DELRAN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 2, 2025– 7:00 PM

Open Public Meetings Act

Delran Township Planning Board regular meeting of Thursday, October 2, 2025, was called to order by Mr. Giles at 7:02 pm in the Delran Township Municipal Building.

The Open Public Meetings Act announcement was read by Mr. Giles, and the Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Roll Call

Present: Mr. Lunemann, Mr. Parento, Mr. Ozdemir, Mr. Moore, Mr. Spych, Mr. Buzzi, Mr. Hutchins, Mr. Giles & Mr. Paris
Absent: Mr. Lyon & Mr. Jeney
Professionals: Mr. Chris Norman, Attorney; Mr. Fred Turek, Engineer & Mr. Christopher Dochney, Planner

Applications

Rooted at Delran, LLC (Final Site Plan Approval)

Project Type: Class 5 Retail Cannabis Dispensary
Location: 8,000 US Route 130 North (Block 120, Lot 8; C2 Commercial District)
Application Number: PN 2025-01
Representing Attorney: Steve Slavin, Esq. (*Prime, Tuvell and Maselli*)

Project Background & History

The applicant previously received a conditional use variance, preliminary site plan approval, bulk variances, and design waivers on **April 3, 2025**, with the formal resolution adopted on **June 5, 2025**. The current hearing evaluated final major site plan consistency regarding an existing 2,670 sq. ft. building restoration.

Expert Testimony

Richard Ortiz, PE (*Dynamic Engineering*) was accepted as an expert civil engineer. Mr. Ortiz presented the revised plan (**Exhibit A1**), detailed following on-site reviews with Township Engineer Fred Turek.

Stormwater & Curbing: Perimeter curbing with intermittent curb cuts and an interior planted swale will capture and divert stormwater runoff away from residential boundaries and into a large wooded depression in the southeast corner. No retention basin is required.

Landscaping: Replaced striped asphalt zones with structural landscape islands and enhanced frontage foliage along Route 130 to screen mechanical fixtures.

Debris & Berm Construction: To remediate existing debris layers (tested 8–10 feet deep), the applicant will excavate all non-native material down to native soil, replace it with clean topsoil, and construct a graded landscape berm.

Buffering & Lighting: An earth-tone, 6-foot vinyl fence and five new trees will top the berm to completely eliminate automotive headlight flare projecting onto southern residential properties. Site fixtures were revised to be down-lit with house-side shields to eliminate boundary lighting spillover.

Board Conditions & Public Comment

Encroachment & Easement: Board professionals noted a portion of Woodview Road encroaches onto the property. The applicant agreed to clear a legal description and route an easement through the Township Council and Attorney.

Construction Methods: In response to safety concerns regarding existing debris stability, a binding note will be added to Exhibit A1 mandating **zero construction disturbance or traffic interference** on the public roadway during excavation.

Public Comment

Michael Sinchenko, Woodview Road: Raised concerns about the historical lack of maintenance on the adjacent retention depression, residential lighting exposure, and foot traffic security. The applicant agreed to clear out overgrown brush in the runoff depression area prior to construction, construct a **6-foot black vinyl chain-link fence** looping the back section to mitigate liability/trespassing, and mount private property signage.

Waste & Security: Waste/recycling will remain completely inside the building and be handled via private haulers inside a secure loading area. The detailed security camera configuration was left as an offline record to protect municipal safety protocols.

Action Taken

A motion to approve Final Site Plan Approval subject to all standard professional reports and the specific stipulations (easement processing, roadway protection note, retention area clearing, and supplemental 6ft chain-link fence) was finalized.

