

REGULAR MEETING
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM – UPPER LEVEL

July 21, 2026

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was opened with the Inspiration and Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Municipal Clerk.

Mayor Christopher Bobbitt stated that July is *Disability Pride Month*, a recognition that is observed each July to commemorate the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which took place on July 26, 1990. He noted that this landmark Civil Rights legislation prohibits discrimination and promotes equal opportunity, access and inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Bobbitt read the following statement of proper notice:

STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE: "Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Council being held on Tuesday, July 21, 2026, has been provided through the posting of the annual meeting schedule of said Council in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act." Said Notice was forwarded to The Trentonian, The Times and The Princeton Packet on December 12, 2025.

Mayor Bobbitt stated that, additionally, notice was posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and the Lawrence Township website.

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
Absent: None.

Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Municipal Manager, Arthur Sypek, Esq., Municipal Attorney.

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Mayor Bobbitt stated that there will be a special presentation tonight from Municipal Planner, Elizabeth McManus. He relayed that she will offer background information

regarding Resolution No. 259-26 *"Authorizing a Resolution Designating Certain Real Property Located at 3641 Lawrence Road as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area Pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J. 40A:12A-1, et seq., and Directing the Preparation of a Redevelopment Plan."*

Ms. McManus introduced herself, and explained that the purpose of her presentation is to help the Council and public evaluate Resolution No. 259-26, which essentially allows the Township to declare 3641 as an area in need of redevelopment. She gave a brief history of the property as it relates to the catalyst that led to tonight's meeting, beginning in 2025 when the Township adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HE&FSP), to the February 11, 2026 settlements with two developers who objected to the Township's plan. She reported that after executing both settlement agreements, the Township began the process of considering the property as an area in need of redevelopment, specifically considering whether or not the property met one or more criteria for the redevelopment designation as set forth in the local redevelopment housing law. Ms. McManus relayed that this consideration began with Council authorizing the Planning Board to conduct a study and hold a public hearing on the study considering whether or not the property meets the criteria, which took place on February 3, 2026. She specified that the Planning Board asked her firm to conduct the preliminary investigation, which they completed on April 1, 2026. This was followed by a Planning Board meeting on April 20th and an adoption of the Resolution on May 4, 2026.

Ms. McManus explained that the Resolution found there were two criteria met with regard to the redevelopment law, and, therefore, found that the property did qualify as an area in need of redevelopment. She relayed that while the Planning Board is obligated to hold a public hearing and prepare a study, it is the Council's role to designate whether or not the property is an area in need of redevelopment, which is the purpose of tonight's agenda item, *Resolution No. 259-26*.

Further discussion was had regarding the fact that this item is a part of the Township's Fourth Round Housing settlement required by the State of New Jersey and Fair Share Housing, with additional discourse pertaining to Criterion A and Criterion D being met, both dealing with the condition of the building itself and the detrimental effect of the dilapidated building on the public with regard to the health, safety, morals, and/or welfare of the community. In addition, it was discussed that the New Jersey State Legislature created the criteria on which properties are judged through the preparation of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Laws, and the fact that tonight's agenda pertains solely to the designation of the property, with no reference to future development.

Upon Mayor Bobbitt's request, Ms. McManus defined "Builder's Remedy," a type of litigation that is set forth as a part of New Jersey's Affordable Housing Law that allows a developer to sue a municipality, bypass local zoning rules, and build higher-density housing, which happens when a town fails to meet its fair share affordable housing obligation.

Municipal Manager, Kevin Nerwinski, asked Ms. McManus to explain the objections raised by the developers who filed suit against the Township regarding the Township's plan. She explained that their objection was to the Township's lower density zoning proposal of 10 units per acre in the housing plan for the property located at 3641 Lawrence Road.

Public Participation

Mayor Bobbitt read into record the following statement:

The focus of the Public Comment Period is for members of the public to inform the Governing Body of their views. This time is an opportunity for Township Council to listen with care to the public and to consider what we hear in our deliberations. It is not a time for back-and-forth dialogue, as that can be difficult for us to give accurate responses to critical and complex issues on the spot. Rather, one can call or email members of Council, Manager or Clerk seeking additional information or response to an issue.

