

**Borough of Florham Park
Planning Board
Work Session Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2025**

The Work Session Meeting of the Borough of Florham Park Planning Board was called to order on Monday evening, August 11, 2025 at 6:30p.m. in the Municipal Building located at 111 Ridgedale Avenue, Florham Park, New Jersey.

Members Present:

Mr. Michael DeAngelis – Chairman
Mr. Joseph Guerin – Vice Chairman
Mayor Mark Taylor
Ms. Kristen Santoro
Mr. Gary Feith
Mr. David Roberts
Mr. Jeffrey Noss
Mr. Sid Dvorkin
Mr. Jeffrey Hegan

Members Absent:

Also Present:

Mr. Derek Orth, Esq. Board Attorney
Ms. Katherine Sarmad, PP, Board Planner
Mr. Victor Vinegra, PE, Board Engineer

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Mr. DeAngelis asked the Board Secretary if the statutory requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act were met. Board Secretary Marlene Rawson responded that we are in compliance with the requirements.

Site Plan Waivers:

None.

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 6:35pm.

Marlene Rawson
Board Secretary

August 11, 2025

**Borough of Florham Park
Planning Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2025**

A Regular Meeting of the Borough of Florham Park Planning Board was called to order on Monday evening, August 11, 2025 at 6:30.m. in the Municipal Building, located at 111 Ridgedale Avenue, Florham Park, New Jersey.

1. Call to Order.
2. Adequate notice has been given in accordance with the Sunshine Law.
3. Announcement – There will be no new testimony after 9:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Mr. Michael DeAngelis – Chairman
Mr. Joseph Guerin – Vice Chairman
Mayor Mark Taylor
Ms. Kristen Santoro
Mr. Gary Feith
Mr. David Roberts
Mr. Jeffrey Noss
Mr. Sid Dvorkin
Mr. Jeffrey Hegan

Members Absent:

Also Present:

Mr. Derek Orth, Esq. Board Attorney
Ms. Katherine Sarmad, PP, Board Planner
Mr. Victor Vinegra, PE, Board Engineer

Approval of Minutes:

4. Approval of the minutes of the July 14, 2025 meeting.

Mr. Dvorkin made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mr. Hegan

Roll: On a roll call vote all members present and eligible voted to approve the minutes

Amended Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision:

5. **Coviello Brothers Greenhouse Property, Inc.** **Application #25MSD-1**
42 & 48 Brooklake Road
Block 4101, Lots 5, 6, 25

Applicant is seeking amended preliminary and final major subdivision with variance relief to permit three roadways servicing 23 single-family dwelling lots, a sewer pump station lot and a remainder lot.

Attorney Michael Rubin represented the applicant. The 29.83-acre property is in the R-15 residential zone and is the site of a former plant nursery with greenhouses.

He gave a brief history of the prior approvals. Preliminary subdivision approval was received on June 9, 2014 and final approval was granted on September 9, 2019. Subsequent extensions expired and the subdivision was never recorded as required. Since then, local zoning changes affected some of the building lots.

Christopher Nusser, PE was sworn in . He stated that he was involved with the project since 2012 and noted that the initial subdivision had been approved.

A-1: major subdivision plan – colorized (7.11.25)

In the first application, the requested variances were for lot width for Lots 5 & 6, and substandard pump station lot.

He described the location of the property. All the utility pads are proposed to be the same in this application. The Chatham Borough side has power lines, gas pipeline and wetlands. That portion of the property is not proposed to be developed. The DEP transition area was modified by permit.

The property is fronted by single family homes. It drains from Brooklake Road to the wetlands. Conceptual building lots shown on the plan are designed for 4000sf homes. The stormwater system is designed for up to 10,000 sf per lot. There are some larger lots that could go beyond the 10,000sqft but would need additional storm water management systems.

The list of changes are as follows:

Rear yard setbacks are now fixed at 50 feet.

Lots 5 & 6 have front yards off Coviello Drive. The rear yard now must be opposite the front door. These home need relief for front and rear yard setback of 25ft (front) and 40ft (rear) to allow for an appropriate building footprint. Lots 38, 42, 43 & 44 need relief for front yard setback to be 25ft. The goal is to have consistent frontage with the adjacent homes since they are situated on cul-de-sacs.

The survey on page 2 is newer. There is a water line that traverses through lot 3 from Brooklake Road. It has been there before those homes. They want to decommission it in the street and remove it from our property but it is not recorded on the title and there is no easement to our knowledge. They will check the deed on the adjacent home. They realize that they can't remove it if someone is using it.

