

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

MEETING MINUTES
December 18, 2025

Chairman Holmes called the December 18, 2025 City of Orange Township Planning Board Meeting to order at 7:32 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) as well as the local newspaper “Transcript.”

Board Members Present: Enock Faustin, Callistus Onyiuke (Arrived 8:17), Christopher Mobley, Council Vice-President Weldon Montague, Jean-Guy Lauture, Mayor Dwayne Warren , Vice- Chair Antoinette Jones(Arrived 8:02), Chairman Dwight Holmes.

Board Members Absent: None

Professionals Present:
Alexandra Reyes, Board Secretary
Steven Martini, Board Planner on behalf of Nishuane
Richard Hawkins, Board Attorney on behalf of Friends &Wenzel
John Cahillane, Board Engineer

Correspondence:

None

Minutes:

None

Reorganization – Board Professionals (Effective January 2026)

Appointment of Board Secretary

Resolution appointing **Alexandra Reyes** as Board Secretary effective January 2026.

Motion by Mayor Warren
Seconded by Council Vice-President Montague

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Council Vice-President Montague, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Appointment of Board Attorney

Appointment of the firm **Friends & Wenzel** with Attorney **Joseph Wenzel** as Board Attorney.

Motion by Mayor Warren

Seconded by Member Mobley

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Council Vice-President Montague, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Appointment of Board Planner

Appointment of **Gerard Haizel, P.P. from Nishuane.**

Motion by Council Vice-President Montague

Seconded by Mayor Warren

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Council Vice-President Montague, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Appointment of Board Engineer

Appointment of **John Cahillane, P.E. from CP Engineers.**

Motion by Member Mobley

Seconded by Mayor Warren

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Council Vice-President Montague, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Memorialize resolution for Case# 25-07 10 Essex urban renewal LLC- 8-22 S. Essex Ave- Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval.

Council Vice-President Montague was not present at the original hearing and abstained.

Motion by Member Mobley
Seconded by Mayor Warren

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Abstained: Council Vice-President Montague

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Memorialize resolution for Case# 25-08 23 Essex urban renewal LLC- 26 Tony Galento Plaza- Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval.

Council Vice-President Montague was not present at the original hearing and abstained.

Motion by Member Mobley
Seconded by Member Faustin

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Abstained: Council Vice-President Montague

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Memorialize resolution for Case# 25-13 VA 475 Urban Renewal LLC- 475 Main St- Amended Site Plan Approval.

Council Vice-President Montague voted no at the original hearing and abstained from memorialization.

Motion by Member Mobley
Seconded by Mayor Warren

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Abstained: Council Vice-President Montague
Motion carried.

Memorialize resolution for Case# 25-12 VA 583, LLC- 583 Scotland Road – Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval.

Council Vice-President Montague voted no at the original hearing and abstained from memorialization.

Motion by Member Mobley
Seconded by Mayor Warren

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobley, Member Lauture, Mayor Warren, Chairman Holmes

Those Opposed: None

Those Abstained: Council Vice-President Montague

Those Absent: Vice-Chair Jones

Motion carried.

Case# 25-10 G & R Used Auto Sales, Inc-78 S. Jefferson St-Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval

Attorney Jennifer Carrillo Perez of Connell Foley appeared on behalf of the Applicant. The property located in the City's MX-3 Zone, the applicant G & R Auto Sales, Inc. ,proposes to construct a new 6-story mixed-use building, with on-site parking and commercial space on the 1st floor and (45) residential units on the 2nd through 6th floors. The proposed mid-rise residential/commercial, building is permitted in the MX-3 zone. Attorney Carrillo Perez confirmed receipt of the Planner report dated September 16., 2025 and the Engineer report dated September 18, 2025.

Variiances Requested (C Variiances)

1. Rear Yard Setback – 18.4 feet proposed where 25 feet required
2. Excessive Building Coverage – 74.9% proposed where 70% permitted

Design Waiver Requested

- Off-street loading space (accommodated within oversized parking space)

Witness #1 Brian Grant- Civil engineer.

