

TOWN OF DOVER PLANNING BOARD

- Rafael Rivera –Chairman
- Scott Miller – Vice Chairman
- William Isselin
- James Visioli
- Thomas Incera
- Osvaldo Orama
- John Londono
- Hon. Mayor James P. Dodd – Mayor

TOWN OF DOVER
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- Vacant – Mayor Designee
- Arturo Santana – Council Member
- Reese Riley - Alternate I
- Vacant - Alternate II
- Stephen Hoyt – Board Engineer
- William J. Rush – Board Attorney
- John McDonough – Board Planner
- Paula Mendelsohn - Board Secretary

Agenda for the Planning Board Meeting Monday, November 24th, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING

1. Call to Order - Reading of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Notice.

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, also known as the Sunshine Law, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6. Notice of the 2025 meeting schedule was sent to the Daily Record and published in the Daily Record on February 3, 2025. The annual meeting list was also posted on the municipal bulletin board in Town Hall, on the Town of Dover website and submitted to the Town Clerk. As a reminder there is no smoking in this building; there are 2 exits in case of emergency and this meeting is not streaming on Facebook live. However, the audio will be posted in a timely manner to the town website."

2. Roll Call

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes - September 18, 2025

5. Resolutions – NONE

6. New Business –

- **DOVER Baker Mansion- Blight Study - "Area in Need of Redevelopment"** for the following parcel of land as identified on the Town Tax Records: Tax Map Identifier: **Block 305, Lot 7, 45 Lehigh Street**. The site is locally known as the "Baker Mansion," the former estate of W.H. Baker, a historically significant Dover Merchant at the turn of the last century

7. Applications –

- **P25-07 Excel Treatment Center Mgmt. - 58 North Sussex Street - Minor Site Plan/Variance** The subject property identified as **Block 1325 Lot 16** currently consists of a 2 1/2-story building with an asphalt parking lot behind the building within the C-1 Retail Commercial District. Under existing conditions, the 1st floor is a professional office (outpatient clinic), and the second/third floor consists of one (1) apartment unit. The Applicant proposes a new 18'x17' addition to the third floor and to raise the existing building height by 1' foot to make it more usable for office space. The Applicant

also proposes renovations to the second floor for office space and to provide façade upgrades along North Sussex Street. The professional office on the 1st floor is to remain unchanged. The application is exempt from Morris County Planning Board review.

- o **P25-08 - 1 Wayside Avenue - Minor Subdivision/Variance Relief – “hardship” (NJSA 40:55D-70c(1))** The subject property identified as **Block 1708 Lot 6** currently consists of a 1-story frame dwelling with an associated asphalt driveway and detached garage within the R-2 Single Family District. The Applicant proposes a minor subdivision to create two lots, Lot 6.01 and Lot 6.02. On Lot 6.02, the Applicant is proposing to improve the existing 1-story frame dwelling with the addition of a second story. The existing detached garage is proposed to be removed in support of this sub-division application.

8. Open to the Public

9. Old Business – NONE

10. Adjournment

The next schedule meeting is on December 18, 2025 @ 7:30 pm.

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- Ruben Gilgorri - Mayor's Rep
- Arturo Santana - Council Member
- Reese Riley - Alternate I
- Vacant - Alternate II
- William J. Rush - Board Attorney
- Paula Mendelsohn – Board Secretary
- Stephen Hoyt PE– Board Engineer

MINUTES September 18, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rivera called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

ROLL CALL:

- **PRESENT:** Commissioners Riley, Incera, Isselin, Orama, Councilmember Santana, Commissioner Visioli and, Chairman Rivera.
- **ABSENT:** Commissioners Londono, Mayor Dodd and Vice Chair Miller.
- **ALSO PRESENT:** Paula Mendelsohn Board Secretary and William J. Rush, Board Attorney, and John McDounough, Board Planner, and Stephen Hoyt and John DeMartinis, Board Engineers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: was recited by all.

