

BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
PLANNING BOARD
June 3, 2026
REGULAR MEETING

The Public Meeting of the Planning Board of the Borough of Norwood was held in council chambers on the above date.

Ms. Cerbasi stated that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, pointed out the exits and asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of the Board:

Mayor James Barsa	Present
Councilman Joseph Ascolese	Present
Mr. Christopher Jackson	Present
Mr. Walter Deptuch	Absent
Mr. John Barry	Present
Mr. Travis Harper	Present
Ms. Kate Cerbasi	Present
Mr. Sal Nobile	Present
Mr. Paul Haberman	Present
Mr. Dominick Congiusti	Present
Mr. Kevin Fischer	Present
Mr. Bill Bochicchio	Present

Also, Present:

Mr. Robert Regan	Board Attorney
Mr. Scott Loverich	Borough Engineer

Mr. Barry made a motion to approve the May 6, 2026, minutes. Councilman Ascolese seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed. Mayor Barsa abstained.

Approval of Resolution –
Application PB 26:03
Arthur & Tanya Rosenblum
7 Frasco Lane
Block 3 Lot 2

Mayor Barsa made a motion to approve the resolution for application 26:03, 7 Frasco. Mr. Haberman seconded the motion and the Board agreed on a roll call vote, with Mr. Bochicchio voting no.

Application PB 26:04
Immaculate Conception Church
211 Summit Street
Block 1 Lot 108

Mr. Michael Sprague, attorney for Immaculate Conception Church, gave a brief background on the church and the application before the Board. Mr. Sprague questioned if the application needs to be before the Board because it is in a residential zone, not a business zone as stated in the denial letter.

Mr. Regan swore in Mr. Scott Loverich.

Mr. Loverich said the same variance would be needed in a residential zone

Mr. Regan swore in Father Doroteo Layosa.

The application packet was marked as A1 and the engineer's letter was marked as B1.

Father Layosa stated he has been with Immaculate Church for 5 years and the church has been in existence for 105 years. Currently on the church property is the church itself, the rector, parking lot and an office. The sign that is presently at the church is a wooden sign bearing the name of the church. The new sign would be electronic and be placed in the same location as the old sign, also perpendicular to Summit Street. Due to an elevator in the church, there is already an electric box near the sign to provide power. A Norwood resident donated money for the purchase of the sign and the installation.

Mr. Sprague said immediately to the left of the church is the Norwood Public School and across the street is the Central school run by the Northern Valley High School District and the Norwood Public Library. The only residences that abut the church are in the rear of the property. KC Sign will be the company installing the sign. A member of the church, Rick Russell, has been coordinating with the company.

Father Layosa said even though the sign is not permitted it will be a benefit to the community. The church will not only advertise sacramental activities but will expand the mission beyond the worship services. They host a variety of events throughout the year that are open to all. The sign will help reach the community.

The current sign faces perpendicular to Summit Street, and the new sign will face the same way. It will be installed in the same place, in the planters. The sign will be

controlled through computers, and new information will be added regularly. The sign will be on from 7am to 7pm except during religious holidays where it could be on until midnight.

Mr. Bochicchio asked if the sign would flash and Father Layosa said it would not.

Councilman Ascolese asked if the lights could be controlled with a dimmer. Father Layosa believed they could be. Mr. Sprague said the church is using the same company that installed the sign at the public school, KC Sign.

Mr. Cerbasi made a motion to open the meeting to the public for questions to Father Layosa. Mr. Haberman seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Colin Machleder, 200 Tappan, said he has no problem with the sign but wants to ensure his sewer line is not damaged during the installation. Mayor Barsa said Mr. Tessaro will be aware of the sewer lines before the installation begins.

Mayor Barsa made a motion to close the meeting to the public for application 26:04. Ms. Cerbasi seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Regan swore in Frederick J. Russel, church parishioner and Chair of the church Finance Committee.

Mr. Russel said he assists Father Layosa in projects and has been communicating with KC Sign. They agreed to use the existing location and install the new sign in the planter. The level of illumination is 7500 nits and is controllable, but he cannot find that reference in the proposal. This company has installed numerous signs throughout Bergen County.

Mr. Loverich asked if there was any animation or just text. Father Layosa replied only text.

Ms. Cerbasi opened the meeting to the public for questions to Mr. Russel.

There was no one in the public who wished to speak.

Ms. Cerbasi closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. Sprague said the sign will not be a detriment to the community but will promote community. The only homes that border the church are to the rear and are higher than the parking lot. The sign will advertise church events and activities for the community.

