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MEMO TO: North Brunswick Township Planning Board

FROM: James C. Watson, P.E., PTOE *JCW*
Township Planning Board Engineer's Office

DATE: May 5, 2025

SUBJECT: **Preliminary and Final Site Plan
Hidden Lake Storage
Hidden Lake Towne Center, LLC
2-4-6 Towne Center Drive
Technical Review No. 1
Block 4.05, Lot 122.02
Township of North Brunswick, Middlesex County, NJ
Application Number: 2685
Our File No.: 115.NOP0004.P49**

Pursuant to our authorization, we have reviewed the above referenced Preliminary / Final Site Plan submission for Block 4.05, Lot 122.02 located on 2-4-6 Towne Center Drive within North Brunswick Township. The following information has been submitted to this office for review:

- A. Final Site Plan titled, *"Preliminary / Final Site Plan, Hidden Lake Storage for Block 4.05, Lot 122.05"*, prepared by Gregory S. Oman, P.E., of the Menlo Engineering Associates, dated January 6, 2025, consisting of nine (9) sheets;
- B. Architectural Plans entitled: *"Proposed New Storage Building for: Kaplan Hidden Lake Storage"*, prepared by Perez + Radosti Associates, P.C., dated February 19, 2025, consisting of three (3) sheets;
- C. Township of North Brunswick Site Plan / Conditional Use Application (Form A), dated February 26, 2025;
- D. 10% Ownership Disclosure Form;
- E. Site Plan Completeness Checklist, Appendix A, not dated;
- F. Tax Certification E-mail from Fran Cipot dated February 21, 2025;
- G. 200' Radius Map – Block 4.05 Lot 122.02;

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NJ CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION NO. 24GA28359000

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- H. Applicant's Planning Board Submission Letter, prepared by Bret Kaplan, Esq of Kaplan Companies, dated February 27, 2025;
- I. Township of North Brunswick, Zoning Officer's Memorandum, dated March 10, 2025;

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The subject property, located at 2-4-6 Towne Center Drive, is identified as Block 4.05, Lot 122.02 on the Township of North Brunswick tax map. It occupies approximately 5.53 acres within the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zone and currently serves as the Hidden Lake Towne Center.

Existing Conditions

The existing site was approved by the Planning Board in 1980 and consists of the following key features:

- Three (3) two-story commercial buildings
- One (1) single-story garage
- A paved parking lot with 211 striped spaces (prior to proposed modifications)
- Landscaped lawn areas, sidewalks, and a paver patio
- A fenced playground that formerly served a daycare tenant (now vacant)
- Supporting infrastructure including site lighting and stormwater collection

The site is surrounded by residential developments. It is improved with typical suburban utility infrastructure, including underground water, sanitary sewer, electric, and gas services connected to Township and utility authority systems.

It is noted that previous approvals were granted for the conversion of the three commercial buildings into 39 age-restricted residential units, although that project has not commenced construction and remains in the resolution compliance review phase.



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Proposed Storage Buildings

The Applicant, Hidden Lake Towne Center, LLC, proposes to construct two garage storage unit buildings to provide additional storage space for existing tenants and nearby residents. The project is consistent with the zoning regulations of the PUD District, where such storage units are a permitted accessory use, subject to Planning Board approval.

- Building 1 is a 4,210-square-foot structure proposed on the eastern portion of the site, in the area currently occupied by the existing playground. It will contain a total of 19 storage units, most of which will measure approximately 10 feet by 20 feet. One larger unit is proposed within the building, sized at 20 feet by 30 feet, to accommodate greater storage needs.
- Building 2 is a 1,800-square-foot structure proposed to be located on a previously landscaped area of the site. It will consist of six storage units, each measuring 10 feet by 30 feet, providing uniform and spacious storage accommodations.

The proposed buildings will connect to the existing on-site stormwater collection system. Existing infrastructure appears to accommodate runoff; however, grading and inlets will be adjusted to redirect flows appropriately. No new detention or infiltration systems are proposed. The Applicant has provided lighting and landscape plan. A replacement landscaping plan has been submitted to compensate for removed trees and vegetative cover due to the playground removal.

The total number of parking spaces will be reduced from 211 to 207, a net loss of four (4) spaces to allow for the turning radius and access to Building 1.

No changes to the existing Towne Center ingress and egress site driveways along Willowbrook Drive are proposed.

The Applicant does not seek any variances or design waivers as part of this application.