Mr. Brian Grant, Principal of Grant Engineering and Construction Group, Newark, New Jersey, was sworn and accepted as an expert in civil engineering

Note_otter_ai (4)

. He confirmed review of the Board Engineer and Planner reports and stated coordination had occurred with City professionals.

Mr. Grant testified:

- The existing auto repair facility and all pavement, curb, and sidewalk will be demolished.
- The proposed six-story building will occupy a 16,919 SF site with 103.5 feet of frontage along South Jefferson Street.
- The ground floor will include:
 - Commercial space with dedicated refuse/recycling behind it.
 - Separate residential refuse system with chute from upper floors.
 - Residential lobby with elevator and stair access.
 - Mechanical room.
 - Bicycle parking (18 wall-mounted spaces accessible through lobby).
 - Structured parking utilizing triple-stack automated parking systems.

Parking Layout & Circulation

- 61 residential parking spaces utilizing triple stack systems.
- 3 ADA spaces located at the front of the building.
- ADA spaces will also function as EV spaces to comply with state requirements.
- 4 retail employee parking spaces located at the rear of the site for long-term employee use.
- Retail employee spaces are not intended for short-term retail customers.
- Access and egress via single curb cut.
- Garage entrance will include rolling gate with audible and visual warning system for pedestrian safety.

Security Condition

Mr. Grant testified that:

- Security cameras will be installed along the building perimeter.
- Final camera locations to be designed by the electrical engineer and security consultant.
- As a condition of approval, a note will be added to the plans confirming perimeter security cameras will be installed.

Landscaping & Buffering

- Grass and four shade trees along the angled frontage.
- Grass strip on opposite side yard.
- Based on Planner feedback, Applicant agreed to install five-foot board-on-board fencing along side and rear property lines to provide visual screening and minimize light spill.

Utilities & Stormwater

- New sanitary connection to 24-inch sewer.
- New storm connection via underground detention system.
- Eight-inch PVC storm line to City system.
- Gas, water, and fire connections to South Jefferson Street mains.
- Underground detention system will capture roof and site runoff and discharge to municipal storm system.

Variances & Waivers

- Rear yard setback: 18.4 ft proposed where 25 ft required.
- Building coverage: 74.9% proposed where 70% permitted.
- Off-street loading waiver — oversized 12' x 20' space designated for residential loading/unloading.

Board Member discussion included questions regarding parking operations, ADA precedence over EV, garage safety alerts, and loading operations.

Witness #2 Jeffrey Lewis- Architect was sworn in.

Mr. Lewis presented the architectural plans for the proposed six (6) story mixed-use building consisting of:

- **45 residential units**
 - **10 Studio Units** – approximately 650 SF each
 - **21 One-Bedroom Units** – generally 850–900 SF (largest at 1,038 SF)
 - **14 Two-Bedroom Units** – ranging from approximately 1,138 SF to 1,382 SF

Mr. Lewis emphasized that the units are larger than typical redevelopment units and designed for quality residential living.

All residential units will:

- Be ADA adaptable
- Include in-unit washer/dryers
- Include ducted HVAC systems
- Be within a fully sprinklered building

Building Layout

Ground Floor:

- 65 parking spaces (including stacked system configuration as described by the engineer)
- Retail/commercial space (908 SF)
- Residential lobby
- Mechanical and sprinkler rooms
- Separate refuse and recycling rooms (residential chute system on each floor)

Mezzanine Level:

- 956 SF residential amenity space
- 908 SF office space
- Parking stack system

Roof Level:

- 3,145 SF shared rooftop amenity deck
- Raised planters
- Setback from building edge to buffer neighbors
- Mechanical equipment screened and incorporated into design

Exterior Design & Materials

Mr. Lewis testified that:

- Lower four floors will feature brick façade.
- Upper two floors will utilize white fiber cement (Hardi panel) finish.
- Black window frames throughout.
- Glass balcony railings.
- Consistent high-quality materials on all four elevations (not limited to front façade).
- Rear and side elevations finished in same materials to maintain architectural integrity.

He emphasized that unlike many mixed-use developments, this building uses the same quality finishes on all sides to ensure aesthetic consistency.

Canopy Clarification

Two canopies are proposed over:

- Commercial entrance
- Residential lobby entrance

It was clarified on the record that:

- The canopies **will not encroach upon the public right-of-way.**
- They will remain fully within the property line.

Exhibit Presented

A rendering of the building was presented and marked into the record as:

Exhibit A-1 – 78–80 South Jefferson Street Rendering

Witness # 3 Matt Flynn – Sworn in as a Planner:

Mr. Flynn testified regarding:

- Mixed-use zone consistency
- Positive aesthetic improvement over existing auto use
- Justification for rear setback variance
- Justification for building coverage variance
- Provision of amenity spaces compensating for reduced ground-level open space
- Compliance with parking requirements (no parking variance required)

Drone imagery marked as Exhibit A-2 (5-page planner exhibit).

Board Members Discussion Highlights

- Triple-stack parking safety and prior municipal usage
- Garage entrance pedestrian safety
- ADA/EV parking configuration
- Height compatibility within neighborhood context
- Loading operations for residential and retail use
- Roof amenity buffering

Board Professionals

Board Planner – Steven Martini, P.P.

Mr. Steven Martini reviewed the application and confirmed that the proposed mixed-use development advances redevelopment objectives for the area. His comments included:

- Confirmation of consistency with the zone intent for mixed-use development.
- Review of the requested rear yard setback variance (18.4 ft proposed where 25 ft required).
- Review of building coverage (74.9% proposed where 70% permitted).
- A recommendation for additional visual screening and mitigation of light spill.
- Request that five-foot board-on-board fencing be installed along the side and rear property lines.
- Clarification of EV parking compliance.
- Review of the amenity space distribution, noting that rooftop and courtyard spaces mitigate reduced ground-level open space.

Mr. Martini indicated no objection to the application subject to compliance with the Planner's report and the conditions discussed on the record.

Board Engineer – John Cahillane, P.E.

Mr. John Cahillane reviewed the engineering components of the application and provided comments regarding:

- Parking circulation and stack parking configuration.
- ADA space placement and EV space compliance.
- Confirmation of audible and visual warning systems at the garage entrance for pedestrian safety.
- Stormwater detention and connection to the municipal storm system.
- Utility connections (sanitary, water, fire, gas).
- Loading/unloading space utilization.
- Confirmation of perimeter security cameras to be installed as a condition of approval.

Mr. Cahillane indicated the application is acceptable from an engineering standpoint subject to compliance with the Engineer's report and testimony provided.

Public Portion

Motion to Open Public Portion

Made by Mayor Warren Seconded by Member Lauture. All in favor. Motion carried.

Alisha Rodriguez – 487 Mountain View Avenue

Ms. Rodriguez raised concerns regarding:

- The requested variances and overall building density.
- Potential spillover parking into nearby residential streets.
- The impact of commercial parking operations.

- Architectural compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Traffic flow and safety.

Applicant professionals responded that the parking exceeds ordinance requirements, employee spaces are long-term use, and pedestrian safety measures including warning systems and security cameras will be implemented.

Kweli Campbell – 55 Randolph

Mr. Campbell expressed concerns regarding:

- Building height and massing.
- Neighborhood character.
- Traffic circulation and safety.
- The cumulative impact of redevelopment projects in the area.

Applicant professionals responded that the building complies with redevelopment standards, provides adequate parking, and incorporates buffering and setback mitigation measures.

Rachel Tenant – Waverly Place

Ms. Tenant expressed concerns regarding:

- Density and scale relative to nearby properties.
- Potential noise from rooftop amenity areas.
- Lighting and privacy impacts.
- Parking and garage operations.