Mayor Bobbitt also read two excerpts from the Lawrence Township Administrative Code regarding the manner in addressing Council:

Chapter 10-22 Manner of Addressing Council: *A person may address the Council upon recognition by the Chair. A person addressing the Council shall write down their name and address on the sign-up sheet, shall step up to the microphone, shall give their name in an audible tone of voice for the record, and shall have the right to address the Council for the amount of time designated by the Chair. No person having the floor shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Council, without permission of the Chair. No question shall be asked of Councilperson except through the Chair.*

Chapter 10-23 Decorum at Council Meetings: *Any person making impertinent or slanderous remarks or who shall become boisterous while addressing the Council shall forthwith be barred from further audience before the Council by the Presiding Officer unless permission to continue or again address the Council be granted by the majority vote of Council.*

Ms. Kathryn Trenner, Esq., stated she has lived in Lawrence Township for fifty years, and it is her contention that what was mentioned earlier regarding the *Builder's Remedy* and the *Area in Need of Redevelopment* has been "knocked-down" by the New Jersey Supreme Court on July 16, 2026 with the *Monarch Communities, LLC v. Township of Montville* decision. She explained her theory that upward mobility is being violated due to the various societal changes taking place, with the advent of commercial aviation to the 1975 *Mt. Laurel* decision being partly to blame. Additionally, she stated, "don't put poor people in the apartment stage of life into the rich neighborhoods" as it is the American way of life to grow up, move up, and eventually purchase a bigger home.

Ms. Marianne Mele stated that, on behalf of the North Lawrence Citizen's Association, she would like Resolution No. 259 to be cut from any type of omnibus bill and be voted on as its own Resolution—including a hand count—so that the residents may see who is voting in favor of this Resolution. She believes that this is very important for purposes of transparency. Ms. Mele indicated that she is not in favor of placing 110 families on a corner that is highly trafficked, and feels that the area could do without 110 families "bleeding on our school system, bleeding on our police, bleeding on our fire, and destroying the neighborhood." She believes that allowing for development in this area would urbanize her bucolic neighborhood and change the character of the community that she and her neighbors would like to enjoy undisturbed as they have earned it.

Mr. Billy Chester stated that he is a lifetime resident of Lawrence Township and a proud retired Lawrence Township Police Detective, and noted that he was the first known African American Detective in over one hundred years of the Lawrence Township Police Department. Mr. Chester indicated that he is here this evening to speak about a proposed *Billy Chester Cornhole Pavilion*. He then explained when the Lawrence Cornhole League was established, the evolution of league and its rapid growth, the reasons why an expansion is needed, and the positive effects of this league on the community. He gave Council copies of his proposal, thanked them for the opportunity to speak at tonight's meeting, and emphasized that he is available to answer any questions that they may have.

Councilwoman Bonnie Giglio thanked Mr. Chester for his presentation, stating that she was on the Recreation Advisory Council when the Cornhole League was established, and she has not seen a proposal this thorough in her eight years on the Advisory Council. She indicated that she appreciates his efforts and looks forward to discussing this proposal further.

Ms. Pepper Evans stated that she is a three-year member of the Lawrence Cornhole League and expressed her enthusiasm for the league and the joy it brings to her life, suggesting that reaching out and being a part of something bigger than oneself is very exciting and a great way to meet new people. She explained that the opportunity to join the Cornhole League is not just available for adults, but for children as well, and then read a statement of support from the Superintendent of Lawrence Township Public Schools, encouraging both adults and children to "get off their screens" and have more engagement in the Lawrence Township public parks. Finally, Ms. Evans asked Council for their consideration of Mr. Chester's proposal.

Councilwoman Patricia Farmer stated that she is still in the process of studying Mr. Chester's proposal, but asked if they would consider locating the Pavilion at Central Park.

Ms. Maria Pico stated that she and her husband made the investment to move to Lawrence Township and expressed her love for her neighbors and the amenities that she receives as a Township resident. She explained that when she first moved to her neighborhood she would jog the trails around a nearby apartment complex before they began development, but soon stopped because she no longer felt safe doing so at 6:00

a.m. or late at night. Therefore, she revealed that she does not know what two hundred or more new neighbors, or their friends and extended families, will bring to this area, and asked that Council not allow further development to take place in her community.

Mr. John Gregg stated that he is speaking in opposition tonight to Resolution No. 259-26. He relayed his concern that Lawrence Township may breach its settlement contract that was entered into on February of this year if the settlement is not facilitated, thereby entering into *Builder's Remedy*; however, he believes that this entire process was not transparent, and most people were unaware of what was taking place. Mr. Gregg then urged Council to vote independently on this Resolution, as was suggested by a previous speaker, in order for residents to see which Councilmembers are in support of this Resolution.