Concerning our review of the submission for compliance with the Zoning and Site Plan Ordinance, we offer the following comments:



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II. ZONING AND CHECKLIST COMMENTS

1. The application pertains to an existing shopping center property located within the (PUD) Planned Unit Development Zone. The Zoning Officer has confirmed that the proposed garage storage units are a permitted accessory use in the zone which require approval from the Planning Board.
2. The Applicant has not requested any variances associated with the proposed site modifications.
3. The Applicant requests the following exemptions from the Township's standard site plan submission requirements:
 - Staging Plan: The Applicant has not provided a staging plan for the proposed development and is seeking a waiver from submitting a total development plan.
 - Stormwater Management Report: A waiver is requested from submitting a stormwater management report.
 - NJDEP Letter of Interpretation (LOI): The Applicant has not submitted a Letter of Interpretation from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Freshwater Wetlands Division and is requesting a waiver from this requirement.
 - Traffic Study: A waiver is requested from submitting a traffic study, including anticipated traffic volumes, capacity of existing roadways, traffic impacts on roadway network and need for traffic improvements.
 - Location of all Existing and Proposed Storm Drainage Structures and Utility Lines: The application does not include a complete layout showing the location, pipe sizes, grades, and flow directions of all existing and proposed storm drainage structures and utility lines (telephone, electric, water, sewer, gas). A waiver is requested from this requirement.
 - Distance to Nearest Intersection: A waiver is requested from providing the measured distance, along the centerlines of abutting streets, to the nearest public street intersection.



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- Zoning and School District Boundaries within 200 Feet: A waiver is requested from submitting a separate or key map identifying all existing schools and zoning district boundaries within 200 feet of the property.
- Current Property Survey: A waiver is requested from submitting a property survey which is less than one year old, prepared by a New Jersey Licensed Land Surveyor.

Overall, we take no exception to the standard site plan submission waivers requested. However, the Applicant should provide testimony justifying the waivers requested.

III. SITE PLAN COMMENTS

1. The Applicant should provide testimony relative to the Architectural elements of the proposed building and specifically how the design will integrate with the existing site context and surrounding development. In addition, testimony should be provided relative to the proposed building / site signage and compliance with the Township's ordinance.
2. The Applicant should verify whether the proposed location of the western storage building falls within the residential or commercial portion of the Planned Unit Development. If it is located within the residential area, the applicant must demonstrate that the minimum requirement of 15% common open space, as outlined in § 205-87.C of the Township Code, is still being satisfied following the proposed improvements. If the building is located within the commercial portion of the site, the Applicant should clarify that this standard does not apply.
3. Please verify that all curbs and sidewalks meet ADA slope and accessibility standards.
4. There are conflicting Block and Lot numbers within the site plans and submission documents which should be correlated.
5. Confirm whether the storage buildings will generate any waste and if so, how disposal will be handled. If no trash is anticipated, this should be stated in the testimony.
6. No signage is shown for the garage structures. The Applicant should indicate if any building identification, directional signage, or tenant numbering will be added, and if so whether it will comply with Township sign regulations.



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7. The Applicant should provide testimony relative to the status of the project previously approved for this site, which allowed for the conversion of the three commercial buildings into 39 age-restricted residential units. Considering that this project has not commenced construction and remains in the resolution compliance review phase, compatibility between the previously approved project and this proposed storage project currently under review should be discussed.

IV. TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND PARKING COMMENTS

1. The Applicant should confirm that the buildings are accessible to emergency vehicles, and that adequate access has been maintained in accordance with applicable emergency access standards. Additionally, the proposed drive aisles should be verified to accommodate the turning movements of the anticipated design vehicles including moving trucks and emergency service vehicles. Site circulation plans should be submitted which demonstrate adequate circulation is being proposed without encroachments.
2. Clarification is recommended regarding vehicle maneuverability in front of the proposed storage units. The Applicant should confirm whether there is sufficient turning space or if a turnaround is proposed. Anticipated operations should be discussed.
3. The design and placement of all traffic signs and striping shall follow the requirements specified in "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways," published by the U.S. Department of Transportation and adopted by the N.J. Department of Transportation.
4. Traffic striping and pavement markings should be Thermoplastic. This should be indicated on the plans.
5. Fire lanes and striping are subject to the approval of the Fire Marshal.

V. GRADING, DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

1. The Applicant's Engineer shall provide a copy of the Soil Conservation District Plan Certification to the Township upon approval.



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2. The Applicant has requested a waiver from providing complete utility and drainage mapping. We recommend the Applicant's Engineer submit a drainage statement with supporting computations in order to determine the applicability of the Townships' Stormwater Control Ordinance and assess any impacts to the downstream receiving stormwater conveyance system due to the proposed site improvements. Additionally, our office recommends consideration be given to the 25-year design storm event.
3. The Applicant has requested a waiver from providing complete utility and drainage mapping. Roof downspout locations and/or connections to the existing stormwater conveyance system shall be provided on the plans along with their appropriate construction details.
4. A grading plan should be submitted that provides the following:
 - a. Top of curb and bottom of curb spot grades at points of curvature, points of tangency, transitions where the proposed curb changes direction, depressed curb, where depressed curb transitions to full depth curb, and where proposed curb meets existing curb.
 - b. Spot elevations should be provided along where proposed pavement meets the existing pavement.
 - c. Additional spot grades shall be provided within the proposed lawn areas in order to demonstrate that minimum 2.00% slopes are provided and graded away from the proposed building footprints.
 - d. Additional spot grades shall be provided within the proposed motor vehicle surfaces to demonstrate a minimum 0.75% slopes are provided and graded away from the proposed building footprints.

