

**BOROUGH OF RARITAN**  
Planning Board Regular Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
September 24, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Borough of Raritan Municipal Building. The Open Public Meetings statement was read into the record.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman LoPresti, Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jayaraj  
**ABSENT:** Mr. Gussman  
**ALSO PRESENT:** Matt Flynn, Esq., Board Attorney; Joseph Brosnan, Engineer/Planner, Lou Gara, Construction Official, Zoning Officer, Board Secretary

**MINUTES**

**Motion** by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Carra to adopt the Minutes of August 27, 2025, as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairman LoPresti, Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Ms. Carra, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Windrem

**ENGINEERING/PLANNING REPORT**

Mr. Brosnan informed the board about the progress at the Richard St. drainage project, finish work to commence soon. The new Borough Municipal building is nearing completion, and the board should be holding the December meeting in the new building. Mr. Brosnan discussed the NJ DOT project at First Ave and US Highway 202 which is anticipated to begin in early 2026.

**CONSTRUCTION/ZONING OFFICIAL REPORT** Mr. Gara advised on the status of the construction at the former Francesco's building and the Catceterra projects. The Colfax St. apartment building received a permit, and a preconstruction meeting is being set for the week of September 29<sup>th</sup>.

**RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution 2025-14

Accepting the direction of the Borough Council to perform a preliminary investigation into the potential redevelopment of block 116.01 Lot 26 in the Borough.

**Motion** by Ms. Windrem, seconded by Chairman LoPresti Tozzi to adopt the resolution as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairman LoPresti, Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Jayaraj,  
**NAY:** Ms. Liptak, Mr. Brown  
**ABSTAIN:** Mr. Cunningham

## **APPLICATIONS/HEARINGS**

**Anthony and Amanda Pellechia**  
**1009 Helene Place**  
**Block 71 Lot 1**  
**Bulk variances for an addition (Completeness Only)**

Mr. Brosnan provided a summary of the application and the waivers and variances requested. Mr. Brosnan recommended that the board deem the application conditionally complete.

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Mayor Carra to deem the application conditionally complete, as presented.

### **ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairman LoPresti, Mayor Carra, Councilman Tozzi, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jayaraj

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**IAAT Services LLC, 25-002 Minor Site Plan with Variances**  
**605 US Highway 202**  
**Block 34 Lot's 8 & 8.01**

Mayor Carra and Councilman Tozzi recused

Robert Falkenstern, Attorney for the applicant provided an overview of the application and discussed the variances requested, several D use variances including D1 for the use, D2 for the expansion of a nonconforming use, and D6 for the height as sign height is limited to 16' in the B-3 zone. Several C bulk variances are required as well for front yard setbacks and impervious coverage, some of which are existing conditions. Mr. Falkenstern stated they will discuss the positive and negative criteria. Mr. Falkenstern stated the use of the billboard for public messages from the police department and community events advertising by the Borough of Raritan will be available free of charge to the Borough. Mr. Jacobs explained the process of building the billboard. In response to a question about who benefits financially from the billboard, Mr. Jacobs stated the owner of the billboard receives compensation, it is a significant investment and there are no guarantees of financial success.

Joseph Jacobs was sworn in and stated he is appearing as a representative of the applicant and stated he testified for over a hundred applications for billboards including many throughout NJ including Atlantic City, Englewood, Paramus, Rochelle Park, West Hampton, Newark, and Paterson. Mr. Jacobs stated he is familiar with the State DOT requirements for placement of billboards with respect to digital billboards and they must abut a highway, be in a business or commercial zone, not in a residential zone and digital billboards must be at least

3000' from another digital billboard and this site meets these requirements. He discussed that emergency notifications by the State will go on the billboard immediately and local emergencies can go up on the billboard as well. He discussed the Franklin Township court case that provides that a town cannot ban billboards. Mr. Jacobs held up exhibits that showed examples of community advertising for local parades and festivals that would be provided to the community free of charge. Mr. Cunningham asked if those court decisions provided that the board could not discuss a location that is inappropriate and Mr. Jacobs responded that the problem is there is no billboard ordinance in Raritan Borough, Mr. Frankenstern stated that the Borough has a blanket prohibition, Mr. Flynn, planning board attorney, stated he is not aware of a blanket prohibition, billboards are not a prohibited use in the Borough code. Mr. Cunningham stated that the billboard could go further up US Highway 202 where it would not be so close to residential uses and took exception to the statements of the court cases and felt the applicant was trying to move the proposal by stating the court cases. Mr. Jacobs explained the process of building the billboard. In response to a question about who benefits financially from the billboard, Mr. Jacobs stated the owner of the billboard receives compensation, it is a significant investment and there are no guarantees of financial success.

Public Questions: responses were provided by Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Frankenstern: Mike Patente Glaser Ave, did the supreme court state a billboard is an inherently beneficial use? Feusse, Helene Pl, has effort been made to put the billboard further to the south on route 202 to a safer location? Farrante, Second Ave, traffic question; Board member Windrem, does property owner benefit? DeBellis Basilone Pl, name of applicant, how did applicant approach the town, are you aware of proposed work to be done at the intersection of Route 202 and First Ave? Wilson Columbus Ave, have previous applications been denied in other towns in NJ and specifically in Somerset County? Digraziano Riverside Ave, why are you seeking variances if the supreme courts say you can't ban billboards? Kolitis, are you renting space and who owns the property? Copt Route 202, what benefit do the residents receive? Wilson Columbus Ave, what happens if people complain about messages on the billboard; how many slots per minute and in 24 hours, if owner pulls out what happens to the billboard? Memoli Lynwood St, will there be political ads? White Perlee Ave, relationship to the applicant? Sink Second Ave, clarify size of the billboard?

Ryan McDermott, PE, applicants engineer, was sworn in and qualified. Mr. McDermott described the characteristics of the property and stated the zoning classification and the requirements of the zoning regulations, and the variances required. The increase in impervious coverage will be offset with additional landscaping. Mr. McDermott discussed the amount of light emanating from the billboard.

Public questions: responses were provided by Mr. McDermott: White, Perlee Ave, how far away will the billboard be visible? Memoli, Lynwood St., the amount of light emanating from the billboard, will neighbors have to put blackout shades on their windows? Sink, Second Ave, electromagnetic field or electric noise? Wilson, Columbus Ave, the view of the screen from the highway? White, Perlee, can you provide your phone number?

Hal Simhoff, applicants traffic engineer, was sworn in and qualified. Federal government provides guidelines for the placement of billboards. NJ DOT reviews applications for billboards and has issued approval. Described the way the government studied digital billboards, established rules and regulations, and referred to his report that was submitted.

Public questions: responses were provided by Mr. Simhoff: 42 Glaser Ave, if there is an increase in accidents is there any recourse? Has anyone from the State visited the site? White, Perlee Ave, Clarify where the accidents in the report took place?

Matt Flynn, professional planner, was sworn in and qualified. The Borough does not have an ordinance regulating billboards so there are no design standards. The NJDOT approved the site, the items previously

mentioned as enhancements for the community provide a benefit. Five-foot proposed setback and 75 percent impervious coverage require variances. Discussed site suitability and stated this is a corner property.

Public questions: responses were provided by Mr. Flynn and Mr. Frankenstern: Patente Glaser Ave, referencing the court case in NJ, was it overturned because the town banned billboards, and is the height variance based on the 16' sign ordinance, isn't a billboard a type of sign? Unnamed resident, the lot size and the dimensions along Second Ave? Copt, Route 202, what is the height of the utility poles?

Additional questions from the board: who owns the property, is a 20-year lease standard, applicant decides what goes on the billboard?

Public comments: Feusse, Helene Pl., comment not discernable. Copt, Route 202, this area of Route 202 is the worst stretch of road in Raritan because of the traffic and all the driveways and roadway intersections. Kovitis, billboards are a distraction, and this does not add any benefit to the Borough. Deon, First Ave, concern that this would have a negative impact on property values. White, Perlee Ave, billboard would negatively impact the view from his property and negatively affect property value because of the height and area of the billboard. Feusse, Helene Pl., traffic and safety concerns. Mr. Brosnan commented on the number of driveways and roadway intersections within the immediate vicinity of this site, Mr. Flynn board attorney clarified that this stretch of Route 202 has different characteristics than a typical roadway referenced in the traffic engineers report, Mr. Brosnan concurred. Digraziano, Columbus Ave, drives many highways throughout NJ and has not seen a billboard of this size in a location such as the one that is proposed, traffic and safety is a concern. Ms. Angelone, business tenant at this property, business has been in this location for over 75 years, the billboard will have a negative effect on their business and their existing sign will be less effective. Unnamed resident (couldn't hear the name), Town needs a vision to avoid the area becoming developed in a negative manner. Unnamed resident (couldn't hear the name), too close to residential properties, too many distractions exist in this area.

Mr. Frankenstern provided a summary of the testimony offered by their experts in support of the application and the case law regarding placement of billboards in NJ. The board deliberated.

Mayor Carra and Councilman Tozzi recused

**Motion** by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Cunningham to deny the application as presented.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Brown

**NAY:** Chairman LoPresti

**ABSTAIN:**

Mayor Carra and Councilman Tozzi returned

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Mayor Carra discussed complaints from neighbors regarding the traffic on Tillman St. from the Stone Bridge development. Mr. Brosnan asked if the Council would like to discuss a billboard ordinance. Mr. Brown and Mayor Carra discussed the Enterprise rental business on Frelinghuysen Ave regarding on street parking.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

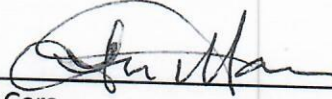
Chairman LoPresti opened the floor to public comment;

Mr. Patente commended the board. Mr. White asked about the proposed construction project for Route 202 and First Ave. Chairman LoPresti closed the public portion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** by Mayor Carra, **seconded** by Chairman LoPresti and unanimously carried to adjourn at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted,



Lou Gara  
Board Administrator/Secretary

Approved: 10/28/2025