Mayor Bobbitt announced that Council will pull Resolution No. 259-26 from the bloc to be voted upon separately to allow for open debate and enable residents to see how each Councilmember voted on this issue.

Ms. Stephanie Wedeking stated that she has lived in Lawrence Township for twenty-two years, and is present tonight on behalf of herself and her neighbors who live near the Gulick House. She read a prepared statement indicating that the zoning change is illegal and unconstitutional "spot zoning," which will create a zone change solely for the benefit of a single land owner. This designation, she explained, will allow increased density in an area that is zoned for a rural and ecologically sensitive area. Ms. Wedeking acknowledged that the structures on the property may be unrepairable and in need of being removed; however, she contends that the remainder of the property is not blighted and contains no features to prevent development under ordinary zoning or by use of conventional use variance processes. Finally, Ms. Wedeking implied that the Township Planner, as a member and employee of the same planning firm that conducted the preliminary investigation, should not be considered an independent advisor to the Planning Board in its review of the proposed redevelopment designation, as this is a conflict of interest.

Ms. Martha Friend stated that she is a South Lawrence resident, and wished to make clear that those who have been speaking tonight do not speak for her. She elaborated that those who spoke against the possibility of development on the Gulick House property do not speak for all of Lawrence Township, and would like to apologize to anyone listening in the audience or at home for the aspersions being cast against residents who live in affordable housing. Ms. Friend expressed that people can feel passionate about their causes but that does not make them an expert, and encouraged Council to listen to the experts involved in this process. She disclosed that she has worked with Ms. McManus through her involvement in the Lawrence Township Master Plan, and conveyed that she is offended that anyone should believe her to be someone who would wish ill on Lawrence residents or act in a "shady" manner. Finally, she thanked Council for the work they are doing, and expressed appreciation that they will be voting on the Resolution separately, stating that she trusts them and knows that they are people of character, and will think of all of Lawrence when they vote.

Mr. Nerwinski wished to respond to a previous comment regarding Municipal Planner, Ms. McManus, stating that she has worked as Municipal Planner for almost eight years as an appointment by the Township to act as their professional planner. He explained that she has the education, certification, and experience to do the job of planner, which is exactly the type of work she was hired to do. Mr. Nerwinski urged everyone to immediately reject any insinuation that a nefarious conflict of interest occurred, as he believes that the Township cannot allow their professionals to be mistreated and mischaracterized in this manner.

Mr. Nate Kunkel stated that he is a lifelong Lawrence Township resident, a founding member of the Lawrence Junior Historians of the Lawrence Historical Society, and is concerned about the historic building located on the Gulick property. He offered a brief history of the Gulick house, explaining that it is one of the few remaining structures in the wider region of Mercer County that shows exceptional Italianate revivalist architecture. Mr. Kunkel expressed that history is a finite thing which cannot be changed once it has been destroyed, and would like to see the Gulick house preserved on account of the fact that it is one of the few remaining properties of its kind in this area.

Further discussion was had between Mayor Bobbitt and Mr. Kunkel with regard to the previous attempts made to preserve the property.

Ms. Elaine Athanassiades stated that she lives right around the corner and moved to the area in 1972. She stated that many years ago, there was a rejection to the Master Plan with regard to building a nursing home in this area, and asked why building 110 units would now be allowed when the building of a nursing home, at that time, was not allowed. She stated that, although she has no problem with the Mt. Laurel decision, she does not see how 110 units can be built on only seven acres without having an impact on the traffic and the community.

Ms. Laurie Evans stated that she has no problem with low-income housing, but her concern is with the number of units to be built on the property. She asked why 10 low-income units cannot be built on the seven acres instead of 110 units. Ms. Evans shared that this zone is considered to be a "wetlands" area, and she is concerned not only about the environmental impact of the proposed construction, but of what she considers to be a possible conflict of interest on the part of the Municipal Planner as well.

Mr. Howard Kauffman stated that he has been a resident of Lawrence Township for thirty-eight years and expressed his deep appreciation for his community, describing it as a wonderful and gorgeous place to live, and even purchased a home nearby for his daughter. He believes one of the issues being discussed is that of the dilapidated building situated on the property, and wonders if it can be fixed "up to code" to meet the requirements of the law as well as the aesthetic value of the neighborhood. He feels the second issue before Council is the requirement by the State that the Township must build a certain amount of affordable homes, and wonders if this issue can be dealt with separately. Lastly, he relayed his concerns regarding the impact development will have on the traffic in his community, which is already a problem during certain times of the day.