VI. LANDSCAPING COMMENTS

1. In accordance with Code Section 205-106A, a solid and continuous four-season screen shall be provided within the required buffer. Currently, only one (1) evergreen species is proposed for the entire buffer and it is heavily browsed by deer. A buffer with both evergreen and deciduous tree species is recommended. It appears there is sufficient space to provide an improved buffer.



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2. Provide a note on the plans to indicate a Tree Removal Permit shall be obtained prior to any site disturbance.
3. Provide an additional shade tree within the open area, located west of the smaller proposed garage building.
4. Provide foundation plantings along the two (2) ends of the L-shaped garage building, to enhance site aesthetics.
5. Revise the 'Deciduous Tree Planting Detail', sheet 9 of 9, to remove the reference to corrugated pipe as a trunk guard. This is not recommended due to limited air circulation and light. Revise the detail to indicate a rigid, plastic open mesh trunk guard instead. Also, only two (2) stakes are required. Currently, three (3) are indicated.
6. Revise the 'Construction Sequence', sheet 7 of 9, to indicate the timing of tree protection fence installation and removal, to prevent confusion during construction. Also, graphically depict the fence location on the plans.

VII. LIGHTING COMMENTS

1. Revise the plans to provide isolux pattern details, to include a scale and graph.
2. Revise the plans to indicate proposed timers and hours of operation for the light fixtures. It is recommended that light levels be reduced during non-operational hours to minimize light pollution.
3. Testimony should be provided regarding the sufficiency of existing fixtures and any modifications for the new structures. Lighting should be designed to avoid glare or overflow onto adjacent properties.

VIII. OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS & MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

1. Construction on the site is subject to the review and approval of the Township Construction Code Official prior to any site disturbance.



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2. Certification that all taxes are paid as required by the Ordinance shall be submitted to the Board.
3. All structures, walls, and ADA/Barrier Free Access issues are subject to the review and approval of the Construction Code Official.
4. The Applicant's Engineer should design the proposed ramps, sidewalks, and crosswalks, to meet the latest ADA requirements. The Applicant's Engineer should provide landing areas as required before and after the ramps at the appropriate slopes and the locations of proposed detectable warning surfaces should be clearly indicated. This ADA compliance issue should be reviewed relative to all ramps, sidewalks, and crosswalks currently proposed under this project.
5. We defer the review of ADA requirements to the Construction Code Official. All handicap ramps must be designed to demonstrate compliance with current ADA requirements.
6. Documentation should be submitted indicating that the Applicant has submitted for approval, Letters of No Interest, and/or plan certification to all agencies having jurisdiction including the North Brunswick Police Traffic Safety and North Brunswick Bureau of Fire Safety.
7. Copies of applications and approvals or certifications by other agencies, as may be required, should be provided as a condition of final approval and prior to the site disturbance.
8. Final As-Built Plans shall meet the North Brunswick Township As-Built Criteria List and contain the information required in the Township's Final Survey Checklist. The Final As-built Plan shall be provided by the Applicant to the Township Planning Staff as both a hard copy (paper or mylar) and as a digital/electronic document(s). The digital data used for such documents shall be in vector format and contain coordinate values for at least (3) identifiable boundary corners (preferably in the 1983 New Jersey State Plane Coordinate System) prior to occupancy.
9. The Applicant shall bring all escrow accounts within the Township current.
10. Except as specifically varied or waived herein, the Approvals granted herein do not in any way relieve the Applicant from constructing all improvements in accordance with



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good and acceptable engineering and construction standards and all construction engineering requirements of the Township.

11. The Applicant shall furnish to the Township all performance guarantee(s) provided for in the MLUL, said guarantee(s) shall be in a form required to be acceptable pursuant to the MLUL, and shall be provided to the Township Attorney for review.

We reserve the right to present additional comments pending the Testimony of the Applicant before the Board and the receipt of revised Plans.

IX. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL, FAIR SHARE CONTRIBUTIONS, IF ANY, AND PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES

Any approval should be conditioned upon the submission of revised plans and revised reports in accordance with the above comments, proof of approval or waivers from all other agencies having jurisdiction, the construction of off-tract improvements if deemed necessary by the Mayor and Council, the payment of any mandatory development fees and outstanding escrow fees and the Applicant's Engineer providing an estimate for the cost of improvements to the Township in order that performance guarantees and inspection fees can be calculated.

Any approvals, if granted, should be conditioned on all of the requirements contained within subsequent Site Plan approvals for the site as applicable.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

JCW/go

cc: Planning Board Members
Planning Board Attorney
Applicant
Applicant's Engineer
Applicant's Attorney