

**Elk Township Combined Planning and Zoning Board**

**Regular Business Meeting**

**October 15, 2025**

**Minutes**

**Call to Order:**

Regular Business Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

**Roll Call:**

**Present:** Mr. Afflerbach, Mr. Goetsch, Mr. Lucas, Mr. McKeever, Mrs. Nicholson, Mr. Smith,  
Mr. Wolf, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Peterson (alt 1)

**Absent:** Mr. Hughes, Mr. Swanson (alt 2)

**Open Public Meeting Act:** was read by the Board Secretary

**Flag Salute:** Chairman Afflerbach led the flag salute.

**Concept Plan Review:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** September 17, 2025

*Mrs. Nicholson moved to approve the minutes of September 17, 2025,*

*Seconded by Mr. Lucas.*

With all other members in favor, *the motion was carried.*



**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

**1. D’Orazio Bulk Variance Driveway**

**110 Pondview Ct. Monroeville, NJ 08343, Block 36 Lot 1.06**

**Completeness followed by Public Hearing, Application No. ZB-25-02**

Board Engineer, Steve Bach of Bach Associates, referred to his letter dated September 3, 2025 and stated that the application is complete. It is Mr. Bach’s recommendation that the Board deem the application complete.

*Mr. Lucas moved to deem the application complete.*

*Seconded by Mr. Wolf*

Roll Call Vote									
Committee	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Committee	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Goetsch	Y				Smith	Y			
Hughes				A	Wolf	Y			
Lucas	Y				Peterson (Alt. 1)	Y			
McKeever	Y				Swanson (Alt. 2)				A
Nicholson	Y				Afflerbach (Chair)	Y			
Richardson	Y								

***For: 9***

***Against: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***9-0-0***

Mr. DeJesus, Board Solicitor, swore in Michael D’Orazio.

Mr. Bach, Township Engineer stated that the applicant is asking for a Bulk Variance for a driveway that is 0 feet from the property line, where no driveway should be permitted within 10 feet of any property line in accordance with the Elk Twp Ordinance. This lot is adjacent to an open space or Storm Water lot and not adjacent to another neighboring residential property.

Mr. Afflerbach asked if this is an addition to an existing driveway.

Mr. Bach stated that this driveway was constructed as part of the construction of Mr. D’Orazio’s new home.

Mr. D’Orazio stated that they are a family of 7 and to accommodate the future 5 drivers that they will have this driveway configuration is necessary. With this configuration, all the vehicles can fit in the driveway and for ease of navigation as they can pull in and make a k-turn and then come onto the street facing forward. The driveway will be up against a future HOA easement to a basin and will not impede on any neighbor or cause any drainage issues. It will cause a hardship to rip out the existing driveway due to irrigation, landscaping etc.

Mr. Bach stated that the Final Plan of Survey should be corrected from Plan to Plan and the drainage easement should be dedicated to the HOA of that development not the Township of Elk.

Mr. Afflerbach asked if this was done when the driveway was put in and when the house was built.

Mr. D’Orazio stated that this was done when the house was built and the house was built just this year.

Mrs. Nicholson asked if notice to neighbors was given.

Board Secretary stated that yes notice was provided to the residents within the 200’ list.

***Mrs. Nicholson moved to Open to the Public, seconded by Mr. Goetsch.***

***With all members in favor, the motion was carried.***

***Mr. Lucas moved to Close to the Public, seconded by Mrs. Nicholson.***

***With all members in favor, the motion was carried.***

***Mrs. Nicholson moved to approve the Bulk Variance to allow for a zero-foot setback from the property line for a driveway where 10 foot is required to Michael D’Orazio 110 Pondview Ct Block 36 Lots 1.06, seconded by Mr. Goetsch.***

Vote	Roll Call Vote				Roll Call					
	Committee	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Committee	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Goetsch	Y					Smith	Y			
Hughes					A	Wolf	Y			
Lucas	Y					Peterson (Alt. 1)	Y			
McKeever	Y					Swanson (Alt. 2)				A
Nicholson	Y					Afflerbach (Chair)	Y			
Richardson	Y									

***For: 9***

***Against: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***9-0-0***

**Continued Business:**

**1. Country Roads Realty LLC Preliminary Major Site Plan w/ Bulk Variance**

**Block 44 Lot 4 730 Buck Rd**

**Application No. SP- 25-01**

**Technical followed by Public Hearing**

*Mr. Lucas moved to reenter this application, seconded by Mr. Richardson.*

*With all members in favor, the motion was carried.*

Michael Floyd of Archer & Greiner Attorney Firm, 1025 Laurel Oak Rd Voorhees, NJ 08043 stated that he is appearing on behalf of the applicant, Country Roads LLC. The applicant is only seeking Preliminary Major Site Plan approval with the Bulk Variance at this time. The applicant is willing to work with the Board Professionals to address all outstanding comments and referring to the Board Engineer's Review Letter, they are willing to work to satisfy them as a condition of any approval. The applicant has been before the Board on September 17, 2025, and provided testimony in support of the Site Plan and Bulk Variance application. It is their understanding that the Board will open the application up to the public comment and ask that they reserve time if necessary for a response.