Mr. Lunemann made a motion for Approval of the Final Site Plan, Mr. Moore second the motion. The results are as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Lunemann, Mr. Parento, Mr. Giles, Mr. Ozdemir, Mr. Moore, Mr. Buzzi, Mr. Hutchins & Mr. Paris
Nayes: Mr. Spych
Absent: Mr. Jeney & Mr. Lyon
Abstain: None
Application Approved

Zacate, LLC (Amendment to Conditions of Approval)

Project Type: Operational Retail Cannabis Dispensary (Class 5 License)
Location: 4037 US Route 130 South (Block 9, Lot 41.24)
Application Number: PN 2025-06 (Amending Resolution PP 2023-04)
Representing Attorney: Peter Chacanias, Esq. (*Hyland Levin Shapiro LLP*)

Requested Amendment

The applicant requested the total removal of **Page 7, Paragraph 4** of their initial April 6, 2023 approval resolution, which mandated keeping an **armed security guard** on-site during all operating hours. The facility has operated for approximately 1.5 to 2 years.

Applicant & Expert Testimony

Eric Wudtke (*Chief Legal Officer*) testified that the store seeks to replace the outside third-party armed guard vendor with an in-house, dedicated employee serving as an access control "Ambassador". The staffing volume will remain identical.

Security Redundancy: All state-mandated security measures will persist unchanged, including controlled keycard environments, multiple secure vault doors, silent panic alarms routing to local dispatch, and 24-hour perimeter video monitoring reviewed daily by corporate entities and overnight by *Security*.

Ellie Siegel (*CEO, Longview Strategic*) was sworn in as a cannabis sector consultant.

State Data: Certified that statistical reporting tracking retail dispensaries statewide shows incredibly low incident ratios—often lower than traditional cash-heavy businesses like pizzerias. Armed personnel are a statistical anomaly throughout New Jersey municipalities, as most locations leverage unarmed entry ambassadors.

Police Coordination: Chief Gasper reviewed the updated security documentation via email on Monday and confirmed the department had no issues with removing the armed guard requirement.

Jen Dalickas (*Day-to-Day General Manager*) verified operational data.

Response Times: Confirmed emergency response times from Delran Police/Fire are exceptional, clocking in at 1.5 to 2 minutes during an isolated faulty sensor event (averaging 5–8 minutes generally). Staff undergo intensive de-escalation protocols before working shifts.

Board Discussion & Public Comment

Mr. Giles opened this portion to the public with a motion from Mr. Ozdemir and second by Mr. Buzzi. The results are as follows:

The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

Michael Sinchenko: Inquired regarding parking lot altercations and product disposal safety. Management clarified that staff actively request individuals smoking in cars to vacate the premises via camera observation. Regulated product waste is destroyed and extracted strictly via state-certified private haulers.

Mr. Giles closed this public portion of the meeting with a motion from Mr. Moore and second by Mr. Ozdemir. The results are as follows:

The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Board Discussion

Trial Period Stipulations: Board members expressed hesitation regarding the total deletion of oversight. To protect local safety, the board implemented a strict **six-month trial framework**.

Action Taken

A motion to approve the amendment relieving the armed guard mandate was passed, bound to three special conditions: an **in-person status report at the April 2026 board meeting**, submission of the Ambassador training portfolio to the Police Chief for vetting, and a mandate that any verified commission of a criminal act (excluding minor infractions or civil accidents) triggers an immediate reversal back to an armed presence.

Mr. Moore made a motion to approve the amendment relieving the armed guard mandate of keeping an armed security guard on-site during all operating hours, Mayor Hutchins second the motion. The results are as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Lunemann, Mr. Parento, Mr. Giles, Mr. Ozdemir & Mr. Moore
Nayes: Mr. Buzzi & Mr. Spych
Absent: Mr. Jeney & Mr. Lyon
Abstain: Mayor Hutchins & Mr. Paris
Application Approved

General Open/Close to the public

Mr. Giles opened this portion to the public with a motion from Mr. Moore, and second by Mr. Ozdemir. The results are as follows:

The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Giles closed this public portion of the meeting with a motion from Mr. Lunemann and second by Mr. Moore. The results are as follows:

The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Adjournment

With no further public remarks or business brought forward, at 8:52, Mayor Huthchins made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Lunemann second the motion. The results are as follows:

The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen Kohn,
Planning & Zoning Board Secretary