Mayor Bobbitt then called for a five-minute recess. Following the recess, the Council reconvened and resumed with the *Review and Revision of the Agenda*.

Review and Revisions of Agenda

Mr. Sypek stated that there will be a need for a Closed Session regarding *Potential Litigation*. Council agreed to add Resolution 262-26 (18-H.8) to the agenda to allow for a Closed Session of Council immediately following the Regular Meeting regarding Potential Litigation. Additionally, Council agreed to vote on Resolution No. 259-26 (18-H.5) separately.

Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Councilwoman Amanda Santos, seconded by Councilwoman Patricia Farmer, the Minutes of the Special Meeting of June 8, 2026 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Ms. Farmer	X						X
Ms. Giglio	X						
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Ms. Santos	X					X	
Mayor Bobbitt	X						

Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, Resolution (9-A) Authorizing Awarding of Bid to Master Build and Design for Rehabilitation to Perform 57 Myrtle Avenue was presented for adoption.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that the bid amount is for \$24,735.00 under the Township's Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Resolution No. 226-26

WHEREAS, on Thursday, July 2, 2026, bids were received and publicly opened for the rehabilitation of 57 Myrtle Avenue and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Master Build & Design that submitted a bid in the amount of \$24,735.00 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

Acct.	Ord. No.	Name	Amount
6-19-56-853-299	-----	Affordable Housing Trust Fund	\$24,735.00

; and

WHEREAS, Master Build & Design performed satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, Marilin Peralta, owner of 57 Myrtle Avenue has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Manager and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Master Build & Design, 400 Broadway, Ste 104, Long Branch, New Jersey 07740 for the purposes of rehabilitating 57 Myrtle Avenue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Adopted: July 21, 2026

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
 Nays: None.
 Absent: None.
 Abstain: None.

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On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, Resolution (9-B) Authorizing Awarding of Bid to Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling to Perform Rehabilitation at 718 Putnam Avenue was presented for adoption.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is for a bid of \$25,100.00 under the Township's Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Resolution No. 227-26

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, bids were received and publicly opened for the rehabilitation of 718 Putnam Avenue; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling that submitted a bid in the amount of \$25,100.00 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

| Acct.           | Ord. No. | Name                          | Amount      |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 6-19-56-853-299 | -----    | Affordable Housing Trust Fund | \$25,100.00 |

; and

WHEREAS, Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling performed satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, Agnieszka Sadowska, owner of 718 Putnam Avenue, has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Manager and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling, 4475 Route 27, Princeton, New Jersey 08540 for the purposes of rehabilitating 718 Putnam Avenue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Adopted: July 21, 2026

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.  
 Nays: None.  
 Absent: None.  
 Abstain: None.

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On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, Resolution (9-C) Authorizing Awarding of Bid to Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling to Perform Rehabilitation at 293 Fountayne Lane was presented for adoption.

Nerwinski stated that this is for a bid of \$12,500.00 under the Township's Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Resolution No. 228-26

WHEREAS, on Thursday, July 2, 2026, bids were received and publicly opened for the rehabilitation of 293 Fountayne Lane; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling that submitted a bid in the amount of \$12,500.00 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

Acct.	Ord. No.	Name	Amount
6-19-56-853-299	-----	Affordable Housing Trust Fund	\$12,500.00

; and

WHEREAS, Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling performed satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, Debra Kvester, owner of 293 Fountayne Lane, has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Manager and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Silviu Nedelcu Painting and Remodeling, 4475 Route 27, Princeton, New Jersey 08540 for the purposes of rehabilitating 293 Fountayne Lane.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
 Nays: None.
 Absent: None.
 Abstain: None.

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On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, Resolution (9-D) Authorizing Awarding of Bid to Unlimited Builders Construction to Perform Rehabilitation at 34 Slack Avenue was presented for adoption.

Nerwinski stated that this is for a bid of \$29,860.00 under the Township's Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Resolution No. 229-26

WHEREAS, on Thursday, July 2, 2026, bids were received and publicly opened for the rehabilitation of 34 Slack Avenue; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Unlimited Builders Construction that submitted a bid in the amount of \$29,860.00 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is:

| Acct.           | Ord. No. | Name                          | Amount      |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 6-19-56-853-299 | -----    | Affordable Housing Trust Fund | \$29,860.00 |

; and

WHEREAS, Unlimited Builders Construction performed satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, Dan Nowak, owner of 34 Slack Avenue has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Manager and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Unlimited Builders Construction, PO Box 9029, Hamilton, New Jersey 08620 for the purposes of rehabilitating 34 Slack Avenue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Adopted: July 21, 2026

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.