*Mrs. Nicholson moved to Open to the Public, seconded by Mr. Richardson.*

*With all members in favor, the motion was carried.*

Attorney Michael Sencindiver of 717 Main Street Riverton, NJ, represented Frank & Colleen Schickling of 732 Buck Rd. Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Frank Schickling.

Mr. Schickling stated that he had a memorandum drafted which was signed by him and his wife, which was entered as D1.

Mr. Sencindiver summarized the memorandum with some comments regarding Noticing, Site Selection, Noise, 9/17/2025 Presentation, and the Manufacturing Facility.

Mr. and Mrs. Schickling stated that for all the reasons and questions posed in the memorandum that the application be rejected.

Mr. Afflerbach asked where the property is that Mr. and Mrs. Schickling own located on the map.

Mr. Schickling stated that they are next door to Huntsinger's property, they are 1 property away from the applicant's property.

Mr. Schickling stated that they own part of the pond and are immediately adjacent to the access road, the property is labeled Pine, as the previous owners.

Mr. Floyd, the applicant's attorney, stated that the applicant complied with all the notice requirements of Elk Twp and there is no requirement to knock on doors and seek approval from neighbors prior to the application.

The applicant received both the Class 1 and Class 2 Licenses from the CRC. The cannabis operations cannot begin immediately; a license is not formerly granted by the CRC until the physical building and systems are constructed and are in place and tested for compliance.

The applicant put on detailed testimony regarding the items in the memorandum at the September 17, 2025, meeting.

The applicant has received the NJDEP LOI today from the NJDEP and the LOI shows that the wetlands are of intermediate value. There will be a 50' buffer as per the LOI.

The applicant is only now seeking Preliminary Major Site Plan Approval.

Mr. Bach asked if the applicant or lawyer would like to speak to the encroachment into the required buffer.

Mr. Floyd stated that while they feel that the proposed driveway is safe and efficient for the proposed operations, they are willing to work with Mr. Bach to revise the Site Plans to provide 2 way traffic throughout the entire length of the driveway and will do their best to avoid any impacts to the regulated wetlands area and they are asking for buffer relief. They are willing to work on any additional landscaping to help mitigate any potential aesthetic issues.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Chad Gaulrapp, Engineer with Pennoni Associates in Haddon Heights, NJ.

Mr. Gaulrapp stated that it was his understanding that the landscape buffer was to buffer structures, existing or proposed. The existing dwelling is 90.3 feet from the property line, which would create an existing nonconformity, which they could offer some additional vegetation to offset. However, the driveway itself is now needing relief but is not a structure. He asked for some clarification.

Mr. Bach stated that according to the Elk Twp Ordinance that all Cannabis Establishments should have a 100-foot vegetative buffer along the perimeter of the entire site except entrances and exits. The rear of the adjacent property, Block 44 Lot 5, could have Arborvitaes added adjacent to the existing roadway on the applicant's property as well as buffering along the rear adjacent property belonging to the Schicklings, because that is not an entrance.

Mr. Gaulrapp stated that he would agree with the applicant's attorney that they would explore opportunities to increase the buffer but not increasing the buffer in wetlands or ponds, but once they are past the ponds.

Mr. Sencindiver stated that there is a gate/guardhouse that is on the site plan and the road is in the buffer and buffers are there for a reason. This site was picked knowing that there were issues with buffering and access to the property. Neighbors, whether it be the Schicklings or someone else has a expectation of the buffers to be pristine. The DEP is going to get involved in some aspect regarding the buffering.

Mr. Floyd stated that if the applicant needs to seek an additional permit from the DEP then this board would make that DEP permit a condition of approval and the applicant would have to show proof of all outside agency permits and approvals. No Board can precondition an approval upon receipt of those outside agencies and approvals.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Tom Huntsinger, 1066 Elk Rd who asked who would be monitoring those conditions that they say they are going to adhere to?

