

**PLANNING BOARD**  
City of Orange Township  
29 North Day Street  
Orange, NJ 07050

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**August 13, 2025**

Chairman Holmes called the August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 City of Orange Township Planning Board Special Meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Salute to the Flag. Compliance with the “Sunshine Law” was acknowledged. Roll Call. Meeting Notice.

Please note this meeting was held virtually via Zoom Meeting and all login information has been posted on the City of Orange Township website ([www.orangenj.gov](http://www.orangenj.gov)) as well as the local newspaper “Transcript.”

Board Members Present: Enoch Faustin, Callistus Onyiuke, Chistopher Mobley, Jean-Guy Lauture, Council Member Tency Eason, Mayor Dwayne Warren , Vice- Chair Antoinette Jones, Chairman Dwight Holmes.

Board Members Absent: Enoch Faustin, Mayor Warren

Professionals Present:  
Alexandra Reyes, Board Secretary  
Gerard Haizel, Board Planner  
Richard Hawkins, Board Attorney from the lawfirm of Friends & Wenzel. Attorney Joseph Wenzel ( Arrived 8:03PM )  
John Cahillane, Board Engineer

Correspondence:

None

Minutes:

None

**Case #25-11 ABJ Orange Urban Renewal LLC- 556-560 Scotland Rd- Preliminary and Final Major Site plan approval**

Attorney Elnardo Webster from the law firm of Connell Foley represented the applicant seeking preliminary final site plan approval for ABJ Orange Urban Renewal LLC for a project to be located at 556-560 Scotland Road, also referred to as Block 5901, Lots 5 and 6 on the official tax records of the City of Orange Township. The Property is in the Central Valley Redevelopment Area – District 4 and governed by the Central Valley Redevelopment Plan.

The Applicant is proposing to construct a new five-story multifamily building, consisting of forty-three (43) ground floor parking spaces, and 43 residential units above. Amenities include a tenant amenity space, storage area, private balconies and fourth floor roof deck. In connection with this proposed project, the Applicant is seeking bulk “c” variance relief for exceeding the maximum total exterior signage area and exceeding the maximum required façade sign height. Further, the Applicant is seeking a design waiver for insufficient parking space dimensions.

**Witness #1** Michaela Maguire was sworn in as the Civil Engineer. Ms. Maguire presented the Site plans depicting the current condition as well as the proposed development dated July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. The site will be improved with a 5-story multi-family residential with ground floor parking with a building footprint of 12,650 SF in a gross floor area of 54,484 SF. The ground parking space will consist of 43 parking spaces which is compliant with the ordinance, the parking area will include (2) ADA spaces and (7) EV make ready spaces. Applicant is requesting a waiver for the parking stall sizes of 9x18 Ft where 9x20 is required.

All the proposed utility will be connecting on Scotland Rd. The existing utility poll will be relocated; the applicant will obtain any necessary PSEG permits. Applicant agrees to comply with the Board engineer requested regarding screening for the proposed transformer in the front yard. Proposed lighting was presented as well as landscaping. The applicant agrees to comply with the board engineer letter dated August 6, 2025.

**Witness #2** Jeff Akerman was sworn in as the Architect. Mr. Akerman presented the architectural drawings dated June 30, 2025. The proposed building will contain a total (43) apartment, which will include a mix of one and two-bedroom units. Each apartment will include a living/dining area, eat-in kitchen, bathrooms and bedrooms. Each apartment will also have independent laundry facilities within them. Unit breakdown is as followed:

1- BR (739-743 SF)	2- BR (955-1,004 SF)	Total Apartments
23	20	43

The proposed roof deck will be an amenity for residents and will include outdoor seating. The rooftop deck will be accessible from a proposed door on the western end of the central hallway, adjacent to the elevator. The exterior of the building will be finished with textured cream EIFS on the front façade and varied colored EIFS on the remaining three frontages.

Board members raised concerns regarding the aesthetics and difference in materials for the affordable units. Attorney Webster stated there will be no discernment for the affordable units, all units will be designed same as a market rate unit.

Applicant is seeking an exception for the proposed signage. The applicant proposes to erect a freestanding sign, which will feature the building address.

Mr. Akerman confirmed receipt of the Board Planner memorandum dated August 4, 2025.

**Witness #3** Thomas Ricci was sworn in as a Planner. Mr. Ricci confirmed receipt of the Planner memorandum dated August 4, 2025. With respect to the Zoning Compliance Presentation explains that the property is located in the Central Valley Redevelopment plan, which was adopted in 2020 to promote mass transit development near the train line.

- The plan aims to expand residential activity, increase density, and provide site improvements to beautify the area.
- The proposal aligns with the redevelopment plan's goal of providing a variety of housing units and types proximate to the train line.
- The proposal substantially aligns with the city's goals for the redevelopment plan.

The use is permitted and complies with all bulk requirements, including setbacks, height, coverage, and parking. The relief sought is primarily related to design criteria, specifically signage and lighting. The freestanding sign is not permitted under the redevelopment plan, and the proposed sign exceeds the maximum area and height. The sign's height and area are driven by the building's setback and the thin lot, which limits the visibility of the front face of the building.

