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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 May 21, 2026, the Lower Township Municipal Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Vice Chairman Chris McDuell. The Recording Secretary stated that adequate notice of said meeting was given in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Vice Chairman Chris McDuell Jeffrey Lindsay, Mayor's Designee Gunär Arenberg Steve Morris Councilman Roland Roy Lindsey Selby Anthony Vetrano Richard Roach/Alt I
MEMBERS EXCUSED:	Chairman Michael Rosenberg Mayor Frank Sippel Marissa McCorkel Alyce Parker/Alt II
STAFF PRESENT:	Avery S. Teitler, Board Solicitor William J. Galestok, Board Secretary Patrick L. Wood, Recording Secretary William Cathcart, Board Engineer
STAFF EXCUSED:	Kathryn M. Steiger, Planning Clerk

CORRESPONDENCE:

Handouts: N/A

Mr. Teitler read the agenda aloud for the benefit of the public, and advised that at the request of the applicant, the following applications has been rescheduled for the next Planning Board Meeting on June 18, 2026:

Minor subdivision and hardship variance application for the creation of two (2) newly described lots. Variance relief requested for lot area, lot frontage, and lot width. Submitted by GT Renovation LLP for the location known as Block 469, Lot(s) 5+6, 947-949 Carol Avenue

Minor subdivision and hardship variance application for the creation of two (2) newly described lots. Variance relief requested for lot area, lot frontage, lot width, lot depth, and encroachment into the front and side yard setbacks. Submitted by Shore Good Properties, LLC for the location known as Block 315, Lot 1, 202 Spruce Avenue

1. Minor subdivision and hardship variance application for the creation of two (2) newly described lots. Variance relief requested for lot area, lot frontage, and lot width. Submitted by Robert & Jane Elwell for the location known as Block 260, Lot(s) 15+16, 15 E. Drumbed Road

Mr. Ronald J. Gelzunas, Jr., Esq., is representing the applicant.

Mr. Gelzunas submitted a set of three conceptual renderings of the proposed structure into evidence, explaining the application is to sub-divide the existing 100 x 100 lot into two (2) 50 x 100 lots.

Mr. Joseph H. Maffei, P.E., P.P., C.M.E., was sworn in by Vice-Chairman McDuell, and provided credentials, which were accepted by the Board.

Mr. Robert Elwell, owner and applicant, was sworn in by Vice-Chairman McDuell.

At the request of Mr. Gelzunas, Mr. Maffei provided the following testimony:

A single-family dwelling, with a detached garage, currently exists on the lot, which previously were known as Lot 15 and Lot 16, until merged. Exhibit A-1 is a building designed to be consistent with the neighborhood character, reflecting a smaller home to be more harmonious for the area. The proposed is a one (1) story, 25 foot high, cottage style dwelling, with three (3) bedrooms each and two (2) parking spaces per house. There are no detriments created and pricing for a smaller house will be more reasonable.

At the request of Mr. Gelzunas, Mr. Elwell provided the following testimony:

The existing house is 520 square feet, with no closets or dining area, and room only for a table and chairs in the kitchen. The result of adding onto the dwelling, rather than a new structure, was deemed unreasonable, due to amount of work and costs involved. The intent is to demolish the current structure, build a similar home, as depicted in Exhibit A-1. It is our hope that grandchildren will build on the newly created adjacent lot. Mr. Elwell stated there are other properties within the area that are 50 x 100.

The Board pointed out that Exhibit A-1 identifies a different lot. Mr. Gelzunas clarified the correct rendering is in the middle of the images.

Mr. Maffei responded to the Board's inquiries about:

Neighborhood lot sizes: There are six (6) lots within 500 feet that are 50 x 100;

Stand-alone lots merged: Lots were merged, due to the Land Use Law requirements with adjacent vacant lots under the same ownership;

Mr. Cathcart reported:

The lots are preexisting and will be separated as before and meet all engineer requirements.

In response to Mr. Cathcart's preference that mature trees be saved and status of the existing structure and garage, Mr. Gelzunas confirmed the trees will be preserved and stated the existing dwelling and garage will be demolished, since it is not suitable for renovating.

On behalf of his client, Mr. Gelzunas agreed that the side yard setbacks will be switched to accommodate the neighbors.

Mr. Galestok requested confirmation that Exhibit A-1 is an example only and not what is proposed. Mr. Gelzunas confirmed it is for example purposes only.

Prior to opening the meeting for public comment, Mr. Teitler advised that, in order to allow for all to voice public comments, there would be a time limit to address the Board and requested the public to avoid making comments already of record.

This portion of the meeting was opened to the public.

All of the following members of the public were individually sworn in by Vice-Chairman McDuell and provided the following testimony:

Mr. Wayne E. Bigelow, Sr., resident of 11 E. Drumbed Road:

Rather leave the lots as they are and have one (1) house. Two (2) houses will be a lot of trouble and will open the flood gates.