Mayor Barsa said he is in favor of the sign and electronic signs are at various locations throughout town such as Borough Hall, Fire Department, library, American Legion, and public school. He feels the sign will be an asset to the church and be good for the community.

Mayor Barsa made a motion to approve application PB 26-04, Immaculate Conception Church. Councilman Ascolese seconded the motion. On a roll call vote the application was unanimously approved.

Mayor Barsa informed the Board that both himself and Councilman Ascolese will recuse themselves from the Railroad Avenue application as they are not permitted to hear a D variance.

Prior to stepping down from the dais Mayor Barsa made the following statement:

Over the past several months, there has been a great deal of discussion regarding development in Norwood. While public dialogue is important and welcomed, it is equally important that the information being shared is accurate and based on facts.

The narrative that Norwood is currently experiencing unprecedented development is simply not supported by the record. From 1984 to 2004, the prior administration approved approximately 17 large development projects, which totaled approximately 105 acres, throughout our community. By comparison, my administration has been involved in 6 redevelopment projects and 1 development project, totaling 15 acres of redevelopment during my 20-year tenure. Here are the facts:

1984-2005

1984: Virgil - 14 homes / 4.5 acres

1985: Chaffee - 24 homes / 10 acres

 Cobblestone & Clinton - 6 homes / 3 acres

 Cobblestone & Hazel - 7 homes / 4 acres

1988: Sutton Place - 150 apartments / 7.5 acres

1989: Buckingham - 240 beds / 6 acres

 Nottingham - 6 homes / 7 acres

1990: Anne - 10 homes / 4.5 acres

1993: Northwoods - 196 homes / 25 acres

1994: Norwood Gardens - 24 units / 1.4 acres

 Rio Vista - 8 homes / 9.5 acres

 Wood Turtle Run - 9 homes / 13.5 acres

2001: South - 3 homes / 1.5 acres

2002: Kensington Ct - 4 homes / 1.5 acres

2003: Foxhill Manor - 94 units / 2.2 acres

2004: Belle – 5 homes / 2 acres
Tappan & Blanch – 3 homes / 2 acres

2005-Present

2007: Tappan & Hudson – 3 homes / 1.2 acres
2016: Dercole Farms (Helen & Lamb) – 18 homes / 4 acres
2017: 521 Livingston – 47 units / 3 acres
545 Tappan – 118 beds / 3 acres
2019: The Grande – 30 units / 1.25 acres
2021: Jones Ct. – 3 homes / 2 acres
2025: 400 Livingston – 36 units / 1 acre
2026: 711 Broadway – 3 homes / 1 acre

It is also important to recognize the work of our Planning Board. Since 2020, the Planning Board has only needed to meet 34 times in 77 months, demonstrating that development activity has not occurred at the pace some have suggested. Our volunteer board members dedicate countless hours reviewing applications, evaluating impacts, listening to residents, and ensuring that every proposal is thoroughly examined. I want to personally thank each Planning Board member for their commitment, professionalism, and service to our community.

Limited growth over an extended period can create financial challenges, placing greater pressure on taxpayers while reducing opportunities to strengthen our tax base. Responsible and controlled development can help address these challenges, support local businesses and maintain long-term fiscal stability.

Our objective is not overdevelopment. The goal is thoughtful, controlled growth that preserves the character, charm, and small-town feel that residents value while ensuring our borough remains financially sustainable for future generations.

Moving forward requires balance. We must continue to protect the qualities that make Norwood special while also making responsible decisions that allow our community to thrive. That balance is the path I remain committed to pursuing.

Thank you to all residents who continue to participate in these important conversations. By focusing on facts, respect, and collaboration, we can work together to build a stronger future for Norwood.

Application PB 26:01
205 Railroad Avenue
Alliotts Construction
Block 93 Lot 17

Mr. Dean Stamos, attorney for the applicant, gave a brief recap of their prior appearance. He advised the Board that the plans have been revised from two two-family duplexes to one three family structure. Each of the three units would be considered a single-family home. The original application required multiple variances, while the new application only requires the D1 use variance.

Mr. Regan noted that this application is 26:01 as it is a continuation of the prior appearance.

Mr. Regan swore in Mark Martins, engineer for the applicant. Mr. Loverich was sworn in at the previous meeting.

Mr. Stamos marked the new site plan prepared by Mr. Martins, dated May 18, 2026, as A5.

Mr. Martins said the new siter plan shows a three-family structure. The property is about 500 ft from Broadway and is irregularly shaped. There is currently a two-story dwelling as well as a shed and detached garage on the property. This will all be removed prior to construction. The zone is R10, single family residential, and the application is looking for a D1 use variance to allow the three-family structure. There is no need for any other variances. There will be a stormwater management system under each driveway, and they are working with the existing grade so a retaining wall will not be needed. The applicant has reviewed the completeness letter from Mr. Loverich and has no issues complying with any comments or conditions. Mr. Martins said there are two sanitary sewer lines in close proximity and would like to work with Mr. Loverich for more separation.

