

Village of Hilton
Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes
Monday, April 13, 2026
Approved

Present: Chairman John Steinmetz, Members Kim Fay, Elaine Begy, Joe Ruta, Paul Cliff, and Laura Pettine, Mayor Andrew Fowler, Village Liaison Christine Brown, Code Enforcement Officer Ron Bragg, Deputy Clerk Amy Harter, Recording Secretary Fawn Cretelle-Galan

Guests: Pat Laber of Shultz Associates, Ellie Dickerman of MRB, Shawn Logue of MRB, Jeff DiCesare, Lisa Stappenbacher, Kay Melvin, Lorie Krantz, Jim & Betty Causyn, Dave & Ann Wright, Calvin McGee, Bill & Christine Caruso, other unidentified guests.

This meeting was held in the Board Room and via Zoom.

1. Chairman Fay called the meeting to order at 6:28 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and a moment of silence.
2. The Chairman declares, for the minutes, that a quorum is present so the meeting may proceed as planned.
3. Mayor Fowler administered the Oath of Office to John Steinmetz as Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, for a five-year term as effective April 7, 2026 through March 31, 2031.
4. Mayor Fowler administered the Oath of Office to Paul Cliff as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, for a five-year term as effective April 7, 2026 through March 31, 2031.

Minutes

Review and approve meeting minutes of March 9, 2026. Approved Chairman Steinmetz, seconded by Member Fay. Carried 4-0. (Harry was absent, Laura voted in his place.) Chairman Steinmetz abstained.

Public Hearing
Parkland Place, 261 East Avenue

Pat Laber gave an overview of the 8.2-acre development, being 24 units in 12 buildings, each unit to be 1,370 square feet with a 2-car garage, and 2 car driveways. Access will be via East Avenue and the roadway behind Hilton East, featuring a sidewalk along one side of the roadway, landscaping, streetlights, paths, utilities, water, and sewer. All village and FEMA permits have been obtained and flood zone has been adhered to.

Chairman Steinmetz opened the public hearing at 6:35pm.

Laurie Krantz of 20 Short Hills Drive asked if a traffic study had been done. Laurie expressed concern that making a left from Short Hills during the morning and evening commutes is difficult,

especially with the school traffic. She would like to know how the subdivision will affect drivability.

Pat Laber noted that a traffic study was done by the Passero Associates a year ago, which resulted in the conclusion that during morning peak hours, there would be an estimated additional 7 cars in and 23 cars out over the span of one hour. During the evening peak hours, it was concluded that there would be an additional 20 cars in and 12 cars out during the evening.

Chairman Steinmetz stated that would be approximately 1 car over 3 minutes on average, which is not too significant of an impact.

Lisa Stappenbacher of 22 Short Hills Drive questioned whether the study was done during a weekday.

Kay Melvin of 25 Short Hills Drive added that she thought there was a lot more traffic than they were aware of and that starting at 6:30 a.m. there are so many school busses that it is difficult to get out of the tract.

Pat Laber reiterated that these numbers are an estimate in addition to the traffic now based on state and federal standards. These numbers, based on use and applied to roadway, show there will be no effect on the service of the road, and no improvements need to be made.

Kay Melvin asked if the road is a state road, and so changes would need to go through state.

Pat Laber answered yes, it is a state road, and improvements were not warranted with this project.

(The road is actually a county road.)

Kay Melvin questioned why this project was proposed in the first place, and if there was a need for a facility like this in this part of the village.

Pat Laber offered that due to the zoning of this area, (multi-residential) it is a nice transition from commercial property to single family residential property, as a sort of buffer.

Lisa Stappenbacher expressed her concern with the speeding through the village. She asserted that the speeding is atrocious, there are more cars than 1 every 3 minutes, and that something needs to be done. She disclosed that there is no stop sign until further down Short Hills, and with the additional traffic, added noise level, and kids driving around, there are lives at risk and asked if anything can be done.

John Steinmetz concurred with the statement regarding speeding.

A guest from the audience asked what that meant.

John Steinmetz answered that it's a discussion that can be taken to the village board. The mayor has talked about potential solutions.

Lisa Stappenbacher noted that she would be interested in providing input and attending that meeting.

Sean Logue mentioned that due to concerns during the design phase, a pedestrian crosswalk was instituted, along with sidewalks, and signage.

Kay Melvin declared that nobody pays attention to signage. She walks here three times per week and must wave to get people (drivers) to pay attention and stop at a crosswalk.