Nays: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

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On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Councilman James Kownacki, Resolution (9-E) Authorizing Awarding of Bid 26-05: 2026 Eldridge Park Pedestrian Improvements to TC Landscape Construction Group, Inc. was presented for adoption.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this project arises out of a previous grant received from the State of New Jersey. The bid received is in the amount of \$318,465.50.

Resolution No. 230-26

WHEREAS, Thursday, June 4, 2026 bids were received and publicly opened for the project known as Bid 26-05: 2026 Eldridge Park Pedestrian Improvements; and

WHEREAS, six (6) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was TC Landscape Construction Group, Inc. who submitted a bid in the amount of \$318,465.50; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the accounts to be charged are;

Acct.	Ord. No.	Name	Amount
G-02-41-230-299	-	Eldridge Park Pedestrian Improvements	\$318,465.50

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Engineer, the Mayor and Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to execute a contract with TC Landscape Construction Group, Inc., 156 Grand Central Parkway, Bayville, NJ 08721 in the amount of \$318,465.50; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.
 Nays: None.
 Absent: None.
 Abstain: None.

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On a motion by Ms. Santos, seconded by Ms. Farmer, Resolution (9-F) Authorizing Awarding of Bid 26-12: 2025 NJDOT Trust Fund Improvement – Brunswick Pike Pedestrian Safety to Earle Asphalt Company was presented for adoption.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this pertains to another phase of the Brunswick Pike streetscape improvement program related to increasing pedestrian safety in the area, for a total amount of \$552,213.13.

Ms. Sylwia Kobus asked if she could be provided with more detail regarding the pedestrian improvements and safety that will be implemented in this area.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that he does not have the information tonight, but asked that she email him and he will be more than happy to provide her with a copy of the contract.

Further discussion was had regarding a complete list of the 24 items involved in this Resolution being attached to the Agenda for Council's review, as well as the fact that this information would be made available to the public in the Municipal Clerk's office.

#### Resolution No. 231-26

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, July 9, 2026 bids were received and publicly opened for the project known as Bid 26-12: 2025 NJDOT Trust Fund Improvement - Brunswick Pike Pedestrian Safety; and

WHEREAS, three (3) bid were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Earle Asphalt Company who submitted a bid in the amount of \$552,213.13; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the accounts to be charged are;

| Acct.           | Order No. | Name                       | Amount       |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------|
| G-02-41-259-299 | -         | Brunswick Pike (Beacons)   | \$500,000.00 |
| C-04-55-516-254 | 2493-25   | Brunswick Pike Streetscape | \$52,213.13  |

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Engineer, the Mayor and Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to execute a contract with Earle Asphalt Company, PO Box Drawer 556, Farmingdale, NJ 07727 in the amount of \$552,213.13; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Adopted: July 21, 2026

Ayes: Councilmembers Farmer, Giglio, Kownacki, Santos and Mayor Bobbitt.  
 Nays: None.  
 Absent: None.  
 Abstain: None.

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### Introduction of Ordinances

Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 2449-23 BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, IN ORDER TO REVISE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENT HEREIN – Improvements to Municipal Buildings: Townhall Employee Breakroom Renovation."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is not an expenditure of new funds, but a redirection to encumber funds needed to address the basement breakroom. He explained that the employee breakroom has never been improved and is not currently being used.

The Ordinance No. 2520-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Giglio    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

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Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "BOND ORDINANCE AMENDING BOND ORDINANCE 2211-15 BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, IN ORDER TO REVISE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPROVEMENT HEREIN – Various Park and Recreation Facility Improvements to include "LED Field Lights Retrofit."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this relates to directing funds to retrofit lighting throughout all Township parks to make them more sustainable and efficient.

The Ordinance No. 2521-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Ms. Farmer	X						
Ms. Giglio	X						
Mr. Kownacki	X						X
Ms. Santos	X					X	
Mayor Bobbitt	X						

Adoption of Ordinances

Mayor Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY ON LANDOVER ROAD FOR OPEN SPACE PURPOSES."

Mr. Nerwinski stated that this is for the Township to acquire 36 Landover Road, i.e., the original Lawrence Neighborhood Center, with the intention of preserving the building and celebrating the neighborhood's history by turning it into a museum for the community to enjoy.