There was a question on how the remainder lot will be maintained. Nino Coviello, trust representative, was sworn in. He stated that there is nothing to maintain. He added that JCPL cuts the grass when needed. He continued that the pump station lot would be dedicated to the Borough. The building on that lot was expanded to provide for a chlorine injection area. Lots that have the transition area in them will be marked by a pin with a cap. The net lot area is needed for those lots that have those buffers. It will be provided in the deeds for those lots.

All DEP permits have been granted and continued and remain valid. Wetland lines are the same.

Board Engineer Victor Vinegra said that each individual plot plan should be reviewed by the Board Engineer when submitted. They said that they are agreeable to that. They also said that some electrical poles will be relocated and they will repave curb to curb. A hydro test will be performed to be sure that there is adequate flow and no upgrade is needed for water pressure.

Fire hydrant placement will be approved by Fire Chief and they agree to meet the requirements.

A treatment works approval for the sanitary sewer pump station was approved but that approval expired. There are no changes to that from the previous plan. Victor Vinegra said that they must comply with the existing standards of what the Borough is using for pump the station. They agreed to that.

The pump station will have a developer agreement and must meet Borough specifications and be inspected by the Director of Water and Sewer prior to the transfer. It will be wood-framed building and sided to be architecturally compatible to the homes in the area or of siding the brick building. They will provide the pump station specification and generator plans.

Regarding stormwater management, they will provide an extra set of filters and will contribute \$9,000 for replacement filters as agreed to in the 2014 resolution.

They will comply with the tree removal and tree canopy limitations. He noted that there is no tree canopy in the center of the site so they will be compliant. Mark Taylor noted that evergreens were to be planted on some designated existing homes and they must be installed or replanted. They will also screen the pump station lot with a mix of arborvitae shrub species. They will be located inside of the fence.

Mr. Nusser stated that the buffer along Route 24 is appropriate. They agreed to discuss this at plot plan and if further buffering of the Route 24 noise is needed. The transition line is buffered but will be discussed at plot plan.

Lighting plans will be reviewed and they agreed to reduce the lighting if possible. This will be coordinated with the Board engineer.

A geotechnical report will be required and provided for the roadways. Soil borings are needed for the roadways so what is in there can be identified.

Mayor Taylor requested that the flooding on adjacent properties be remediated.

Chris Nusser reported that no phase 2 environmental report has been done. He agreed to a geotechnical probe for the roadway. A geotechnical probe is required on the pump station lot to be sure it is clean. It must be free of any environmental encumbrances.

Mike DeAngelis asked about the old greenhouses and where all that went. Nino Coviello replied that it was all removed from the site. The question was asked how their water is collecting on existing properties if the water slopes from Brooklake Road. Chris Nusser replied that the land catches it but they will install drains to capture any water runoff. He said that a swale exists but they will inspect to see where it is ponding and correct it.

Victor Vinegra noted that each lot will be inspected for proper drainage and grading.

Jeff Noss asked about stormwater management. Chris Nusser replied that each home will have a drywell to manage the water runoff. The drywell would likely be put in the front yard so the rear yard is usable for pool, patios, etc.

Sid Dvorkin asked whether there were any liability concerns for the Borough in regard to homes near the power lines and the flood plain. Victor Vinegra replied that this has DEP approval so there are no concerns.

Katherine Sarmad asked about the written confirmation about the gas line easement requirements. This was part of the 2014 and 2019 resolution that requested setback and buffer confirmation and a written opinion on that from Spectra.

Chris Nusser responded that numerous letters were sent to Spectra but they never received a response from Spectra. He added that they are not working near their easement. Derek Orth said that they were legally noticed on this application and they are not here tonight.

Mark Taylor asked if the pipeline is identified by flags. Chris Nusser said there are markers. The pipe is located at the base of a hill. This is a physical barrier to the pipe.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Herbert Armeny. He asked about the chlorine injection at the sewer pump station and how that is protected.

Chris Nusser replied that this is a request from the Florham Park Water Department. The chlorine is stored in a plastic drum so it can be injected into the system. Mark Taylor added that all the pump stations have this.

Mark Opdyke. He said he has witnessed truckloads of material being dumped on the property through the years. He asked if soil boring samples would be taken in other areas besides the traffic patterns. He asked if there was a traffic study done.

Chris Nusser replied that the roadways and the pump station lot are all that is planned for soil samples. Mr. Opdyke asked if they would test other areas. Mr. Nusser said they do not plan to test other areas. Chris Nusser continued that no traffic study will be done. This is a permitted use and the road can handle the development that it is zoned for.

John Winters. He asked about the easement that contains a water pipe and if this will impact it. It was stated that there is no impact to that water pipe.

Break: 8:25-8:35pm.

Christopher Nusser began his planning testimony. He reviewed the variance requests.

