

TOWN OF DOVER

PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 7:30 PM | Town Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order for Thursday, March 19th. The Chairman noted that the annual meeting notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board in Town Hall, on the Town of Dover website, and submitted to the town board (ledgers dated January 28, 2026).

Building reminders: No smoking in the building. Two emergency exits are available. This meeting is not being streamed or broadcast on Facebook Live.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL / APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes Approval – February 19th Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of February 19th.

Roll call vote on minutes:

- Commissioner Rivera – present
- Commissioner Miller – present
- Mayor Dodd – present
- Commissioner McDonald – present
- Council Member Santana – Here
- Commissioner Isselin – present
- Commissioner O'Rourke –present
- Commissioner Scarneo –present
- Commissioner Fitzgerald – present
- Commissioner Incera – present
- Commissioner Ryan – [absent]

Minutes were approved. There were no resolutions on the agenda.

4. SUBSTITUTE BOARD ATTORNEY

Glenn Keinz, Esq. introduced himself as substitute Board Attorney, appearing in place of Mr. Rush, who had a conflict. Mr. Keinz noted that Mr. Rush had covered for him on other matters in the past and that his substitution was acceptable to the board.

5. APPLICATION P26-01 – 570 MOUNT PLEASANT AVENUE

Application Summary

Application No.: P26-01

Address: 570 Mount Pleasant Avenue

Status: CARRIED – No Public Appearance

Public Notice

The Chairman confirmed no members of the public were present for this application. Attorney Keinz made the formal announcement for the record.

Action Taken

The Board carried Application P26-01, 570 Mount Pleasant Avenue, to a Special Meeting on April 22, 2026, commencing at 7:30 PM. No further public notice is required. The Land Use Administrator is to notify the applicant of the scheduled date.

The motion carried with all members present voting in favor (no formal roll call required).

6. APPLICATION P23-11 – 71 BASSETT HIGHWAY (63-105 BASSETT HIGHWAY)

Application Overview

Application No.: P23-11

Address: 63-105 Bassett Highway (also referenced as 71 Bassett Highway)

Block/Lot: Block 1201, Lot 6

Applicant: Meridia Dover 63 Urban Renewal, LLC

Request: Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval

Zone: 63-105 Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan (Subdistrict A)

Redevelopment Plan Adopted: October 14, 2025 (Ordinance No. 27-2025)

Review letters before the board included a Pennoni Engineering letter revised through March 17, 2026, and a John McDonough letter dated September 30, 2025.

Hearing protocol established by Attorney Keynes: Each witness provides full testimony, followed by board questions, then board professional questions, then public questions limited to three minutes per person on that witness's specific testimony only. Members of the public may also be sworn in later to offer general testimony.

6A. Attorney's Opening Testimony

Witness: Dennis Liloia, Esq. – Attorney for Applicant

Name: Dennis Liloia

Role: Attorney for Applicant – Meridia Dover 63 Urban Renewal, LLC

Attorney Liloia provided an overview of the application and project:

- The property is located within the 63-105 Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan, adopted September 9, 2025, by the Mayor and Governing Body.
- The application proposes redevelopment of an underutilized property into a three-building, mixed-use development consisting of 640 total residential units (17 of which are affordable housing) and commercial/retail space.
- The project is designed in three phases, each intended to function independently and cumulatively.
- Phase 1: 256 residential units (including all 17 affordable units)
- Phase 2: 144 residential units
- Phase 3: 240 residential units
- The Governing Body has already established permitted uses, density, bulk standards, and design parameters through the Redevelopment Plan. Tonight's review is focused on whether the application complies with those standards.
- The applicant worked closely with the board's professionals; testimony this evening incorporates comments from their review letters.

6B. Civil Engineer Testimony

Witness: Michael Nona, PE – Civil Engineer, Stonefield Engineering & Design

Name: Michael Nona (N-O-N-A)

Firm: Stonefield Engineering and Design, 92 Park Avenue

License: Licensed Professional Engineer – current and in good standing

Education: B.S. Civil Engineering, Wayne State University

Experience: Approximately 8 years as a practicing civil engineer

Scope of Testimony: Site civil engineering: stormwater, grading, site design, utilities, parking, access, and phasing

Site Overview

Exhibit A1 (aerial exhibit) and Exhibit A2 (colorized site plan) were marked and presented.