Ms. Farmer stated that turning this building into a museum will be a tremendous addition to the community by capturing the history of this community and all that it has done for Lawrence Township.

Ordinance No. 2519-26

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY ON LANDOVER ROAD FOR OPEN SPACE PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the residents of Lawrence Township have previously approved, by public referendum, the acquisition of land for open space and conservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence has identified certain real property commonly known as 36 Landover Road, Lawrence Township, New Jersey, also designated on the official Tax Map of the Township as Block 02327, Lot 0003, as appropriate for acquisition for open space purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council has determined that acquisition of the property will further the public purposes of preserving open space, a historical building and protecting community character; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Lawrence and the property owner have negotiated a purchase price of Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Township of Lawrence is hereby authorized to acquire the real property known as 36 Landover Road, Lawrence Township, New Jersey, also known as Block 02327, Lot 0003, for open space purposes, at a purchase price not to exceed \$70,000.00.
2. The Mayor, Municipal Manager, Township Attorney, and Township Clerk are hereby authorized to take all actions necessary to effectuate the acquisition authorized herein.

3. The funds for said acquisition are hereby certified as available from the Township Open Space Trust Fund and/or other lawful municipal funding sources.
4. This Ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days after final passage and publication according to law.

Adopted: July 21, 2026

The Ordinance No. 2519-26 was approved on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Ms. Farmer	X						X
Ms. Giglio	X						
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Ms. Santos	X					X	
Mayor Bobbitt	X						

Manager's Report –

There was no manager's report.

Attorney's Report –

There was no attorney's report.

Clerk's Report –

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Tonya Carter, informed Council that the New Jersey State League of Municipalities Annual Conference will take place on November 17th through the 19th this year. She stated that early registration began July 1, 2026, and asked that Council let her know if they would like to attend in order for her to register them for the event.

Ms. Carter next disclosed that the Mercer County Board of Elections distributed flyers pertaining to learning more about becoming an election board worker, with a "recruitment day celebration" taking place on Thursday, August 20, 2026 at the Mercer County Office Park in Ewing, NJ at 5:00 p.m. She suggested that they pass this information along to anyone they know who may be interested in becoming an election board worker.

Finally, Ms. Carter shared that she sent Council an email providing information pertaining to an upcoming photo-op, and to please let her know which days they will be available for this event.

Unfinished Business –

There was no unfinished business.

Old Business/New Business –

Mayor Bobbitt reiterated his desire to revisit Boards and Committees, and asked Council to let him know how their committees are functioning and if the ordinance needs to be changed to allow for more or fewer members, name changes, etc. He explained that his idea is to have this completed by September.

Additionally, Mayor Bobbitt informed Mr. Sypek that he will be sending him an email requesting information pertaining to which Boards and Committees are legally required.

Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –

Ms. Marianne Mele asked if there are any contracts presently being executed or negotiated with developers for either the Gulick or ETS properties, as she understands that there are contracts with developers for both properties moving ahead without regard to what is transpiring at past and current Council meetings.

Mayor Bobbitt stated that he is unclear how many contracts there are but will find out and bring it up at the next meeting. He then asked Ms. Mele to share the names of the developers who have supposedly signed these contracts, to which Ms. Mele stated that she could not for fear of being sued.

Further discussion was had regarding the misinformation being spread throughout the community pertaining to these properties, there being no Land Use application before either the Planning or Zoning Boards, which renders the idea of "shovels being at the ready" false, and the fundamental misunderstanding of Land Use Law and the Township's role in land development on behalf of those questioning supposed "active contracts." Additionally, it was discussed that when and if the Planning or Zoning Boards are presented with an application, further studies will take place with regard to traffic, environment, and density and subject to a public hearing.

Mr. Vince Evans asked if the number of units that is being suggested is the approved amount to be built on this property.

Mayor Bobbitt responded in the affirmative, explaining that it is part of the Township's Fourth Round Housing Obligation as was previously mentioned by the Municipal Planner.

Mr. Sypek reiterated that there is no approved plan to build anything at this time; there is only the current settlement agreement in the Superior Court of New Jersey indicating a certain number of units with regard to that property and a certain number of affordable housing, with no current application before the Planning or Zoning Boards.

Ms. Kathryn Trenner asked if she could have a copy of the settlement agreement to see the items that were agreed upon by the Township.

Mr. Sypek stated that she may, as this is a public record.