Mr. Haberman asked if the property was currently occupied. Mr. Stamos said it is but there is an agreement to vacate when necessary.

Mr. Loverich said he would like to have the applicant add additional storm water management to meet code. Mr. Stamos said the applicant will comply.

Ms. Cerbasi opened the meeting to the public on application 26:01 for questions to Mr. Martins.

Melinda Choe 217 Railroad Avenue, the property to one side of the structure asked for confirmation of the setbacks between the properties. Mr. Martins said the setbacks between the properties will be 22.4 ft and 20.4 ft. She also asked if privacy trees will be planted and if there will be any windows facing the side properties. She noted that in the construction 8-10 years ago she was told no windows would be added to the side of the building and windows were added to the basement. Mr. Stamos deferred those questions to the architect.

Mr. Tessaro said the basement windows had to be added due to code as egress windows in case of a fire.

Ms. Cerbasi closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. Donato, architect for the applicant, was previously sworn in at the February meeting.

Mr. Stamos marked the new plans, dated May 12, 2026, as A6.

Mr. Donato said the new proposed structure will be one three-unit building. Each unit will be one family with no one above or below. The size of the building has been reduced to fit in the lot. All setback requirements have been met.

Each unit will have a two-car garage that leads into the basement. There is a set of stairs from the basement that will take you to the first floor. The basement will be an open room, a full bath and a boiler room. The corner units will have a door to the outside and windows that are higher in the ceiling due to the basement being partially buried.

The first floor has stairs to access the basement and second floor. There is a half bath, dining room, kitchen with a deck out the back with a sliding glass door and a family room. The middle unit will not have side windows. The corner units will have side windows from the dining room. All units will have front windows from the family room.

The top floor will have stairs that lead to the first floor, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a laundry room. The master bedroom will have windows that face the front. The other two bedrooms will be in the rear of the building. There will be smaller windows in the bathroom.

Mr. Nobile asked if the units would have sprinklers. Mr. Stamos said they would, as the state requires it. Mr. Nobile also asked how big the room in the basement was. Mr. Stamos said about 23.8 by 12.3. Mr. Nobile is concerned about the basement becoming an apartment.

Mr. Congiusti asked if a rear basement door can be added to the middle unit. Mr. Donato said he could do that.

Mr. Nobile asked how big the windows would be that face the neighbors. Mr. Donato said the dining room would have a triple window about 8x5, the upstairs windows would be about 2x5 and the bathroom windows would be about 2x4. Mr. Donato said he could make the dining room window a double rather than a triple. Mr. Stamos said there will be privacy screening of a vinyl fence or arborvitaes on the sides and the

windows should have no impact on the neighbors. Mr. Nobile said he prefers planting over the fence.

Ms. Cerbasi opened the meeting to the public for application 26:01 for questions to Mr. Donato.

There was no one in the public who wished to speak.

Ms. Cerbasi closed the meeting to the public.

Matthew Flynn, Planner for the applicant, was previously sworn in.

Mr. Flynn said this area had characteristics that are appropriate for a three family. To the north are two two-family structures, the post office and then Broadway. Right across the street is a railroad and industrial buildings. This property provides options for all types of new Jersey residents. There is no detriment to the area. There is currently a two-family home there now, it will only increase by one unit.

Ms. Cerbasi opened the meeting to the public for application 26:01 for questions for the Planner.

Jennifer Rhee, 201 Railroad Avenue, said the zone for R10 is for single family homes not triples being built. She suggested changing the Master Plan if this is going to be allowed.

Mr. Stamos said he appreciates the public comments. He gave a brief recap of the application and thanked the Board.

Mr. Fischer asked if the units will be for rent or for sale. Mr. Stamos said it will be sales.

Mr. Nobile said he is concerned about the basements turning into apartments and asked for a stipulation to be put in the resolution to not allow that.

Mr. Loverich asked the Board what the preference is for privacy. Mr. Regan said it should be plantings.

Ms. Cerbasi made a motion to open the meeting to the public on application 26:05. Mr. Harper seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Ms. Cerbasi made a motion to close the meeting to the public on 26:05. Mr. Barry seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Ms. Cerbasi made a motion to approve application 26:01, 205 Railroad Avenue. Mr. Harper seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Harper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Barry seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Ms. Cerbasi thanked the Board and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lindsay Volpitta, Board Secretary