Joe Ruta pointed out that the meeting was getting off task, that we were here for this project, and that the zoning board has no control over traffic and speeding.

Kay Melvin mentioned that if these situations are ignored, they can get out of hand.

Calvin McGee of Parkwood Lane stated that he is an owner whose back yard faces the proposal. He asked if traffic would go down Salmon Creek (the roadway leading to Salmon Creek Park) or come from other side (the driveway to be shared with Hilton East). He asked if he would see fencing or landscaping from his backyard.

Pat Laber indicated that the developers have included extensive landscaping, including evergreens, deciduous trees, and plantings. No fence is proposed.

Kay Melvin asked who would be maintaining it once completed.

Pat Laber answered that the owner of the property would maintain it.

Calvin McGee asked if the walkway to Salmon Creek would be separate from the development.

Pat Laber stated that there would be no vehicular access down Salmon Creek, there would be no access to the development from there.

John Steinmetz questioned the grade change.

Pat Laber stated that they were raising the site quite a bit in pond area, and that would be 2-3 feet above existing grade along Salmon Creek.

Chairman Steinmetz asked if the public had other comments and closed the public hearing at 6:47 p.m.

Chairman Steinmetz indicated that the layout was strong and that he did some “digging” on other local projects and presented a slide show with photos of other similar housing projects. He stated that the development would be an asset to village but would like to minimize or reduce the amount of asphalt on the landscape without changing the layout. He suggested using building styles and attention to the streetscape, such as separation between driveways, to emulate a neighborhood versus just “housing.”

Pat Laber pointed out that there are different elevations, colors, etc. planned.

Chairman Steinmetz agreed that he likes them but feels they are “asphalt forward” and would like to see what we could do about that. His ideas include separation of asphalt, eliminating the number of driveways on the main roadway, and other designs used to space it out a bit, so the entire length isn’t pavement.

Jeff DiCesare said we introduced this concept, the plan is very green space generous, and that the addition of sidewalks and additional parking was at the request from village. Jeff noted that a walking space and green path were added along with a playground, for more green space. Jeff expressed that it has been over a year trying to get everyone in agreement, the developers are open to suggestions, but that we do not want to continue changing the engineering.

Chairman Steinmetz replied that we are not changing the engineering but if it makes sense, is there anything they can do with the individual pads.

Jeff DiCesare replied that per village code, this developer or another developer would make changes, but it depends on cost at the end of the day. He suggested that this is a proposal and when we get on track to introduce different models, it would be back to the drawing board.

Chairman Steinmetz noted that it affects the approval of the building plan, and his goal is to support the village character. If the plan is approved it can be built, so seeing the layout is important.

Pat Laber stated that more than a year and a half later, they can’t do much different than what has been done, they’ve gone through SEQR, everything has been looked at, and to change the layout now would not be easy and could potentially be more than the developer is willing to pay.

Jeff DiCesare mentioned that we could put together a list and he would make a comparison.

Chairman Steinmetz pointed out a corner building on the inner circle and asked if it could have side load driveway, would that require a new engineering plan.

Pat Laber says it depends, as the current design is based on all the feedback and it is tight now, due to easements and setbacks, it is difficult at this point to foresee what it would affect and would require a new plan.

Kim Fay states he met with John to look over the plans and discussed removing extra parking spaces to eliminate some asphalt, because there are four parking spaces per unit, six if you count the garage. At 1,300 square feet, there other options for style to fit that square footage. Not to change the location but alter the overall look.

Pat Laber agrees and would like to know about these ideas before coming to another meeting and finding out there is another thing that needs changing.

Kim Fay replies that once the development is in the village it is not going away, and we should do the best we can come up with at the moment.

Pat Laber would like if someone let him know ahead of the meeting if there will be changes requested so he can provide answers before and avoid coming back to another meeting.

Laura Pettine asks what extra parking spots are being reference.

Pat Laber points out the extra parking located near unit 19.

Laura asked how many extra parking spots are there.

Pat Laber confirmed there were six, and these were asked for.

Kim Fay states there's a difference in elevations, we still can talk about and change to make it look better, like a residential development.

Joe Ruta notes this has been going on for over year and is repetitive and he would thank Pat and Schulz Associates for being accommodating in moving forward. He is happy with their willingness to revamp the park. Joe went to the property after all the rain we've had to see what it looked like and was surprised there was no real concern there and doesn't foresee flood zone being impacted. Joe appreciates the \$2,200 per unit rent to attract people who will spend money within the village. Joe is concerned about 48 cars being added to village traffic and would like another study done down the road.