Ms. Carter stated that this information can also be found on the Lawrence Township website, under the *Engineering* page.

Ms. Joyce Allington asked how long the residents will have before the various studies are completed if the developers are given approval to move forward.

Discussion took place regarding the Township having no control over when a developer will file an application, or the timeframe allotted for the Planning Board to review the application or produce the studies, as there is no set time limit. Further, it was stated that when the Municipal Engineer deems an application and ensuing studies to be complete, the item will be placed on a regular meeting of the Planning Board that will be duly noticed and open to the public.

Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 232-26 (18-C.1) through Nos. 258-26 (18-H.4) and Resolution Nos. 260-26 (18-H.6) through Nos. 262-26 (18-H.8) were approved by the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Ms. Farmer	X						
Ms. Giglio	X						
Mr. Kownacki	X						X
Ms. Santos	X					X	
Mayor Bobbitt	X						

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

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Mayor Bobbitt read by title, a Resolution No. 259-26, *"Authorizing a Resolution Designating Certain Real Property Located at 3641 Lawrence Road as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area Pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J. 40A:12A-1, et seq., and Directing the Preparation of a Redevelopment Plan."*

Ms. Farmer stated that she listened intently to all the public comments made tonight, and noted a few words and phrases that struck her, such as, "urbanizing," "these people," "draining resources," "bleeding our neighborhoods, schools, police department," "subsidized housing," "housing projects," and "not feeling safe jogging in my neighborhood because of the people." She relayed that it pains her to hear these words coming from residents in her community. Ms. Farmer shared that she has lived in Lawrence Township over fifty years—a fourth-generation Township resident—and she takes great pride in her community. She noted that there is an affordable housing crisis, and strongly believes that teachers, firefighters, police, professionals, and young college students deserve a place to live here in Lawrence Township, in a "bucolic neighborhood." Although she is saddened by the loss of a historic home such as the Gulick house, she acknowledged that thirty years have passed without sufficient action being taken to preserve it. Ms. Farmer expressed hope that, moving forward, steps will be taken to ensure that a similar situation does not occur with another historic home in Lawrence Township. She explained that she has served for two years on the Lawrence Township Planning Board, and understands the responsibility of Council—through a mandate by the State of New Jersey—to provide affordable housing within the community. Ms. Farmer emphasized that she is very proud of the work done by the Planning Board and Council, and will continue to stand up for all residents of Lawrence Township.

Ms. Giglio stated that Council is hearing what is being said by the residents, but noted that there is a difference between "hearing" and "agreeing." She found many things that were said tonight to be offensive, and the comments made regarding the Municipal Planner to be completely inappropriate. She regrets not stating—while the Municipal Planner was still present—that the allegations accusing her of acting inappropriately were awful, and relayed that the criticisms aimed at Ms. McManus had no basis in fact.

Ms. Santos agreed with Ms. Farmer that there is a housing crisis and people deserve a place to live, whether it be in bucolic neighborhoods or otherwise. She stated that she is feeling very emotional after hearing many of tonight's comments, and shared that she fully supports this Resolution, not only for her generation but for generations to come.

Mr. Kownacki stated that serving on the Planning Board takes a lot of time and members must be good listeners and have "strong backbones." He explained that attendance at Planning Board meetings varies, with some meetings being well-attended while others have fewer attendees. Mr. Kownacki noted that, on occasion, decisions are made at meetings with limited public attendance. He emphasized that this is not due to any lack of transparency on the part of the Township, which openly advertises its meetings and provides the public with the opportunity to attend and participate. He

shared that the Township has professionals that know what they are doing, and he is proud of the decisions that the Planning Board has made, as they must take into consideration all 33,000 Township residents and not simply a small but vocal group of residents.

Mayor Bobbitt stated that some of the words spoken tonight were disgusting and showed a lack of understanding about Lawrence Township. He explained that he has friends throughout all four corners of the Township, and that hearing comments that mischaracterize the Township demonstrates how limited that perspective can be. Mayor Bobbitt shared that he is the third owner of a small Cape Cod-style home in the Colonial Lakeland area, which was once part of a potato farm in the 1950's, and noted that this is one example of the progress and development that have taken place in the Township over the years. He noted that one of the things Council has been tasked with is figuring out how to manage that change while fulfilling their legal obligations, and in this case, Council must figure out how to change the zoning to make it inclusionary to allow for the realistic development of affordable housing units. Mayor Bobbitt indicated that Lawrence Township does not have the financial resources to construct affordable units on its own; therefore, like many New Jersey Municipalities, the Township must rely on the private sector, with developers providing twenty percent of the units as affordable housing and the remaining eighty percent at market rate. He stated that he cannot disregard the Township's legal obligations under the Mount Laurel doctrine or the expertise of the Township's professionals simply because a small group of residents does not want affordable housing in their neighborhood. Mayor Bobbitt emphasized that it is his intent to do his best for all 33,000 residents of Lawrence Township, and so tonight he will be voting 'yes' on Resolution 259-26.

