within the building and 27 spaces on Lot 17.01 for a total of 64 spaces that exceeds the requirement of 57.

Mr. Keller discussed the proposed landscaping and noted that the applicant will work with the Township based on the recommendations of the Township Planner and the Environmental Commission and will also work with the neighboring coffee shop owner on additional buffering. Lighting will be consistent with Township standards.

Mr. Keller reviewed the traffic report and stated that the impact on the existing roadway system is negligible with no impact on the level of service. Mr. Keller stated the opinion that this project will not materially impact the existing traffic patterns.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Keller stated that the existing dumpster on the Terrace I property will be used for Terrace II, the parking requirement for the retail space will be three spaces, the retail space will be used by one tenant, he does not believe storm water management will be required for this location but he will work with the Township Engineer to meet the intent of the ordinance with respect to that issue.

Discussion took place regarding the lighting in the parking lot. Mr. Mistretta advised that the applicant is required to provide a map of the parking lot and easements to provide a full understanding of ownership and control of the lot. Mr. Flannery stated that the applicant will provide the information.

Mr. Keller further stated that the applicant will comply with the comments and recommendations of the Township Engineer and work with them on the building development.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Keller's testimony.

Gennaro Raimo, owner of the adjacent coffee shop, asked about the depth of the underground parking lot, the excavation that will be done and if the retaining wall will be removed.

Mr. Keller provided information regarding the elevations and stated that all activity will only be on the subject property and all safety precautions will be taken to protect pedestrians and vehicles on Springfield Avenue. The retaining wall is on the applicant's property and it has not yet been determined if it will be removed. The applicant has agreed that any landscaping that is damaged during construction will be replaced.

Joe Iadanza asked if the width of Sherman Avenue is being changed and how many vehicles are expected to use it. Mr. Iadanza also raised questions regarding the number of parking spaces, water problems on Sherman Avenue and maintenance of the walkway between the two buildings.

Mr. Keller stated that there are 64 parking spaces proposed which exceeds the requirement and the walkway will be maintained by the applicant and the adjacent owner of Terrace I.

Lance Blake, architect, was sworn, provided his educational and professional background and was accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Blake reviewed the floor plans and elevations of the proposed building. He indicated the location of the parking level, the main entrance, lobby, mail boxes, package room, lounge, open seating, elevator and the trash room. Mr. Blake also discussed the maintenance area, storage area, stair towers, electrical room, water service and electric meters that will be accessed from outside. He stated that the first floor will have a retail area and 865 square feet for pedestrians in front of the retail area. The apartments will be generous in size and there will also be an amenity deck and club room. Mr. Blake further stated that the height of the building will not exceed 36' and he reviewed the rendering of the building which will be similar to Terrace I and presented Exhibit A-4 – samples of the brick, siding and other exterior materials.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Blake stated that the applicant is willing to work with the Township to add more architectural interest to the building, there will not be enough room on the roof for solar panels, there will be a rooftop parapet and the ceiling height will be 9'.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Blake's testimony.

Joe Iadanza asked if further approval will be required if the retail space does not work out and the applicant wants to make a change. Mr. Flannery stated that approval would be required.

Mr. Flannery stated that the applicant will comply with the comments and recommendations contained in the Township Planner and Township Engineer reports.

Gennaro Raimo asked how long construction will take. Mr. Blake advised that construction will take about 12 months.

The hearing was opened to the public for comments with regard to the application.

Gennaro Raimo was sworn and stated that he does not object to the project but he is concerned about the existing landscaping. Mr. Raimo stated that he likes the proposed pedestrian walkway from Springfield to Sherman Avenues.

Mr. Robertson advised that as a condition of approval the applicant has agreed to replace any of the landscaping adjacent to the building that might be damaged.

Mr. Flannery stated that the applicant has worked very hard with the Township on this project and requests the Board's approval.

Mr. Johnson noted that the applicant will work with the Township Engineer on the important issue of storm water management.

Ms. Kingsley stated that the Township did a great deal of work on this project and she thinks it will look great and the applicant's patience is appreciated.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the conditions of approval.

A motion was made by Ms. Kingsley, seconded by Mr. Hall, to approve App#SP-5-25: Lockhern Property II, LLC, 458 Springfield Ave., Bl. 702, L. 4 &, subject to the conditions discussed and further subject to the requirements, restrictions and limitations that shall be set forth in a Resolution of Memorialization to be adopted by the Board at a future meeting. The roll call vote was 7-0 with Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hall, Ms. Kingsley, Mr. Harris, Mr. Kraut, Mr. Couto and Mr. Sternheim voting in favor and none opposed.

Adjournment:
A motion was made by Mr. Hall, seconded by Ms. Kingsley, to adjourn the meeting. The voice vote was unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Regina Giardina, Secretary Pro-Tem