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| Frank Sippel, Mayorfsippel@townshipoflower.orgKevin Coombs, Deputy Mayorkcoombs@townshipoflower.orgThomas Conrad, Ward 1tconrad@townshipoflower.org | lower township logo from townshipoflower.orgTOWNSHIP OF LOWER2600 Bayshore RoadVillas, New Jersey 08251 | Joseph Wareham, Ward 2jwareham@townshipoflower.orgRoland Roy, Jr., Ward 3rroy@townshipoflower.orgMichael Laffey, Managermlaffey@townshipoflower.org |

THESE MINUTES HAVE NOT BEEN FORMALLY APPROVED AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR MODIFICATION BY THE PUBLIC BODY AT ITS NEXT MEETING. THIS BOARD WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY MIS-STATEMENTS, ERRORS OR OMISSIONS OF THESE MINUTES, AND CAUTIONS ANYONE REVIEWING THESE MINUTES TO RELY UPON THEM ONLY AT THEIR OWN RISK.

LOWER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Lower Township Planning Board was held on July 18, 2025, the Lower Township Municipal Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairman Michael Rosenberg. The Recording Secretary stated that adequate notice of said meeting was given in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Michael Rosenberg

 Vice Chairman Chris McDuell

 Gunär Arenberg

 Jeffrey Lindsay

Alyce Parker

Roy Abrams

 MEMBERS EXCUSED: Frank Sippel

Marissa McCorkel

 Steve Morris

 Roland Roy

 Lindsey Selby

 Anthony Vetrano

STAFF PRESENT: Avery S. Teitler, Board Solicitor

William J. Galestok, Board Secretary

Patrick L. Wood, Recording Secretary

William Cathcart, Board Engineer

 Kathryn M. Steiger, Planning Clerk

CORRESPONDENCE:

Handouts:

* List of Board Engineer Vouchers, dated July 15, 2025
* List of Board Solicitor Vouchers, dated July 16, 2025

Mr. Teitler read the agenda aloud for the benefit of the public.

1. Minor subdivision and hardship variance application for the creation of two (2) newly described lots that would be deficient in lot area, frontage, width. Submitted by Edward & Carolyn Zebrowski for the location known as Block 497.01, Lot(s) 22.07+23, 518 Shunpike Road

Mr. Anthony P. Monzo, Esq., is representing the applicant.

At 6:02 P.M., Mr. Abrams joins the Board.

Mr. Monzo provided an overview of the application, as follows:

* Previously, sewer was unavailable at this site, but now is
* Existing lot is an irregular shape
* Rather than tear down, the existing structure will be retained
* Subdivision will create a new lot
* Three variances are necessary – frontage, width, lot size

Mr. John E. Halbruner, AIA, was sworn in by Chairman Rosenberg, and provided credentials, which were accepted by the Board.

At the request of Mr. Monzo, Mr. Halbruner offered the following testimony:

* Explained the location is in a Single Family Residential 2 (R-2) Zone
* Size of the existing property
* Structure is a one (1) story, single family dwelling (SFD), approximately 1420 square feet, circa 1950, and includes a shed and a barn. The barn is not in good shape
* Lot sizes vary within the area
* Property is located across the street from an Industrial (I) Zone
* No renovations are planned for the existing structure
* Lot area is slightly deficient; however, bulk coverage is fully compliant
* The new lot will be larger size than minimum required and, although there are no immediate plans for construction, will be compliant for future construction of a SFD
* Variances needed for frontage, width, and lot area for the house. Will be compliant with all statues and setbacks
* Trees are to remain, preserving as many as possible

Mr. Halbruner continued testimony, highlighting components of variances needed, noting when the existing house was constructed, municipal sewer was unavailable, requiring a one (1) acre lot size. Since municipal sewer is now available, a half-acre lot size is permitted. The area variances are made up in the aggregate in the proposed subdivision, almost fully conforming and preserving the existing dwelling. The project provides sufficient space to meet the needs of New Jersey citizens and encourages coordination of allowing a more efficient use of land. This application presents no harm or substantial detriment to the public good or the Zoning Plan.

In conclusion, Mr. Halbruner opined this complies with the overall intent of the Ordinance and stated the deviation is minor in nature – one (1) unit per half acre – further noting there is a well-established pattern of similar lot sizes in the area.

The Board inquired whether the new property line could be moved 30 feet from the existing dwelling, rather than 20 feet. In reply, Mr. Monzo stated the objective was to come as close to complying as possible. Mr. Halbruner added they were trying to balance the lot size - readjusting the dimensions would reduce the area of the house lot.

 Mr. Cathcart advised that the presentation addressed most issues. Status of the mature trees has been discussed, stating preservation as much as possible. Assuming the septic system is abandoned due to availability of municipal sewer, it is suggested to notate on the plans to avoid interference with the lot lines, and remarked the proposal almost suggests a flag lot.

This portion of the meeting was opened to the public. No comments were made from the public. This portion of the meeting was closed to the public.

Mr. Monzo had no further comments and thanked the Board for their time.

For the benefit of the Board, Mr. Teitler summarized the application request.

During the vote, the following Members gave findings of fact along with their decisions:

* Mr. McDuell Approved Newly created lots almost conform

Mr. McDuell made a motion to conditionally approve the minor subdivision and hardship variance application, seconded by Mr. Lindsay.