### **Signage and Lighting Variance**

- The sign area appears to be over the allowance due to the sign having three sides.
- The sign is slim, modern, and only has the address on one side, which helps justify the sign height and area variances.

### **Parking Stall Size and Illumination Variance**

- Speaker 1 discusses the parking stall size variance, noting that the proposed 9x18 feet is still an acceptable size.
- The project cannot comply with the 20-foot deep parking spaces due to the thin lot, and the best alternative is to propose 9x18 feet parking stalls.
- The minimum driveway entrance illumination is three foot candles, but the average foot candles in the area will be well above that.

- The lighting point close to the street frontage is the only spot below the required illumination, and the rest of the area is well lit.

Mr. Rucci summarizes the relief sought, emphasizing that it is minor in nature and justified by the unique aspects of the project. The project substantially aligns with the goals and objectives of the redevelopment plan and zoning requirements. The grant of the relief items does not pose a substantial detriment to public good but actually furthers the general welfare. The project promotes the city's intended housing goals and transit-oriented development, as outlined in the redevelopment plan.

### **Board Professionals**

Board Engineer John Cahillane was sworn in. Mr. Cahillane provided his report to the Board and applicant dated August 6, 2025. Mr. Cahillane appreciate the applicants thorough testimony and their attention to detail in both our professionals reports as well TRC, He appreciate the inclusion of a green roof in stormwater quantity standards, but as well as quality and the green infrastructure initiative that is part of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protections, major development as this project is defined as.

George Williams was sworn in as the Board Planner. The Planner Memorandum dated August 4, 2025 was provided to the board and the applicant prepared by Gerard Haizel. The proposed does not pose a substantial detriment to the public good. Mr. Williams would agree that the sign serves a purpose to identify the property which is uniquely positioned on the site, and that's advances purposes of zoning. In terms of parking, he would also agree with the testimony provided by the applicant about the deviation from the parking standards. He was most persuaded, and in consultation with Gerard, that the trade off here is better maneuverability on the site, and most importantly, that the stall sizes and aisle sizes are actually industry standard.

Board Member questioned whether a rendering of a building's surroundings is accurate representation of Scotland. Attorney Webster and the applicant professionals addressed the aboard members concerns.

Councilwoman Eason emphasized the need for accurate landscape depictions and ongoing maintenance enforcement, warned that overgrowth from unmaintained trees has become a recurring problem. Councilwoman suggested developers be held accountable for pruning and maintenance in future approvals.

**Motion** by Member Lauture and **second** by Member Mobley to open public portion. All in favor.

**Ms. Tanya Fitzgerald**, 489 Carry Street, Orange, NJ, expressed concerns regarding:

- Ongoing construction activity along Scotland Road near the train station.
- Whether the current application involved eminent domain for existing homes.

Applicant's Attorney clarified that the lots were acquired through private not eminent domain.

**Motion** by Councilwoman Eason and **second** by Member Mobley to close public portion. All in favor.

Motion made by Vice Chair Jones and second by Member Faustin for the approval of Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan for Case No. 25-11-ABJ, Orange Urban Renewal, LLC, 556–560 Scotland Road, with the following variances and design waivers:

### **Variances Granted**

- **Exterior Signage:**
  - 70 sq. ft. sign permitted where 20 sq. ft. is allowed.
  - Facade sign height of 12 feet, where 20 inches is permitted.
  - Freestanding address sign in front yard (where not otherwise permitted except for wayfinding).

### **Design Waivers Granted**

- **Parking stall size:** 9'×18' (vs. 9'×20' required).
- **Driveway entrance illumination:** 2.3 foot-candles (vs. minimum 3.0 required).
- **Lighting shield:** Allowance for minor light visibility variance (0.9 foot-candles).

### **Conditions of Approval**

1. Applicant to comply with all recommendations from:
  - **Planner's Report:** Dated August 2025
  - **Engineer's Report:** Dated August 6, 2025
2. **Transformer Screening:** To include evergreen landscaping, subject to review and approval by the City Engineer and Planner.
3. **Garage Access:** Limited to right-turn-only egress onto Scotland Road.
4. **Security Cameras:** Applicant to provide digital access code for City Police Department (no direct connection).
5. **Parking Requirement:** Minimum of one parking space per apartment unit, provided at no cost to tenants.
6. **Landscape Maintenance:** Ongoing maintenance responsibility of the applicant/developer.

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Onyiuke, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Council Member Eason, Vice Chair Jones, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: Mayor Warren

Those Abstained: None

Motion carried: 7-0-1-0

Old Business:

Zoning Officer and Construction Official scheduled to attend next Planning Board meeting to address compliance issues related to Scotland Road and Central Avenue properties.

New Business:

Correspondence from City Council for new assignment of Councilman Weldon Montague as the newly appointed Board Member effective September 2025.

None

**Motion** to adjourn from Vice Chair Jones **second** by Member Member at 9:01PM. All in favor

**Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 27, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. via virtually using Zoom Meeting.**

**Prepared by: Alexandra Reyes.**