Mr. Bach stated that the conditions would ride with any land use approval and would be monitored by the Zoning Officer.

Mr. Huntsinger asked what the consequences would be for those violations.

Mr. Bach stated that the Township would cite the business and monetary penalties would also be assigned.

Mr. Huntsinger asked what would happen if they violate and pay fine and then keep violating.

Mr. Bach stated that there are instances where violations have resulted in cease and desist until the violations are addressed.

Mr. Huntsinger asked if there is a power failure and the odors get out what happens and is there a penalty for that.

Mr. Bach stated that violations would occur.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus stated that citations are typically escalatory in nature so not addressing Zoning Issues would typically increase the citation.

Mr. Huntsinger stated that the area had been filled in by Mr. Fazzio including a ditch, so now when it rains heavy the water goes across Buck Rd, due to no drainage.

Mr. Bach stated that they are bound by the NJDEP Stormwater Management rules and the applicant must comply with the entirety of that rule book and we cannot compel them to go above and beyond, as it is outside of our ordinance.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Jeffrey Foreman, 123 Stockton Ct, who asked if the Cul de Sac at Stockton Ct will have trees planted to block the direct visibility line and if the security cameras will be recording the adjacent properties with children running around. He also asked about the audible levels.

Mr. Floyd stated that the cameras are meant to secure the operations internally not offsite. The Security Plan was submitted to the Elk Twp Police Department for their review as well as the CRC, and it was deemed sufficient. There should be no noise leaving the property. The NJDEP has very specific sound requirements regarding daytime and nighttime decibel levels and every operator in the State of NJ has an affirmative ongoing obligation to comply with those day and night decibel levels.

Mr. Floyd stated that there will be full perimeter fencing and they are seeking variance relief to permit an 8-foot-high fence where 6 feet is permitted to comply with State regulations.

Mr. Foreman asked if there was any consideration regarding a tree line to block visibility to the retention pond by the 2 homes on Stockton Ct which are corner properties, this would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Floyd stated that they would agree to work with Mr. Bach on condition of approval regarding buffering outside of any of the DEP regulated areas.

Mr. Bach stated that Mr. Gaulrapp indicated that they would add to the thin spots along the 100 foot buffer with arborvitaes.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus, swore in Mr. Ploskonka who stated that the CRC requires them to have 30 days of ongoing footage with backup required. The cameras would not be intentionally facing anyone's property or recording anyone's family, they are just there for security reasons. The streams are not public, and it is secure data that is kept internally with an offsite backup.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Chris Creta 253 Daisy Ave who stated that he does construction and generator rentals are very hard to come by. He asked how the odor is being measured when it comes up and is blowing over. He states that NJ regulations state that the length of the growing season cannot be year-round with greenhouses, so what is the growing season going to be. He asked how anyone is going to turn around if they cannot go through the fence and there might be a lot of curious people once this is built. He asked if there is going to be a police escort or police notification for shipments that leave the facility. He stated that by his calculations, the decibel levels could range between 116 – 158 decibels which is between thunder and a military jet with afterburners. He stated that the Traffic Study was done on February 17, 2024 and that date was President's Day which is a Federal Holiday.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Darlema Bey 507 Arch St who asked when there is a power emergency and there is no onsite generation of power, what is keeping the facility secure during this time because it could be very vulnerable, create a criminal emergency and leaves nearby residents in danger.

Paul Ploskonka stated that generators are rented on a monthly rate and will be in place, on site and meant to power all critical life safety, plant health/safety rooms, and vault safety. These generators will also accommodate ventilation as well as emergency lighting.

Mrs. Nicholson asked how these generators would be fueled.

Paul Ploskonka stated that they would like to go with natural gas generators, but the accessibility of diesel generators seems to be much greater than natural gas.

Mr. Lucas asked if they are going on demand with a transfer switch.

Paul Ploskonka stated that yes they are using a transfer switch.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Bill Drebes 802 Buck Rd who has a concern with someone walking around in a rural area with a weapon 24/7, anyone could get hurt. He is concerned about the water usage of the facility, and the internet says there is much more water usage than was declared. He was wondering what happens with the wastewater after fertilization and his well being contaminated since it is not more than ½ mile away from the facility. He asked what the benefit that Elk Twp would get from having this industry here and if anyone from Elk Twp going to be employed there. He asked if they have been given a tax break to come here.

Mr. Lucas, Township Committee Member stated that this applicant has not been given a tax break to come to Elk Twp. The benefit to Elk Twp is they are taxed at a commercial rate which brings in a lot of taxes for the Twp and it is a ratable which does not add kids to the schools. Elk Twp can also tax them an additional 2% so it is a good revenue booster to Elk Twp.