Mr. Nerwinski thanked everyone who remained until the conclusion of the meeting, stating that their willingness to stay speaks highly of their character, and remarked that the absence of those who left before the meeting concluded could be interpreted by others as they saw fit. He also commended the young gentleman who presented the Gulick house presentation for remaining until the end of the meeting, noting that he may have had other commitments or activities he would have preferred to attend. Mr. Nerwinski then gave a brief history of the Gulick house, and noted the Planning Board's efforts to save the building, the Governing Body's lack of legal authority to do so as the building is not Township-owned or designated "historic," and the fact that no one in the private sector had stepped in to purchase and/or preserve the home. Finally, Mr. Nerwinski remarked that it is improper for a municipal government to spend local taxpayer money to fund a multimillion-dollar rehabilitation project for a property the municipality does not own.

Ms. Farmer stated, in the spirit of transparency, that there are opportunities pertaining to the Township's Master Plan for members of the public to engage with Council.

Resolution No. 259-26 (18-H.5) was approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL       | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|---------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Ms. Farmer    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Ms. Giglio    | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki  | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Ms. Santos    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mayor Bobbitt | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

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### Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –

Ms. Giglio thanked the Recreation Department and the Recreation Advisory Committee for another successful fireworks event. In addition, she wished to highlight the Recreation Department's "Safety Town" program, stating that it is one of the best programs offered by the Township of Lawrence. She noted that Safety Town is in its 50<sup>th</sup> year, and provided a brief overview of the program. She then thanked the Recreation and Health Departments, the Lawrence Township Police and Fire Departments, and the head of the Safety Town program, Ms. Jen Scaruba, for their involvement in making the program a success.

Ms. Giglio stated that National Night Out will be held on Tuesday, August 4, 2026 at Town Hall from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Farmer thanked Mayor Bobbitt for recognizing the fact that July is *Disability Pride Month*, and for his comments regarding the observance.

Ms. Farmer reported that she attended the Business and Economic Growth Committee on behalf of Councilwoman Santos, and participated in the Student Liaison interviews. She stated that there are many outstanding young people in this community who have a desire to engage with and contribute to the Township.

Mr. Sypek wished to publicly thank Mayor Bobbitt for coming to Quaker Bridge Mall on Saturday to welcome the Anchor House riders and support staff. He shared that he has been involved with Anchor House for nearly fifty years and noted that the event has been held at the mall for the past forty-eight consecutive years. Mr. Sypek relayed that this is the biggest non-profit bicycle fundraising event in the United States.

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### Written Communications –

There were no written communications.

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There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Tonya D. Carter, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor

Re-opening of the Regular Meeting of Council:

8:56 p.m.

After the Closed Session, Mayor Bobbitt read the following letter he received from Senator Shirley K. Turner:

*Dear Mayor Bobbitt,*

*I am pleased to inform you that I secured a \$2 million appropriation in the Fiscal Year 2027 State budget to support improvements to the Lawrence Township Neighborhood Center.*

*The request for this appropriation was initiated by me and advanced by my office through the State budget process. I initiated the request because I recognize the important role the Neighborhood Center has played in the community and believe it has the potential to once again serve as a welcoming and active resource for the Lawrence Township community and residents.*

*This funding will help support needed improvements to the facility so that it can provide programs, services, activities, and gathering space for children, families, seniors, and community organizations. I look forward to working with you and Township officials as plans for the Neighborhood Center move forward. Please do not hesitate to contact me if my office can be of assistance during the process.*

*Sincerely,  
Shirley K. Turner  
Sentator – 15<sup>th</sup> District*

Mayor Bobbitt stated that Council can all agree that they are very thankful to Senator Turner for her advocacy on behalf of Lawrence Township.

Ms. Farmer asked if the red, white and blue lights will stay lit throughout the remainder of July, to which Mr. Nerwinski responded that yes, they would stay lit.

There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Tonya D. Carter, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor