BOROUGH OF CAPE MAY POINT

Planning Board

Final Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 6:30 pm

HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO/AUDIO CONFERENCE & AT THE CAPE MAY POINT FIRE COMPANY

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening
In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this session has been provided by publication in the Cape May Star and Wave Newspaper and continuous posting of the scheduled meeting dates on the official Municipal Bulletin Board at 215 Lighthouse Avenue, Borough of Cape May Point, New Jersey.

Roll Call

Present:	Mayor VanHeeswyk Mr. Remy, Mr. Brown, Mr. Rusnak, Comm. Geiger, Ms. MacKenzie, Mr. Wallace, Mr. Murphy, Dr. Farrell, Ms. Shufelt
Absent:	Ms. Shaw, Ms. Hobdy
Also Present:	Mr. Nathan Van Embden, Esq., Attorney, Mrs. Kate Dunn, Secretary

Mr. Brown gave a brief introduction. He stated that this is a combined Planning and Zoning Board that operates in accordance with the MLUL and the chartering authority of Borough governance. Cape May Point is a small community with a variety of opinions and respect for each other. Together, the volunteer members, Borough Officials and professional staff within the board conduct board business and welcome applicants following the operational processes that fair governance asks. And we welcome public input.

Minutes
Mrs. Dunn asked if there were any further comments on the revised V2 draft minutes for April 21, 2026 that were circulated to the board members from the board secretary prior to this meeting. No other corrections were noted. As a result, the minutes from April 21, 2026 were approved on a motion from Mr. Wallace and a second from Mr. Rusnak. All present were in favor.

Business

1. **LCA Subcommittee: Summary of Previous Master Plan Surveys**
    a. Mr. Brown stated that this LCA subcommittee topic relates to the review of previous surveys that supported the 2007 and earlier Master Plan. You're going to hear in detail that we had as much data as we could find related to the master planning process at that time, and each time, there was a survey of the community that preceded that. That survey information is helpful context for the discussion we're going to have later tonight on master planning.
    b. Mr. Wallace stated that their understanding of these two previous surveys, the 2004 survey is pretty complete and the 1993 is pretty incomplete. All they have is the survey instrument. They don't really have the results or much of the analysis. The LCA attempted to characterize and summarize their results.
    c. Mr. Wallace stated that there are some caveats to the surveys. A particular caveat is that, the surveys are attempting to find out what the property owners in Cape May Point think.

However, the people who respond to the survey that's sent out may or may not represent the underlying group of property owners, and the response can add to bias in terms of looking at the results. Another caveat is they're trying to look at how these responses to these surveys are impacted by how old the respondents are, whether they have renters or not renters. Most of that analysis gets very small groups of people in each of those particular groups, so statistically it's hard to draw much significance from those.

d. Mr. Wallace stated that with the 1993 survey, they sent the survey out to all property owners and they asked quite a few questions in that survey. They were particularly focused on overall satisfaction, were interested in the direction of change, and what people saw things as going right or going wrong. We don't really know the conclusions from this; all we know is what the people in 2004 said the conclusions were. The 1993 survey apparently had a very good response rate with about 60% or 70% responses. All we really tend to know is that people were generally satisfied with the direction of change in Cape May Point and they didn't reflect many areas of concern. They didn't want to increase commercial presence. That was very strong, they had a lot of questions about the Zoning Code and they felt that the zoning code was achieving the right balance between restrictions on homeowners and the community's needs. They were very concerned about whether the people who are moving to Cape May Point had different points of view than people who had been in Cape May Point for quite a while. They did not find much of a difference between those particular people.

e. Mr. Wallace then talked about the 2004 survey. This survey was shorter than the 1993 survey. This survey seemed to focus on what people saw as their vision for Cape May Point. The results showed that there was also a strong desire to not have commercial presence and most people suggested they weren't going to do much with their property and a small amount of people indicated they would sell their property. Most of the differences were not strikingly significant among the different demographics. Nevertheless, they felt that the older population and rising prices were going to change the amount of turnover and that would potentially lead to undesirable consequences in Cape May Point. They still argued, despite weak evidence in the survey itself, that the Master Plan and the zoning code needed to be reinforced to prevent these kinds of negative changes that they perceived.

f. Mr. Wallace talked about the survey analyzers suggestions for strengthening the 2007 Master Plan and Zoning Code that they felt came out of the survey results. That list included the winding street pattern, diversity in architectural styles, a range of size in structures, the importance of native and beach vegetation, the lack of suburban style, areas with long site lines, pedestrian scale at the street level and houses oriented to the streetscape. Some suggestions for strengthening the Zoning Code are adding standards to encourage and/or compel, native planting, requiring porches to deliver the pedestrian friendly and streetscape look, and that there be an historic district with a map of historic properties and associated guidance.

g. Mr. Wallace stated that one of the things the survey analyzers were focused on is having the streets and having houses that presented the street such as having porches, having front-facing doors, and those kinds of things that presented a more accommodating look. They also focused on 3 standards in the Zoning Code which were native vegetation, an architectural zone and front facing stores and porches. Some of the items are referenced in the 2007 Master Plan.