Applicant professionals stated that rooftop amenities are set back, lighting will be shielded and mitigated with fencing, and the building incorporates screening and perimeter security measures.

Motion to Close Public Portion

Made by Member Mobley Seconded by Mayor Warren . All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion for Approval for Case# 25-10 G & R Used Auto Sales, Inc-78 S. Jefferson St- Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval

Motion to approve made by Mayor Warren Seconded by Member Mobley

Prior to the vote, Vice-Chair Jones placed on the record that she had reviewed the transcript for the portion of the meeting she was not present for and confirmed she was fully informed prior to voting.

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Mobely, Member Lauture, Mayor Warren, Vice-Chair Jones.

Those Opposed: Chairman Holmes

Those Absent: None

Those Abstained: Member Onyiuke, Council Vice-President Montague

Motion carried: 5-1-0-2

Case# 25-14 Rakhee Enterprise LLC-339-355 Henry St-Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval.

Attorney Benjamin Wine, of Prime & Tuvel, LLC , appeared on behalf of the Applicant, Rakhee Enterprises, LLC.

The Applicant seeks Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval for construction of a four (4) story multi-family residential building consisting of:

- 32 residential units
- 39 parking spaces (where 32 required)
- One-way parking aisle circulation
- Overcompliance with setback and coverage requirements
- No use variances requested

Attorney Wine noted for the record that the application is located within Zone B of the Central Orange Redevelopment Plan and that the project was intentionally designed as a fully compliant redevelopment application with no bulk variances requested.

He further testified that:

- The project is below the maximum permitted height.
- The floor area ratio is significantly under what is permitted.
- Parking exceeds ordinance requirements.
- The building steps back at upper levels out of consideration for adjacent neighbors.
- The design philosophy was “quality over quantity.”

Witness# 1 Kiersten Osterkorn was Sworn in as a Civil Engineer and Planner.

Planning Testimony

Ms. Osterkorn testified that the property is located within **Zone B of the Central Orange Redevelopment Plan** and that the proposed four (4) story multifamily residential building is a permitted use. She stated:

- No use or bulk variances are requested.
- The building height is below the maximum permitted.
- The Floor Area Ratio is below the maximum allowed.

- The project provides 39 parking spaces where 32 are required.
- The building design incorporates step-backs and articulated façades to reduce perceived massing.

She testified the application advances redevelopment goals by replacing underutilized properties with compliant residential development consistent with the Redevelopment Plan and the Municipal Land Use Law.

Engineering / Site Components

Ms. Osterkorn addressed site layout and circulation, including:

- One-way internal driveway circulation.
- Standard parking dimensions and ADA-compliant spaces.
- Landscaping and rear buffering.
- Utility connections to existing municipal infrastructure.
- Stormwater management directed to the municipal system.

She indicated the Applicant would comply with all recommendations of the Board Engineer and Board Planner, including any refinements related to ADA grading, drainage confirmation, and landscaping.

Witness# 2- Alexander Elias- Sworn in as an Architect.

Mr. Elias provided testimony regarding the design, layout, and architectural features of the proposed four (4) story multifamily residential building containing thirty-two (32) dwelling units. Mr. Elias testified that the building was designed with an emphasis on quality, proportion, and contextual compatibility rather than maximizing bulk. He explained that the structure incorporates architectural articulation and step-backs to reduce perceived massing and create visual relief along the Henry Street frontage.

Building Design & Unit Layout

Mr. Elias testified that:

- The building contains 32 residential units.
- Units are designed with functional layouts and appropriate square footage.
- The building includes elevator and stair access with efficient corridor circulation.
- The façade incorporates varied materials and articulated elements to avoid a flat or monolithic appearance.
- The overall design is consistent on all elevations.