Lot 5: Lot depth (100ft), front setback (25ft), rear setback (40ft)

Lot 6: Lot depth (123.1ft), front setback (25ft), rear setback (40ft)

Lots 38, 42, 43, 44 front yard setback of 25 feet

Lot 32 lot area 13022 square feet, lot width – 38.5 lot frontage 26.5 floor area less than 1200 square feet

Fence height (sewer pump lot) 6 feet in the front.

Chris Nusser stated that complying with the lot depth for 5 and 6 would negatively impact Coviello Drive. The benefits of granting the front and rear setbacks outweigh the detriments. It will allow for more space between the rear yard neighbor property lines. For the other lots, it will allow for a consistent front façade along the Coviello Drive frontage and around the cul-de-sac bend and avoid having homes situated behind adjacent homes.

In regard to the sewer pump station lot size, Mr. Nusser stated that this is not a residential home lot and it does not need to be larger. The fence height of 6 feet is needed for safety and security of the utility. The benefits of the variance outweigh the detriments. He added that all lots are conforming other than the pump station lot.

Mr. Nusser stated that they are in agreement with all of the conditions stated in the 2014 and 2019 resolutions for this subdivision. He clarified that #3 in the 2019 resolution the water main extension does not require a DEP permit. #4 – the jellyfish stormwater device was approved by the State and remains unchanged. The 2014 (#15) condition to provide plantings for the homeowner on Brooklake Road across from the proposed Coviello Drive. That is agreeable as long as the current homeowner wants them.

Katherine Sarmad stated that lot width vs. lot depth variances must be clarified and updated on the zoning table. She explained the new ordinance involving front and rear yards. This was changed to have the front yard and the rear yard is opposite the front door.

Derek Orth asked about the recent letter to the Municipality from the property owner. The communication proposed multifamily housing on the site and will provide inclusionary housing for the most recent housing plan. Derek Orth asked if that request is still being pursued.

Michael Rubin responded that they would not answer that question. The reason is that he felt a response would somehow influence the Board members one way or the other. He continued that the letter was to the Mayor and Council and not the Planning Board.

Derek Orth reiterated that the Applicant has declined to answer the question. Mike DeAngelis agreed that the letter is not something that is relevant to the application and the Board should not consider it.

Chris Nusser stated that there are restrictions on page 4 on the remainder lot 25. There is a utility easement. They do not want impact the maintenance of the utility right of way. The lot is not developable and they do not want restrict or encumber any utility rights.

Katherine Sarmad commented that that the lot is significantly encumbered with flood hazard areas. Chris Nusser added that it is highly unlikely that the State would lift any of those restrictions. Mark Taylor said the State is out of control with building.

Derek Orth suggested a condition that on the lot. Katherine Sarmad suggested that it is encumbered by flood plain, utilities, and cannot be developed.

Kristen Santoro thought the using the same name for the roadways would be confusing for EMS. The Applicant agreed to add a second road name for the connecting road.

The application testimony is complete and there are no other witnesses.

Mr. DeAngelis opened the meeting to the public for any questions and comments.

Herbert Armeny. He asked about a six-foot fence in the front yard. It was stated that a variance would be needed. Only a four-foot fence is permitted in the front yard.

Susan Opdyke. She said she appreciates all the work of the volunteers. But there are rules on building. Why do we allow variances? We can't have more building. Why are the squeezing in so many large homes? There are so many variance requests with this application.

Katherine Sarmad responded that this was a previously approved subdivision. The lots were compliant and variance free. The new proposed position of the lots would be less imposing to you. Forcing homes to front on Brooklake Road in order to avoid variances would have a negative effect and would be very intrusive to the Opdyke property. In response to large homes, she said that there is a sliding scale for building coverage so that larger lots get less building coverage.

Michael Rubin added that it is a better planning alternative.

Ms. Opdyke said the tower is loaded with asbestos. It was stated that the Lum tower will be removed as per environmental regulations.

Mark Taylor stated that the Board heard applications for this property several times over the years and it was clear it was going to be developed at some point. The town is growing and changing and some changes are not always good.

Derek Orth summarized a number of the conditions that were discussed:

- All professional reports to be complied with
- Individual plot plans to be reviewed
- Dedication of the sewer pump station to the Borough
- Developer agreement requirement
- Title 39 enforcement agreement
- Tree replacement obligation
- Lighting intensity to be reduced where possible
- Soil borings and geotechnical report requirement along roadway and pumps station lot
- Water management along neighboring properties
- Compliance with prior approval conditions

There were no other questions or comments. Chairman Michael DeAngelis called for a motion.

Mr. Feith made a motion to approve the resolution, second by Mr. Noss
Roll: On a roll call vote all members present and eligible voted to approve the resolution.

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Marlene Rawson
Board Secretary

August 11, 2025