ADEQUATE NOTICE OF MEETING

NEW BUSINESS –

- Professional Planner's Presentation and Planning Board's Review of the Overall Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan (Ordinance No. 26-2025) for Consistency with the Town's Master Plan and Board's Recommendation to Town Council Regarding Same;
- Professional Planner's Presentation and Planning Board's Review of the 63-105 Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan (Ordinance No. 29-2025) for Consistency with the Town's Master Plan and Board's Recommendation to Town Council Regarding Same.
- Professional Planner's Presentation and Planning Board's Review of the W. Blackwell Street-Dewey Street Redevelopment Plan (Ordinance No. 28-2025) for Consistency with the Town's Master Plan and Board's Recommendation to Town Council Regarding Same;
- Professional Planner's Presentation and Planning Board's Review of the Newberry Building Redevelopment Plan (Ordinance No. 27-2025) for Consistency with the Town's Master Plan and Board's Recommendation to Town Council Regarding Same;

John McDonough, the Board Planner was present to speak about the plans. Mr. McDonough presented four redevelopment plans for properties within the Bassett Highway Redevelopment Area, which had previously been designated by the Board as an "area in need of redevelopment." Each sub-area plan builds upon the framework of the overarching **Public Realm Redevelopment Plan**.

The purpose of the redevelopment plans is to:

- Revitalize an area that has been economically stagnant.
- Establish design standards and infrastructure improvements.
- Encourage private development that aligns with the community's goals and Master Plan.

1. Public Realm Redevelopment Plan

- **Scope:** Encompasses 44 lots along Bassett Highway.
- **Objective:** Provide a cohesive framework for future redevelopment.
- **Public Improvements Proposed:**
 - Construction of a **Riverwalk** along the Rockaway River.
 - Creation of a **seasonal public plaza** with temporary street closures for fairs and community events.
 - Development of a **new municipal complex and civic square**.
 - Installation of a **public art mural** at the Blackwell elevated wall.
 - Establishment of a **rails-to-trails pedestrian connection** to improve circulation and connectivity.
 - **Streetscape upgrades:** shade trees, pedestrian lighting, street furniture, decorative pavers, and improved sidewalks.
- **Design Standards:**
 - Emphasis on **high-quality materials** for new construction.
 - **Storefront transparency and glazing** to enhance walkability and retail visibility.
 - Requirement for **architectural renderings and color elevations** with applications.
- **Environmental Measures:**
 - Flood hazard mitigation.
 - Use of green infrastructure and sustainable design principles.

Goal: Establish a unified sense of place, improve public spaces, and attract redevelopment interest in the district.

2. Sub-District B – (63–105 Bassett Highway)

- **Size:** Single lot, 9.3 acres, located along the Rockaway River.
- **Proposed Uses:**
 - Mandatory **affordable housing component**.
 - **Multifamily residential** and **mixed-use development**.
 - **Retail and commercial uses**.
 - **Civic and cultural facilities**.
- **Public Amenities:**
 - Riverwalk and public park integrated into the site plan.
- **Bulk & Development Standards:**
 - Maximum building heights and density limits.
 - Affordable housing set-aside requirements.
 - Development permitted in **up to five phases**.
 - Building coverage and lot coverage limits.
 - Parking standards, including ADA spaces and **electric vehicle (EV) charging stations**.
- **Vision:** Transform the vacant site into a **transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood** that reconnects Dover to the riverfront and downtown.

3. Sub-District C – West Blackwell & Dewey Street

Size: 4 tax lots, approximately 0.25 acres.

- **Proposal:**
 - **Adaptive reuse** of existing structure with allowance for building expansion.
 - **Permitted Uses:** multifamily residential, retail, shared workspace, and civic/cultural facilities.
 - **Height:** Up to 5 stories; possible 6th floor limited to amenity space.
- **Integration:** Streetscape upgrades required to align with the Public Realm Plan.

Board Discussion and Concerns:

- **Structural integrity** of the existing building questioned due to prior fire damage and general condition.
- Concern that redevelopment may not be feasible unless the building is structurally sound.
- **Parking deficiencies** noted, as the site lacks on-site parking capacity.
- The Board recommended that the Town Council require:
 - A **structural engineering assessment** to verify building soundness.
 - Consideration of **off-site parking solutions** or **payment-in-lieu-of-parking (PILOP)** fees to support future municipal parking decks.

4. Sub-District D – Newberry Building

- **Size:** 2 tax lots, approximately 0.5 acres.
- **Objective: Preservation and rehabilitation** of the historic Newberry Building.
- **Proposed Uses:**
 - Marketplace/event space.
 - Commissary kitchen and training kitchen.
 - Co-working office space.
- **Regulatory Standards:**
 - No new bulk requirements imposed since the existing building remains.
 - Rehabilitation and any exterior changes are subject to **Historic Preservation Commission review**.
- **Goal:** Encourage economic activity while maintaining the building's historic character.