Laura Pettine adds that she appreciates the efforts made by Schulz. She states traffic will be tough especially during the morning and at 2:30 p.m. However, we want village to grow and there's a cost economically and residents who live with it. We are trying our best to balance everything, it's a great idea after the residences are filled to see if a study could be done.

Elaine Begy is concerned that removing parking spots could clog the roadway with parked cars that belong to visitors.

Chairman Steinmetz offered that Unionville Station does not experience this issue and there are more homes there.

Elaine mentioned that these residences are potentially for younger families.

Chairman Steinmetz asked the bedroom count on the units.

Pat Laber confirmed two bedrooms per unit.

Jeff DiCesare expects them to be starter family and 55+ residences.

Laura Pettine mentioned that roads were wider at Unionville Station while Park Place at Hilton has narrower roads, and you can't park on the road there. Laura is sensitive to parking situations and would like to keep some of the additional parking spots.

Pat Laber noted the streets are the same size as Unionville.

Paul Cliff has parked at Unionville and had no issues.

Kim Fay lives in Unionville and parks his boat and RV on the street while he gets them ready and does not have any issues. He notes removing some of the excess parking spaces and adding grass would make it look nice.

Laura Pettine questioned the density of Unionville.

Pat Laber remembers it being close to section 3 where the doubles are.

Laura Pettine commented on the amount of traffic that will be in one continuous circle as opposed to Unionville which has multiple streets.

Kim Fay noted there are 24 units here and 141 in Unionville so the density is different.

Chairman Steinmetz mentioned that a year or two down the road this could be addressed if there is an issue.

Jeff DiCesare states this is a minor issue.

SEQR RESOLUTION - DECLARING THE INTENT TO BE LEAD AGENCY

Bell Atlantic Mobile System, d/b/a Verizon
144 South Avenue

Bell Atlantic Mobile Systems LLC d/b/a Verizon is a public utility and wireless telecommunications licensee of the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC"). To maintain adequate and reliable wireless telecommunications service in its Pleasure Lanes Bowling cell, Verizon proposes to modify and upgrade its telecommunications facility at 144 South Avenue in the Village of Hilton. This property is zoned Commercial.

WHEREAS, the Village of Hilton Zoning Board of Appeals is considering Special Use Permit, Site Plan, Area Variance & Use Variance approval for installation of an 80' high ground-mounted tower for telecommunications equipment at 144 South Avenue, as described in the project application, dated January 8, 2026, which includes a "Zoning Drawings" dated, September 9, 2025, last revised October 31, 2025 and all other relevant information submitted as of April 13, 2026 (the current application); and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board has reviewed the completed State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF), Part 1 prepared by the applicant on the above referenced 80-foot-tall ground tower (hereinafter referred to as the Action); and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board determines that said Action is classified as an Unlisted Action under the SEQR Regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board determines that said Action is also subject to a coordinated review and approval by other interested and involved agencies under SEQR Regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board determines that it may be the most appropriate agency to ensure the coordination of this Action and will provide written notifications to the involved and interested

agencies, for the purposes of conducting a coordinated review and making the determination of significance thereon under the SEQR Regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Zoning Board does hereby declare its intent to be designated as the lead agency for the Action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village Engineer (“MRB Group”) is directed to provide notice to the involved and interested agencies, seeking their agreement (or objection thereto) in writing on or before **12:00 PM on Monday, May 18, 2026**.

Motion to review and approve SEQR Lead Agency and Determination made by Kim Fay, seconded by Member Begy, carried 5-0.

Chairman Steinmetz reminded all that this is not an approval, and it doesn’t endorse the project but is a purely administrative decision declaring this government body is leading the review process.

Shaun Logue advised that we are going to start this process early to get feedback from identified agencies involved. People have expressed concerns about this location and the village has contracted with a Third-party RF engineer to determine the most suitable location for this village. This process is going to take another 3-4 weeks and when we come back, we can take a hard look at that.

David Wright of South Avenue requested that the RF Analysis Report be published on a publicly accessible site.

Discussion

Chairman Steinmetz noted there was nothing further to discuss on this at this time.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 11, 2026

Agenda Deadline: Friday, May 1, 2026

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Kim Fay at 7:29 p.m., seconded by Elaine Begy, carried 5-0.