- Total lot area: approximately 9.3 acres
- Address: 71 Bassett Highway, Block 1201, Lot 6
- Zone: 63-105 Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan
- Bounded to the south by Bassett Highway, east by North Warren Street, and north by the Rockaway River
- Adjacent uses: Sportsplex (west), Church of Latter-day Saints, Mill Ponds Apartments
- Existing condition: approximately 70% parking lot with a two-story masonry retail/commercial building; no stormwater management measures; drainage runs directly into river

Site Access

- Three private internal roadways proposed:
- Janine Court – central roadway (currently an existing private driveway, connects to North Warren Avenue)
- Towpath Center – aligns with Towpath Place to the south; realigned to eliminate an existing 30-foot offset

- James Court – on the west side, connects to Bassett Highway
- All roads remain private property of the developer; no legal street names currently assigned

Phasing Summary

- Phase 1: 256 dwelling units; 558 parking spaces (539 in garage, 19 surface); approx. 23,000 sq. ft. courtyard; 4,000 sq. ft. retail
- Phase 2: 144 dwelling units; 202 parking spaces (192 in garage, 10 surface)
- Phase 3: 240 dwelling units; 13,000 sq. ft. courtyard; 205 parking spaces (198 in garage, 7 surface); remaining retail
- During Phase 1 construction, parking lot in Phase 2 footprint remains active; retail in Phase 3 footprint also remains active
- Approximate timeline: 3 to 5 years per phase; full project expected within approximately 10 years

Parking

- Redevelopment plan requirement: 961 parking spaces
- Total provided: 1,065 parking spaces (surplus of 104)
- Additional 96 tandem spaces (not counted toward total) allocated to 2- and 3-bedroom units; tandem spaces counted as one per redevelopment plan
- Parking ratios: 1.65 spaces per dwelling unit required; applicant exceeds this
- Existing parking easements: 82 spaces allocated to Mills Pond Towers and Church of Latter-day Saints (maintained)
- Surplus of approximately 22 spaces available beyond easement obligations; applicant working to make further agreements for public use

Trash / Loading

- Each building has dedicated trash rooms and loading zones
- Phase 1: loading zone adjacent to retail space with elevator bay
- Phase 2: loading zone on west side; coordination underway with adjacent neighbor re: access easement
- Phase 3: loading zone on east side with trash room and elevator
- Trash removal: 2–3 times per week by private hauler
- Move-in/move-out: scheduled by property management on designated days

Impervious Coverage

- Existing: 98.6% impervious
- Proposed: 79.5% impervious (allowed: 85%)
- Net reduction: over 80,000 sq. ft. of hardscape removed
- Redevelopment plan language clarified with board professionals: pervious areas (courtyards, landscape, river walks) are not counted as impervious

Utilities and Infrastructure

- New utility corridor through Janine Court connecting to existing infrastructure on Bassett Highway
- New on-site lighting for resident and public safety
- New trees: 96 proposed (existing: 10 trees on site)
- Rockaway River walkway: new paver walking path open to the public with landscaping improvements
- No disturbance proposed within 25 feet of Rockaway River (per redevelopment plan)

- No improvements to the existing bulkhead wall or riverbed

Stormwater

- Major development (site > 1 acre); complying with all NJDEP regulations
- Rockaway River is a Category One waterway with riparian zone, floodway, and flood hazard area
- 300-foot riparian zone on site; all disturbance within this buffer will be submitted to DEP for approval
- Stormwater calculations address current and future rainfall rates per NJDEP requirements
- DEP approval is a required condition prior to construction

Deviations

All previously noted deviations have been resolved. The plan is fully compliant with the Redevelopment Plan with no waivers or deviations requested. Key resolutions:

- Impervious coverage: corrected interpretation of redevelopment plan language; now showing 79% where 85% is allowed
- Per-phase parking compliance: the cumulative parking model (Phase 1 provides the base supply) satisfies the plan's intent; phases are not stand-alone

Board Questions – Engineer Testimony

Mayor (Board Member): Requested breakdown of parking spaces per phase and clarification on Phase 1 being "over-parked." Witness deferred detailed retail parking to traffic engineer.

Commissioner (Board Member): Raised concern about approximately 100 cars that currently park daily behind Crousers (private lot currently used informally by town employees, court visitors, and the public). Asked whether the developer would build a public parking garage to offset this loss.

Michael Nona (Engineer): Clarified that the site has a surplus of 104 spaces beyond the requirement, of which 82 are allocated to existing easement holders and approximately 22 remain. The applicant is working on additional agreements. Acknowledged that visitors would use street parking or available tandem spaces.

