TOWNSHIP OF RIVER VALE
JOINT PLANNING BOARD
September 16, 2026
7:30 p.m.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Approved 10/21/26

ADEQUATE NOTICE STATEMENT:

In accordance with the provisions set forth in the Open Public Meetings Law, notification of this meeting has been sent to all officially appointed Township newspapers and notice is posted at the River Vale Municipal Office.

The Joint Planning Board saluted the flag.

==========

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Mark Bromberg	Mayor
John Greco	
Scott Lippert	Chairman
Matthew Ross	Vice Chair
Susan Vaccaro	Secretary

Also Present:

Marc Leibman, Esq.	Board Attorney
Christopher Statile, P.A.	Township Engineer
David Karlbach, P.P.	Township Planner
Maria Haag	Land Use Administrator/ Recording Secretary

Absent:

Delix Alex
Anthony LaSpada
Peter Wayne

REGULAR MEETING

Swearing In of Board Member

Joseph Ziccarelli – Class III

Board Attorney Marc Leibman administered the oath of office to Councilman Joseph Ziccarelli, who was sworn in as the Class III representative to the Joint Planning Board, with a term ending December 31, 2026. Following the oath, the executed document was signed and submitted to the Recording Secretary for the record. Chairman Lippert welcomed Mr. Ziccarelli to the Board.

Minutes

A motion for approval of the minutes of **August 19, 2026**, was made by Mr. Lippert; seconded by Mr. Greco; on a roll call vote, all in favor, the minutes were approved.

Applications

272 Cedar Lane LLC and The Pet Lodge at River Vale LLC – Block 1705 Lot 3 – 272 Cedar Lane – Use (D) and Bulk (C) Variances

Board Attorney Leibman announced that this application was being carried, without further notice, to the October 21, 2026 meeting at 7:30 PM in the same location. The public announcement served as the notice of the continuance; no additional newspaper publication or mailed notice would be issued.

Conceptual Review

440 Cedar Lane LLC – Block 1301 Lot 41 – 440 Cedar Lane – Multifamily Development

Chairman Lippert prefaced the discussion by clarifying that the conceptual review is entirely informal and non-binding; no sworn testimony would be taken, no evidence formally presented, and no vote taken.

Attorney Brian Giblin and planner Fran Reiner presented a concept for 10 to 11 townhouse units, including 2 to 3 affordable units, on a single-family zoned lot adjacent to existing affordable and multifamily development. They stated the proposal would comply with bulk standards, with variance relief needed primarily for use and density. The applicant also emphasized increased buffering to the neighboring single-family property, preservation of much of the rear wooded area, and the potential benefit of providing alternative housing options.

Mr. Leibman asked if the units were going to be sold or rented. The applicant replied that the units would be for sale.

Chairman Lippert expressed concern that River Vale has already seen substantial townhouse development and is currently meeting its affordable housing obligations, making the affordable component less persuasive. He noted that a use variance is the most difficult variance to obtain with the heaviest burden.

Board members expressed concerns regarding building length and site design, including vehicle access, open space, landscaping, and whether age-restricted housing or a conforming subdivision had been considered. The applicant responded that subdivision was constrained by riparian issues at the rear of the property and that age-restricted townhouse products may be less marketable in this format.

The applicant thanked the Board for its feedback. No formal action was taken.

Discussion

Discussion of proposed changes to variance requirements for fence height – cont. from 8/19/26

Board Attorney Leibman led the Board through a review of the revised fence ordinance, continuing from the prior meeting. The discussion focused on confirming the language and exhibit were in final form for transmittal to the governing body.

Key provisions reviewed included: a permit requirement for all new fences; bulk standards permitting fences up to 3 feet in height in front yards (at least 50% open and unobstructed), and up to 6 feet in rear and side yards; a prohibition on chain-link fences in front yards and in side yards forward of the primary structure's facade; restrictions on prohibited materials including barbed wire, razor wire, pointed materials (with an exception for picket and stockade styles), and electric fences; and specific provisions governing fences over stormwater and sanitary sewer easements, including an emergency access clause allowing the township to dismantle non-compliant fence sections at the owner's cost.

The Board clarified that the 50% open-and-unobstructed requirement applies only to 3-foot front yard fences, while 6-foot fences in the rear and side yards may be solid. It was agreed that the exhibit should be annotated to reflect this explicitly, so that the distinction is clear to laypersons and future boards alike. Board Attorney Leibman noted he would add "solid permitted" to the drawing for the 6-foot zone.

A Board member raised concerns about the prohibited materials language, noting incidents of razor wire in neighboring municipalities and requesting that "razor wire" be added explicitly alongside "barbed wire." Board Attorney Leibman agreed to incorporate that change.

The Board noted that the primary goal of the ordinance revision is to reduce the volume of variance applications arising from the prior, more restrictive standards. Chairman Lippert remarked that the 6-foot rear yard allowance should substantially reduce applications that were previously being granted nearly as a matter of course.

Board Attorney Leibman confirmed he would finalize the ordinance with minor tweaks, send the exhibit revisions to Board Planner David Karlebach for updating, and then transmit the document to Board Secretary Maria Haag along with a consistency review letter to the governing body. The Board concurred, and the ordinance is expected to be placed for a vote at the next meeting.

Resolution

Levy – Block 603 Lot 8 – 663 Handwerg Drive – Sunroom addition – Bulk variance due to nonconformance of the rear yard setback

The resolution for the application was presented for adoption. Motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Lippert and seconded Ms. Vaccaro; all in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Saoud – Block 1301 Lot 1.01 – 458 Cedar Lane – Newly constructed single-family home – Bulk variance due to nonconformance with the required building height requirements

The resolution for the application was presented for adoption. Motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Lippert and seconded Mr. Ross; all in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Meeting opened to the public for any non-agenda items

Chairman Lippert opened the meeting to the public for any non-agenda items. There were no members of the public present; the meeting was closed to the public.

Payments of Invoices: Chairman Lippert reviewed and signed

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting - **Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.**

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____

MARIA HAAG
Recording Secretary