Ms. Penny Isaac, resident of 304 E. Drumbed Road:

Only one (1) house in the neighborhood that is 50 x 100 – everyone else is 75 x 100. If this is approved, a neighbor across the street will come in for his own subdivision. The original houses were built on 100 x 100 lots, not 50 x 100.

Mr. Bigelow asked about driveways and parking locations, with Ms. Isaac stating concern about conformity with the neighborhood. In response, the Board asked Mr. Maffei about a map of properties in the area. Mr. Maffei stated there was no map, and made reference to his previous testimony regarding consistency within the neighborhood.

Ms. Terry Diehl, resident of 17 E. Drumbed Road:

Submits Exhibit O-1, outlining neighborhood concerns. Mr. Teitler inquired whether this exhibit is Ms. Diehl's opinion only. Ms. Diehl responded it was not, with the document signed by the neighbors. Ms. Diehl voiced concern about water runoff and impact to the quality of the homes. In summary, since the public is taking the time to attend this meeting, the Board should take the time to read it.

Responding to Ms. Diehl's statement, Mr. Teitler addressed those in attendance, on behalf of the Planning Board. He reviewed that the Planning Board is an all-volunteer Board. Members do take time to review correspondence submitted. Generally, it is not common practice to take exhibits from the public during a meeting, as comments are typically being provided via direct testimony from witnesses, rather than reading from written exhibits. Mr. Teitler noted the exhibit from Ms. Diehl has been entered into evidence.

Mr. Gelzunas objected to Exhibit O-1 being accepted.

Ms. Maria B. Affatato, resident of 18 E. Drumbed Road:

Stated concern about affordable housing and what affordable housing is being brought in. Mr. Maffei clarified that the terms "reasonably priced" were used, not affordable housing terms.

Mr. Richard T. Grayo, resident of 7 E. Drumbed Road:

His home was purchased in 1980, which is a 100 x 100 corner lot, and is small. This application would be like the northern end of the Villas, with smaller lots. Mr. Grayo stated his opposition to the application.

Ms. Robbin Wase, resident of 19 E Drumbed Road:

Inquired whether the proposed dwellings are modular or stick built. Mostly concerned with noise and infrastructure.

This portion of the meeting was closed to the public.

In response to the Board's question on occupancy, Mr. Elwell stated the intent is a long-term rental for the one dwelling and give the other to the grandchildren. Mr. Galestok advised that the Board cannot restrict or base their vote on the testimony of the type of rental.

Mr. Maffei identified the location of the six (6) undersized lots, in response to the Board's question. Mr. Galestok stated it would be beneficial to have a plan, denoting the size of the lots. Mr. Gelzunas then submitted an aerial tax map into evidence, Exhibit A-2, that labels those six (6) lots referenced.

Mr. Maffei testified the existing lot could support a 3,000 square foot house, with the same runoff as the proposed two 1400 square foot dwellings. Drainage is not supposed to be directed to the neighbor's properties, and is meeting the same building coverage. The proposed homes are more in character with the neighborhood.

Mr. Gelzunas confirmed the applicant will agree to a condition that the home will be a one (1) story, ranch style home.

Mr. Maffei concluded that a one (1) story home will not infringe on privacy of the neighbors. He provided a review of lots that have been consolidated, due to MLUL. Mr. Maffei then restated that two (2) smaller homes are more in tune with the area, noting a larger home is more susceptible to renting to a larger group of people.

Mr. Gelzunas restated their belief that keeping with smaller bungalow type structures, with smaller lots, is more in harmony with the neighborhood.

For the benefit of the Board, Mr. Teitler clarified that should the application be approved, the condition is that any structure would be a one (1) story, three (3) bedroom, two (2) bathroom, ranch-style home.

Mr. Galestok stated that this condition does not continue with the land, only the initial construction shall be deeded, as such.

Prior to voting, Mr. Teitler provided a summary of the application.

Mrs. Selby made a motion to approve the minor subdivision application, seconded by Mr. Vetrano.

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

- Mr. Lindsay Approved: Lots size conforms with the neighborhood
- Mr. Roy Approved: Testimony shows longevity for the property. Rental will aid with taxes
- Mrs. Selby Approved: More conforming than one large home
- Mr. Vetrano Approved: Conforms with the neighborhood
- Mr. Morris Denied: Will substantially alter the character of the neighborhood
- Mr. Arenberg Denied: Does not conform with the neighborhood
- Mr. Roach Approved: Homes fit the character of the neighborhood.
- Vice- Chairman McDuell Approved: Fits with the neighborhood and was originally two lots prior to merge.

VOTE:	Mr. Arenberg	NO	Mrs. Selby	YES
	Mr. Lindsay	YES	Mr. Morris	NO
	Mr. Vetrano	YES	Mr. Roy	YES
	Mr. Roach	YES	Vice Chairman McDuell	YES

Motion approved.

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

Mr. Roy made a motion to approve the Minutes from the meeting of April 22, 2026, seconded by Mr. Roach. Motion carried.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Wood,
Recording Secretary

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

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