Board Attorney Keinz (Board Attorney): Clarified that requiring the applicant to build public parking is beyond the board's purview; the applicant is fully compliant with the redevelopment plan. The parking lot is private property; any obligation to replace public access lies with the town.

Commissioner (Board Member): Raised concerns about riverbank erosion visible from across the river (rocks in riverbed). Asked whether the wall would be reinforced during construction.

Michael Nona (Engineer): Stated that no riverbed improvements are planned; geotechnical investigations will confirm structural soundness of wall before construction. Wall is on applicant's property and was previously reviewed by engineering and building departments.

Vice Chairman (Scott miller): Asked whether Phase 1 construction would leave existing building and parking in place for Phase 2 footprint; confirmed yes. Asked about the timing and extent of the Rockaway River walkway (deferred to architect).

Board Professional (Stephen Hoyt) (Engineer Reviewer): Asked about the DEP 150-foot/300-foot riparian zone buffer and whether DEP approval has been obtained.

Michael Nona (Engineer): DEP approval not yet obtained; it is a condition of this board's approval. The 300-foot riparian zone applies; the site is currently 100% paved within that zone, allowing improvements under DEP regulations because coverage is being reduced. A structural analysis of the river wall will be provided as part of DEP plans.

Vice Chairman (Scott Miller) : Asked whether all interior roads will be built in Phase 1; confirmed Janine Court and James Court will be built in Phase 1. Towpath Center extension depends on Phase 3 building demolition. Pool and amenities confirmed for Phase 1. Bike lanes not proposed but 57 bike parking spaces provided (22 required). Roads will be privately managed.

Board Member (Board Member): Asked about gating; confirmed redevelopment plan allows gating for portions of roadways; garages will be key-fob access; final gating decision not yet made. Retail areas will remain publicly accessible.

Chairman (Rafael Rivera): Expressed concern about vandalism and security in parking garages based on experience with Meridia's Blackwell Street property. Recommended mandatory 24/7 security guards.

Michael Nona / Dennis LaLoya (Engineer / Attorney): On-site property managers live on site; 24/7 guard not proposed at this time. Security cameras, lighting, and gated garages are standard. Attorney agreed to discuss 24/7 security with client.

Commissioner (Board Member): Requested mandatory 30-day video retention for police investigations.

Michael Nona (Engineer): Confirmed third-party security company monitors footage retained for at least 90 days.

Commissioner (Board Member): Asked about accommodations for existing tenants in the Phase 3 building (dumpsters, truck deliveries) during the interim period before Phase 3 is built.

Michael Nona (Engineer): Property owner's responsibility to accommodate existing tenants; details will be included in the phasing plan to be submitted.

Board Professional (Reviewer): Noted comment in review letter about a structural analysis of the river wall given proximity to construction.

Board Professional (Reviewer): Asked about EV charging compliance; deferred to architect.

Public Questions – Engineer Testimony

Linda Mullen (Public): Confirmed green space increase is 80,000 sq. ft. (not 8,000). Confirmed retail in Phase 1 is approximately 4,000 sq. ft. Confirmed Phase 1 has 558 parking spaces for 256 units, with Phase 2 and 3 using that supply. Asked where retail customers park; engineer confirmed retail parking is factored into the 961-space requirement.

Pete Gorey – 17 Julia Terrace, Dover (Public): Expressed concern (held for general comment period) about population density. Chairman directed general concerns to the later public comment period.

Wendy Carmona – 59 [address not fully stated] (Public): Asked about live-work units (deferred to architect), retail parking (deferred to traffic engineer), amount of retail space relative to apartments, whether Dover residents can use private roadways to access retail (yes), where affordable units are located (deferred to architect), and whether the river walkway is publicly accessible (confirmed yes, required by redevelopment plan).

Irina Boyd (Public – Dover Resident): Asked specifically how many parking spaces will be designated for retail customers (deferred to traffic engineer).

Bob Buck (Public): Asked about affordable housing ratio: 17 of 640 units = approximately 2.5%. Asked whether the development will be part of a tax abatement program (witness did not testify to that; deferred).

6C. Architect Testimony

Witness: Cristiano Pereira, AIA – Principal, CPA Architecture

Name: Cristiano Pereira (P-E-R-E-I-R-A)

Firm: CPA Architecture

License: Licensed Architect – New Jersey and seven other states; all licenses current and in good standing

Experience: Regularly testifies before planning boards; extensive experience with developments of this scale statewide

Exhibits presented: Revised sheets A106, A203, A204, A205 (marked as exhibits per board); material finish board (marked as Exhibit A4). A full 24-page plan set was referenced; revised/added sheets address comments from the board's engineering review.

Unit Breakdown – Full Project (640 Total Units)

- Phase 1 (Building 1): 256 units – 16 studios (flats), 172 one-bedrooms, 64 two-bedrooms, 4 three-bedrooms (all three-bedrooms in entire project are here, reserved for affordable housing)
- Phase 2 (Building 2): 144 units – 28 studios, 64 one-bedrooms, 52 two-bedrooms
- Phase 3 (Building 3): 240 units – 12 live-work units, 24 studios, 144 one-bedrooms, 60 two-bedrooms
- Project Totals: 12 live-work, 68 studios, 381 one-bedrooms, 176 two-bedrooms, 4 three-bedrooms
- Affordable Units (17 total, all in Phase 1): 3 one-bedrooms, 10 two-bedrooms, 4 three-bedrooms; dispersed throughout the building

Average Unit Sizes (exceeding minimum redevelopment plan requirements)

- Studios/Flats: avg. 608 sq. ft.
- One-bedrooms: avg. 781 sq. ft.
- Two-bedrooms: avg. 1,176 sq. ft.
- Live-Work units: avg. 1,994 sq. ft.

Live-Work Units

Located on the ground floor of Building 3 along Bassett Highway. Two-story configuration: lower floor includes kitchen, living, and a street-facing storefront for business use; upper floor (loft) contains sleeping area. Twelve units total. Similar to artist studio concept. Compares to Meridia's South Orange development.

Phasing Plan (Revised Sheet A-100)

- Development 1 (Phase 1 of construction): Building 1 + portions of Phase 4 street improvements + portion of Phase 5 riverfront improvements. Caveat: Towpath extension (front boulevard) cannot be built until Building 3 is demolished; Janine Court used as access until then.
- Development 2 (Phase 2): Building 2 + remaining Janine Court improvements + James Court to Bassett connection
- Development 3 (Phase 3): Building 3 (requires demolition of existing building) + remaining riverwalk improvements + pocket park + Towpath extension

Building Configurations

- Building 1: 3 levels of parking (Level 1 semi-underground taking advantage of grade change) + 4 residential floors; interior courtyard layout

- Building 2: 2 levels of parking + 4 residential floors; courtyard overlooks Rockaway River
- Building 3: 2 levels of parking + 4 residential floors; three open courtyards facing Bassett Highway; E-shaped footprint
- All buildings: max height 67.3 ft. (below allowed height limit per redevelopment plan)

Rotunda / Drop-Off

A rotunda is proposed at the Towpath continuation point providing drop-off, Uber/rideshare, and food delivery access for all three buildings. Dedicated spaces for deliveries (UPS, FedEx, food delivery) are designated per building and are not at the rotunda.

Amenities – Building 1

- Mail/package room, resident lobby, lounge, kids' room
- Fitness center, yoga studio
- Cap Works co-working space (desks and meeting rooms for residents working from home)
- Pool and outdoor courtyard; outdoor gourmet grilling area
- Tenant storage areas; mini-suites (rentable private office space, approx. 100 sq. ft.)

Parking Garage Appearance

Parking levels treated with durable materials (cast stone, glazing with anti-glare treatment) to avoid the appearance of a traditional parking garage from the street. Mechanical equipment placed at center of roof to minimize street-level visibility.

Materials (Exhibit A4 – Finish Board)

- Ground floor: cast stone with significant glazing
- Upper floors: iron-spot brick (gray/terracotta mix), cementitious board panels (factory-painted, low maintenance)
- Windows: fiberglass/vinyl framing with sound-attenuating glazing; varying pane sizes to cancel noise from train and nearby sources

Signage

A full signage package will be developed and presented to the board as part of resolution compliance. Proposed signage types include: building identification, parking entrance/exit, retail space identification. All signage will comply with the redevelopment plan and town ordinance.

Environmental / Flood

Basement parking level is above flood hazard elevation; designed as a walk-out basement per DEP requirements. Required flood hazard signage will be provided in compliance with DEP regulations.

EV Charging

- Will comply with 15% state mandate: 5% at time of construction, additional 5% + 5% as EV-ready conduit
- All EV spaces located on ground floor of each building to facilitate fire safety response
- Option to place some spaces on exterior/street level explored

ADA Compliance

ADA spaces provided on the ground floor of each building; distribution across other levels will meet or exceed code requirements per building and per floor.

Board Questions – Architect Testimony

Commissioner Rivera (Board Member): Asked about the rotunda and delivery truck congestion for 640 units. Architect confirmed UPS/Amazon trucks are directed to designated loading zones at each building, not the rotunda.

Commissioner Rivera (Board Member): Asked about pool access: confirmed pool is for residents only, accessible only through the building.

Commissioner Rivera (Board Member): Asked about rental pricing per unit. Architect noted this is not within the purview of this board. Board attorney confirmed.

Commissioner Rivera (Board Member): Expressed concern about safety, vandalism, and homeless access to amenity areas based on Meridia's Blackwell Street experience. Architect confirmed all courtyard and pool amenities are accessible only through the secured building.

Commissioner Scott (Board Member): Asked about the visual appearance of the parking garage levels from the street. Architect described use of cast stone, glazing, and screening materials to mask garage appearance. Asked about pets; architect confirmed the building will be pet-friendly and a dog walk/play area is being studied.

Commissioner (Board Member): Asked whether impact on the school system was considered. Board attorney clarified this is a redevelopment and was addressed during the redevelopment plan process, not before this board. Attorney LaLoya noted that 460 of 640 units are studios or one-bedrooms, minimizing school-age children; a Rucker study was conducted.

Commissioner (Board Member): Asked about maximum occupancy for two-bedroom units and potential school impact. Attorney clarified the Rucker study covers this; portfolio-wide, school-age children represent less than 2% of tenants.

Commissioner (Board Member): Asked about public access to pool (seasonal memberships). Board attorney noted the redevelopment plan permits the developer to offer pool memberships to the public. Attorney advised this right should not be eliminated by the board's resolution.

Commissioner (Board Member): Raised concern about vetting/screening for pool memberships to exclude sex offenders. Board attorney confirmed the board cannot mandate a specific screening process; the developer's property management handles this. Federal law governs.

Commissioner (Board Member): Asked about potential for public gym membership access; architect described Meridia's emerging model of ground-floor amenities accessible by membership to surrounding community.

Board Professional (Reviewer): Asked about gym access and its potential parking impact; professional advised this should remain a developer option and not be codified in the resolution without further parking analysis.

Board Member (Board Member): Asked about solar panels; architect indicated none proposed currently, but structural loads are designed to accommodate panels if added in the future.

Board Member (Board Member): Asked about basement garage elevation relative to flood elevation; architect confirmed designed above flood hazard elevation. Engineer confirmed DEP compliance; signage required.

Board Member (Board Member): Asked about EV space placement and fire safety; architect confirmed all EV spaces are on ground floor. Fire blanket protocol noted. Exterior EV placement discussed as a future option.

Public Questions – Architect Testimony

Linda Mullen (Public): Asked about managing street parking for retail in Buildings 1 and 3, handling of the 22 surplus parking spaces for visitors, and visitor parking management. Architect confirmed property management will administer visitor spaces; street parking is publicly available.

Linda Mullen (Public): Expressed general support for the project design but noted ongoing concerns for Dover residents; requested to speak at a future meeting's public comment period. Chairman confirmed next opportunity is April 16th meeting.

7. CONTINUATION / CARRY TO NEXT MEETING

At approximately 10:20 PM, the Chairman noted the hour and proposed carrying remaining testimony to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Two additional witnesses remain: the Traffic Engineer and the Planner.

Motion made to carry Application P23-11 (71 Bassett Highway) to the April 16, 2026, regular Planning Board meeting. No further public notice required. Matter to be heard first on the agenda.

The Chairman announced to all public attendees that this case will continue at the April 16th meeting at 7:30 PM. No additional notice will be sent. Information is available online.

Motion carried. All members present voted in favor.

8. RECOGNITION OF BOARD SECRETARY

Chairman recognized outgoing Board Secretary Paula, noting that this is her last meeting prior to maternity leave. The board thanked her for her service and wished her well.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was noted; however, the Chairman indicated remaining agenda items still required attention. [Minutes end prior to formal adjournment.]

Certified as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Board Secretary: _____ Date: _____

Chairman: _____ Date: _____