Mr. Drebes asked if the taxes would start immediately or if there is an abatement.

Mr. Bach stated that there is not an abatement and once they have a CO then they will have a value added tax of what they have built by added by the tax assessor and once revenue comes in, they will have to demonstrate their revenue and then up to 2% can be collected by the Twp. Well and Septic systems are under county jurisdiction, and they will have to demonstrate to the county that they have compliant well and septic systems.

Mr. Drebes asked how polluted ground water is controlled from coming in his direction.

Mr. Bach stated that they will not be allowed to discharge polluted water into a septic system. If there is necessary treatment needed, they will have to demonstrate that they can treat their wastewater onsite from their operations and is subject to the counties septic engineer's review.

Mr. Afflerbach stated that this board cannot take into account taxes, money, abatements, etc. The board is here on the legality of the application.

Mr. Bach stated that the financial impact cannot be used to deliberate the application before the board.

Mr. Afflerbach stated that the tax question would be for the Twp Committee.

Mr. Lucas asked if the applicant is using UV Charcoal to treat the water.

Mr. Ploskonka stated that they will have a cake filter at the end of each flood tray of 50' that would filter out the 3 nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Calcium) so that any water that comes after it can be released into the discharge lines. This equipment would come from DRAM who is a professional agricultural company who also deals with cannabis. All treatment that is required will be provided as per the county's regulations.

Mr. Lucas stated that DRAM is a leader in water quality for greenhouses.

***Mrs. Nicholson moved to Close to the Public, seconded by Mr. Goetsch***

***With all members in favor, the motion was carried.***

Mr. Floyd thanked the Board and Board Professionals for their time and consideration last month and this month regarding this application.

Mr. Wolf asked if the applicant agreed at the end of the last meeting to put fencing around the office and did that change.

Mr. Bach stated that the office will be outside of the fenced area but still within the buffer area.

Mr. Wolf stated that he thought there was no access without going through security and going back and forth.

Mr. Bach stated that the farmhouse will still be within the required 100 foot buffer and fenced.

*Mrs. Nicholson moved to approve the Preliminary Major Site Plan Approval to Country Roads Realty LLC with a perimeter buffer at one point being 90.3 feet down to 0 feet adjacent to the access road, the side yard setback of 0 feet where 50 feet is required for the existing farm structure to be used as an office, and the security fence at 8 foot in height when 6 feet is required with the conditions outlined in the September 12, 2025 Review Letter, seconded by Mr. Wolf*

Roll Call Vote					Roll Call				
Vote									
Committee	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Committee	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Goetsch	Y				Smith	Y			
Hughes				A	Wolf	Y			
Lucas	Y				Peterson (Alt. 1)	Y			
McKeever	Y				Swanson (Alt. 2)				A
Nicholson	Y				Afflerbach (Chair)	Y			
Richardson	Y								

***For: 9***

***Against: 0***

***Abstain: 0***

***9-0-0***

***Mr. Lucas moved to open the General Public Portion of the meeting, seconded by Mr. Goetsch.***

***With all members in favor, the motion was carried.***

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus swore in Chris Creta 253 Daisy Ave who asked if a Preliminary Site Plan approval locks in so that the Zoning Laws do not change.

Mr. Bach stated that a Preliminary Approval vests the applicant in their site plan and the relief that they were granted and they should proceed with Final Approval prior to any construction.

Mr. Creta asked if any of the Board Members had an application of a large size, would that be a conflict of interest and would they be allowed to vote.

Mr. Bach stated no, there are very specific rules regarding conflict of interest in terms of financial and familiarity.

Board Solicitor, Brandon DeJesus stated that sometimes it is just the appearance of conflict, just having the appearance such as a friend or family member, a board member may have to disqualify themselves.

Mr. Creta asked if being next to their property wouldn't be a conflict.

Mr. Bach stated that if their property was within 200 feet then they would be excluded from participating and be recused.

*Mr. Goetsch moved to close the General Public Portion of the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Nicholson.*

*With all members in favor, the motion was carried.*

*Adjournment:*

*Mrs. Nicholson moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Wolf.*

*With all members in favor, the motion was carried.*

Adjournment time: **8:21 pm**

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Weitzel, Board Secretary

**These minutes are a brief summary of the proceedings that took place during the Elk Township Planning & Zoning Board meeting held October 15, 2025, and should not be taken as verbatim testimony.**