Master Plan Consistency Findings

Mr. McDonough advised that the redevelopment plans are consistent with both the **2007 Master Plan** and the **2018 Reexamination Report**, specifically furthering the following planning goals:

1. Enhance Dover's sense of place and economic vitality.
2. Expand and diversify the economic base.
3. Improve circulation and promote multi-modal transportation.
4. Provide a range of housing opportunities.
5. Increase availability of housing for seniors and retirees.
6. Preserve and enhance properties of historic and cultural significance.

Board Concerns Regarding Parking

The Board engaged in extensive discussion concerning the **elimination of off-street parking requirements** under the proposed redevelopment plans.

Consistency with Zoning vs. Master Plan:

- Members noted that the **current zoning ordinance requires parking** for new development, whereas the redevelopment plans reduce or eliminate these requirements in certain sub-districts.
- The **Master Plan** does not recommend eliminating parking but instead emphasizes the need for **adequate parking to reduce congestion**.
- Board members weighed whether the redevelopment plans could still be considered “consistent with the Master Plan” given this conflict. Some members stated that the lack of parking requirements could justify a finding of **inconsistency** with the Master Plan.

Impacts of Removing Parking Requirements:

- Concerns were raised that the **Newberry Building**, while historically exempt from parking requirements, would expand into a major **commercial hub and destination**. Without required off-street parking, customers and visitors would rely on street parking, potentially displacing residents and businesses in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Members described a potential “**domino effect**”: as new uses attract more people, parking spillover would spread into residential streets, creating hardships for existing residents who already face limited parking options.

Equity Between Projects:

- The Board expressed concern about fairness, noting that some developments would be forced to provide parking while others, particularly adaptive reuse projects, might be exempt. Members stressed that all developers should bear some responsibility for addressing the broader parking challenges.

Payment-in-Lieu-of-Parking (PILOP):

- Several members supported the concept of a **PILOP program** where developers unable to provide on-site parking would make contributions to a municipal fund. This would help finance the construction of **municipal parking decks** or expanded shared lots.
- The Board recognized that this concept was mentioned in the **2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report**, which discussed hiring a parking consultant and exploring PILOP as a means of addressing downtown parking constraints.

Transit and Technology Considerations:

- While redevelopment is intended to be **transit-oriented**, members cautioned that Dover remains largely **auto-dependent**, and parking needs cannot be ignored.
- Discussion also referenced the Town’s planned rollout of **parking meters downtown** to promote turnover, though members expressed doubt that meters alone would resolve the fundamental shortage of parking supply.

Legal and Procedural Discussion:

- The Board acknowledged that its role is to provide recommendations, not final decisions, and that the **Town Council, as the elected body, has authority to adopt or amend redevelopment plans** even if the Planning Board finds them inconsistent.
- Members debated whether to recommend that the plans be deemed **inconsistent with the Master Plan due to lack of parking**, or to recommend them as “generally consistent” while attaching a **strong caveat urging the Council to reconsider parking requirements**.
- It was noted that if the Board formally finds inconsistency, the governing body may still adopt the plan, but would need to do so by unanimous vote with justification.

Ordinance 26-2025 – Sub-District A - Motion to find consistent made by Councilmember Santana, seconded by Commissioner Isselin. **APPROVED 6-0.**

Ordinance 27-2025 – Sub-District D (Newberry Building) - Vote: Motion to find consistent made by Commissioner Isselin, seconded by Councilmember Santana. **Approved 6–0.**

Ordinance 28-2025 – Sub-District C (Harry Lorry Site) The Board determined the plan is **consistent with the Master Plan**, but strongly recommended that the Town Council address deficiencies in off-street parking. At this point, Commissioner Isselin brought to the attention of the Board that the Alternate should vote because there was a tie and the full Board was not present. Motion to find consistent made by Commissioner Isselin, seconded by Commissioner Visioli. **APPROVED 4-3.**

Ordinance 29-2025 – Sub-district B (63-105 Bassett Highway)**Vote:** Motion to find consistent made by Commissioner Isselin, seconded by Councilmember Santana.**APPROVED 7–0.**

Overall Board Recommendation to Town Council

The Board supports the redevelopment initiatives as generally consistent with the Master Plan and essential to revitalizing the Bassett Highway area. However, the Board urges the Town Council to:

1. Reconsider elimination of off-street parking requirements across the redevelopment sub-districts.
2. Adopt a **Payment-in-Lieu-of-Parking (PILOP)** program or other municipal parking strategy to fund long-term parking facilities.
3. Ensure equitable treatment of all developers with respect to parking obligations.