VOTE: Mr. McDuell YES Mr. Lindsay YES Mr. Arenberg YES Ms. Parker YES Chairman Rosenberg YES

 Motion denied.

The Board Solicitor will prepare a memorializing resolution to review and approve at the next meeting.

1. Minor subdivision and hardship variance application for the creation of two (2) newly described lots that would be deficient in lot frontage and width. Submitted by Michael & Mary Webster for the location known as Block 557.01, Lot(s) 45.02-50, 6 & 8 Englewood Road

Mr. Cory J. Gilman, Esq., is representing the applicant.

Mr. Gilman summarized the application request, stating the intent is to move the interior lot 20 feet to create one (1) lot 55 feet wide and a second lot, with a 60-foot width. The new lots will meet lot area requirements. The SFD and accessory buildings will remain, noting the existing two (2) sheds and one (1) woodshed will be relocated to comply with the four (4) foot setback. The intent is to construct a SFD on the newly created lot, which will be occupied by the applicant as a retirement home. The existing dwelling will be retained by the applicant and eventually occupied for immediate family when visiting.

Mr. Michael Webster, applicant, was sworn in by Chairman Rosenberg.

Mr. James R. Boney, Surveyor, was sworn in by Chairman Rosenberg, and provided credentials, which were accepted by the Board.

In response to Mr. Gilman’s request, Mr. Webster addressed the Board regarding the following:

History of the property: Mr. Webster explained the property has been owned by members of his family since the late 1940’s. In 1998, he purchased the property, which continues to be occupied/used solely as a vacation home for family.

Intent: Mr. Webster confirmed the intent to retain the newly created lot and, although there are no plans drawn as yet, is to eventually construct a retirement home, while keeping the existing dwelling for family use only. Other than relocated the sheds to meet setback requirements, there are no other changes planned for the existing home, including retaining the fence. The mature trees will remain, except for a cedar tree, due to the proposed location of the future home. Upon future construction of a dwelling, it will meet all codes, requirements, etc.

Mr. Gilman explained the character of the neighborhood will remain and submitted a photograph, noted as Exhibit A-1.

Mr. Webster stated most area houses are on two (2) or three (3) 20-foot lots. There are no negative impacts, since this fits within the character of the neighborhood.

The Board questioned Mr. Webster on the following:

* Side Setback: Consideration to switch the side setback, so that the setback allows for more distance from the neighbor’s property. Mr. Webster explained initial discussions placed the driveway and garage in that location, but would consider switching.
* Off street parking: Mr. Webster advised the proposed project will have a paved driveway and garage, with potential to allow for six (6) cars

Mr. Boney addressed the Board and testified to:

* Familiarity with the site and local ordinances
* Described the current conditions of the lot and existing total lot area, which is approximately 17,000 square feet
* Proposed new lot dimensions are approximately 8308 and 9264 square feet, with sufficient depth
* Confirmed the accessory buildings will be relocated to meet four (4) foot setbacks
* Reviewed required distance between buildings, setbacks of main buildings, height of buildings will be less than maximum of 35 feet
* Lot sizes are similar to the area and appear to be trending substandard, per zoning requirements for frontages

Mr. Webster stated the proposal is in keeping and not unusual with the neighborhood.

Mr. Gilman then posed a series of questions to Mr. Boney, who responded that no negatives and/or damage caused by application, project allows for light, air, open space, the benefits outweigh any detriments, positive impact to the general welfare and character of the neighborhood, and adds a visually desirable property to the area.

The Board needed clarification on the handout submitted by the applicant and whether lots not highlighted meet code. Mr. Webster stated this was prepared based on his personal knowledge and not based on any formal/official research process.

Mr. Cathcart that most questions were addressed, but is recommending to see the details of the old tax map lines on the plans, as well as the setback distances, which can be revised. There is a typographical error on the scale shown, which can be corrected when submitting the final plan.

This portion of the meeting was opened to the public. No comments were made from the public. This portion of the meeting was closed to the public.

Mr. Abrams made a motion to conditionally approve the minor subdivision and hardship variance application, seconded by Mr. Arenberg.

During the vote, the following Members gave findings of fact along with their decisions:

Mr. McDuell Approved Proposed meets lot area

VOTE: Mr. McDuell YES Mr. Lindsay YES Mr. Arenberg YES

 Mr. Abrams NO Chairman Rosenberg YES Ms. Parker YES

 Motion approved.

The Board Solicitor will prepare a memorializing resolution to review and approve at the next meeting.

Chairman Rosenbert made a motion to approve the Minutes from the meeting of June 19, 2025, seconded by Mr. McDuell. Motion carried.

Mr. McDuell made a motion to approve the Board Engineer vouchers, seconded by Mr. Lindsay. Motion carried.

Chairman Rosenberg made a motion to approve the Board Solicitor vouchers, seconded by Mr. Abrams. Motion carried.

Mr. McDuell made a motion to approve the Resolutions from the meeting of June 19, 2025, seconded by Mr. Abrams. Motion carried.

At 6:50 P.M., Mr. Lindsay made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr.

Arenberg. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Wood,

Recording Secretary

A verbatim recording of said meeting is on file in Township Hall.

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