Exterior Materials & Façade Treatment

Mr. Elias described the exterior materials and confirmed that:

- Brick and complementary façade materials will be used.
- Window placement and façade detailing create rhythm and visual interest.
- The architectural treatment is consistent on all sides of the building.
- Step-backs are incorporated to soften the building's presence and reduce visual impact.

Exhibit Presented

A building rendering was presented and marked into the record as:

Exhibit A-1 – 339–355 Henry Street Rendering

Mr. Elias testified that Exhibit A-1 accurately reflects the architectural design intent, building massing, façade articulation, and material character of the proposed development.

He concluded that the design is consistent with the Central Orange Redevelopment Plan and appropriate for the surrounding redevelopment context.

Board Professionals:

John Cahillane- Board engineer was sworn in.

Mr. Cahillane reviewed the engineering aspects of the application, including site circulation, parking layout, ADA compliance, utilities, stormwater management, and landscaping.

He confirmed that the proposed one-way circulation and parking dimensions are generally acceptable. He requested minor refinements related to ADA grading and confirmation that stormwater overflow connects to the municipal storm system and not the sanitary sewer.

He also addressed landscaping and buffering along the rear property line and discussed street tree feasibility given overhead utility constraints.

Mr. Cahillane indicated no objection to the application from an engineering standpoint subject to compliance with his report and testimony provided on the record.

Steven Martini- Board Planner was sworn in.

Mr. Martini reviewed the application for consistency with the Central Orange Redevelopment Plan. He testified that the proposed four-story multifamily building is a permitted use within Zone B and does not require use variances.

He confirmed that the building height and bulk comply with redevelopment standards and that the project provides more parking than required. He noted that the building's step-backs and façade articulation reduce perceived massing and are consistent with redevelopment objectives.

Mr. Martini indicated no objection to approval subject to compliance with his written report and conditions discussed on the record.

Motion to Open Public Portion

Made by Member Mobley Seconded by Member Lauture. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

Rachel Tenant – Waverly Place

Ms. Tenant expressed concerns regarding:

- The scale and massing of the building in relation to surrounding residential properties.
- Potential privacy impacts to neighboring homes.
- Rooftop activity and possible noise impacts.
- Lighting and overall compatibility with the neighborhood streetscape.

The Applicant's professionals responded that:

- The building complies with redevelopment standards.
- Step-backs and façade articulation reduce perceived massing.
- Rooftop areas are set back from the building edge.
- Lighting will be shielded and directed downward to minimize spillover.
- Landscaping and buffering are incorporated into the site design.

No additional members of the public wished to be heard.

Motion to Close Public Portion

Made by Mayor Warren Seconded by Member Faustin. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion to Approve made by Vice-Chair Jones Second by Mayor Warren for:

Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval for Case #25-14, including the following design waivers:

1. Design waiver for parking stall size of 9' x 18' where 9' x 20' is required.
2. Design waiver for three (3) tandem parking spaces for which there is no aisle width between parking spaces for ingress and egress.
3. Design waiver for required street trees as dictated by the Redevelopment Plan, subject to coordination with Board professionals.

As part of the motion, Vice-Chair Jones stated the following conditions of approval:

- The Applicant shall comply with all recommendations contained in:
 - The Board Engineer's Report dated December 11, 2025, and
 - The Board Planner's Report dated December 8, 2025.
- The Applicant shall install an audible and visual alert system at the egress of the garage to alert pedestrians of vehicles exiting the garage.

- The Applicant shall work with the Board professionals regarding the appropriate placement and use of street trees in light of overhead utility wires.

Those in Favor: Member Faustin, Member Onyiuke, Member Mobely, Member Lauture, Mayor Warren, Vice-Chair Jones, Chairman Holmes.

Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: None

Those Abstained: Council Vice-President Montague

Motion carried: 7-0-0-1

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Motion to Adjourn made by Member Lauture and seconded by Member Mobley. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:25 PM.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. via virtually using Zoom Meeting.

Prepared by: Alexandra Reyes.