MINUTES:

- Motion to approve minutes of the Special Meeting of **June 2026, 2025** was made by Commissioner Isselin and seconded by Councilmember Santana. All in favor vote. **APPROVED 6-1 Abstained.**
- Motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting of **July 17, 2025** was made by Commissioner Isselin and seconded by Councilmember Santana. All in favor vote. **APPROVED 5-2 Abstained.**

RESOLUTIONS – None

APPLICATIONS

P25-04 – 141 Lincoln Avenue. Applicant is proposing to subdivide the property on lot 5 into two equal 50x100 lots. Applicant is also requesting variance relief from bulk requirement of minimum lot size, R-3 zone for preexisting two family dwelling.

Attorney **William Rodriguez** of Griffin Alexander, LLC appeared on behalf of the applicant, **Mr. William Gomez**, property owner. Mr. Rodriguez introduced **Stephen Smith, Professional Engineer** of Jaman Engineering Associates, who was sworn in as a professional planner and land surveyor licensed in the State of New Jersey.

Mr. Smith provided an overview of the application, explaining that the property is located in the **R-3 Zone**, which permits both single-family and two-family dwellings. The existing lot measures **10,000 square feet**, containing a **pre-existing two-family dwelling**. The applicant proposes to **subdivide the property into two 5,000-square-foot lots** — one to retain the existing two-family dwelling and one for future single-family residential development.

Mr. Smith testified that the **variance requested** is for **minimum lot area** to allow the two-family dwelling to remain on a **5,000-square-foot lot**, whereas 7,500 square feet are required. The existing **lot width of 50 feet** is a

pre-existing nonconforming condition. All other bulk requirements — including setbacks, building coverage, and lot coverage — will conform to ordinance standards.

Mr. Smith testified that the proposed subdivision is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood, where most lots are approximately 5,000 square feet, and that it represents **infill development** compatible with the existing character of the area. He further stated that the project advances several purposes of the **Municipal Land Use Law**, including promoting appropriate residential use, providing adequate light and air, and supporting orderly growth.

He concluded that the **C(2) variance** can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good or impairment to the intent of the zoning ordinance or master plan.

Board and Professional Comments

The Board discussed the shared driveway between 137 and 141 Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Smith confirmed that the driveway currently serves both properties, but the subdivision plan calls for **widening the portion on the applicant's property** to provide **a minimum of 10 feet of width** and ensure that **all required parking spaces** are located fully within the subject lot.

The **Town Engineer, Mr. Hoyt**, confirmed that his office issued a review letter dated **July 8, 2025**, and that the applicant addressed most comments, which were largely technical in nature. He noted a prior discussion regarding the configuration of the subdivision, stating that the revised plan now better aligns with zoning requirements and avoids irregular lot shapes.

Regarding fencing, the applicant testified that **no fence is proposed** between the two lots, as the properties are owned by family members and separation is not desired.

Public Comments

Ms. Linda Mullen, 150 Ann Street, addressed the Board. She expressed concern about **parking capacity and density** in the neighborhood. She stated that even with the widened driveway, parking would remain tight and urged the Board to ensure adequate on-site parking.

She also cautioned against permitting additional two-family homes in the area, noting that the town's master plan seeks to reduce density in existing residential zones. She requested that any future development on the new lot be restricted to a **single-family dwelling**.

The Board and **Zoning Officer** clarified that **any proposal for a two-family dwelling on the new lot** would require **a separate application before the Zoning Board of Adjustment**.

Board Action

After further discussion, the Board agreed that the proposed subdivision was consistent with the surrounding area and that the requested variance for minimum lot area met the criteria for approval.

The **sidewalk along the property frontage shall be repaired or replaced** prior to the issuance of final approval or construction permits.

Motion to approve application P25-04 141 Lincoln Ave was made by Commissioner Orama and seconded by Councilmember Santana. **APPROVED 7-0.**

OLD BUSINESS – None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – None

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Arturo and seconded by Commissioner Orama. All members were in favor. Approved 7–0.

Meeting adjourned 9:18PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Paula Mendelsohn, Board Secretary

Date approved _____