h. Mr. Wallace discussed the aggregate take aways from both surveys. He stated when you look back on it, 1993 was a period where it had a long period of flat or stagnant home prices in Cape May Point, and he thinks there's a sense they're trying to find out whether the property owners have a consensus around where the zoning was, or if people were perceiving that to be a problem. By the time 2004 comes along, prices of real estate were up so now they're concerned about whether this price run-up and the people buying in Cape May Point, as opposed to people who had bought previously, had a different mindset about what to do with their properties, and if that would have a negative impact on life at Cape May Point.

i. Mr. Wallace stated that both of the surveys focus on green issues, and they both look at public green issues. In other words, how do people feel about the circle, the lake and the beaches and so forth. How do people feel about the way people are viewing their vegetation? How much vegetation is their lawn? Basically, what we've been talking about is a green agenda. The 1993 survey covered a lot more ground, including issues about flooding, issues about what people saw as negative as well as positive. Then in 2004, they seemed focused around this streetscape idea.

j. Mr. Wallace stated that now the LCA may be looking to send out a new survey in the near future to help update the Master Plan next year. He stated that we can take these as ideas and take it forward and he would recommend that we try to stick as close on the demographics as we can to the way they did it before, so that we can compare ourselves to those.

k. Mayor VanHeeswyk talked about the 1993 survey and how the questions were non-weighted and were asked in a way that didn't lead people to answer in one way or another. She also noted that a stamped self-addressed envelope was included so that helped with the return rate of the survey.

2. **PB 2025-01-Helena Bew, C/O Richard Bew, POA-(719-723 E. Lake Dr.)**

a. Andrew Catanese from the Monzo, Catanese and DeLollis Law Firm represents the applicant Helena Bew represented by her son Richard Bew. The property is located at 719-726 E. Lake Dr., Block 31 Lot 25, 26 & 27 in the R-1 Zoning District.

b. Mr. Catanese stated that in this application, they are seeking nothing more than a lot line adjustment for three existing lots located at 719 to 723 East Lake Drive. All 3 of those lots are currently vacant, and all 3 of those lots are currently fully conforming. The proposal here is simply to adjust two of those lot lines that separate the three lots in order to eliminate a conforming, but odd shaped lot, and simply improving the layout, making it more consistent from one lot to the next. Importantly, no new lots are proposed and no variances are being requested.

c. Vince Orlando, partner in the firm of Engineering Design Associates. Mr. Orlando provided his credentials for the benefit of the board. Mr. Orlando was accepted by the board and sworn in.

d. Mr. Orlando referred to the plan that was prepared by Cape Land Surveying. It's the plan of a minor subdivision of Block 31 that Lots 3, 25, 26, and 27. The plan was briefly revised which incorporated some of the comments of the previous review memo that was prepared by Mr. Foster. This is a simple subdivision. Their proposal is to rearrange the lots to provide a better configuration for the lots, a better unity of the lots, and make the lots more consistent.

e. Mr. Orlando stated that as you look in the zoning chart, all the lots are roughly about 8,000 square feet. They meet or exceed all the bulk standard within the zone. No variances are being sought. They do show Lot 3, which is located off of Oak Avenue, while it's not part of the subdivision, they just show it in context because there is an existing sewer line that runs from Oak Ave. to the home that was previous there, that will be extinguished. If you look to the rear of the property, Mr. Orlando has completed a sewer extension plan that is currently before review of Mr. Foster. The Borough asked that the sewer run behind the lots so that sewer leading to the proposed lot 27.01 will no longer be needed.

f. Mr. Orlando stated that as Mr. Catanese indicated, this is really a very simplistic plan of just redefining the existing lots. As part of the application, they recognize that if they are successful with the subdivision, that the lots would require a plot plan to show where the house location is, and the grading, and things of that nature, but they are not at that point yet.

g. There was some discussion regarding an existing sanitary sewer line and the new sewer line. It was confirmed that the existing sanitary sewer line across lot 3 served the original home and is not needed for any development on lot 3. That sewer line will be eliminated and relocated to the rear of the property. The easement is proposed to be extended and be a continuation of the sewer that currently exists behind the other properties. That sewer line currently serves most of the East Lake properties.

h. There was some discussion about the electric lines. The applicant will work with Atlantic City Electric to see what the best way to service the property is. The applicant understands that lines would need to run underground.

i. After some more discussion regarding utilities, Mr. Brown stated that final approval doesn't mean that what we see for utilities here today will be what happens. That is, there is room for improvement, and the questions you're seeing here will relate to the kinds of questions you could get for site plan discussions down the road.

j. Mr. Catanese stated that this is a minor subdivision application, so unlike a major subdivision that has a preliminary and final component, a minor is a one-time application. With the approvals in place today, the lot lines can be adjusted per the plan, and that would be the last appearance before the board. Subsequent development of the sites would require individual zoning permit applications for each lot that would go to the Zoning Office, not return to this board. They would need to be fully compliant with the Zoning Ordinance since they are not asking for any variances. Should one of the lots require a variance, they would have to come back to the board and justify that. The last component, utilities, to the extent that they are dealing with the utility companies, they're going to have insight and input, as will the Borough Engineer.

k. Mr. Foster, Board Engineer, was sworn in.

l. Mr. Foster stated that his main concern was the sewer easement across the back of the properties. That sewer easement needs a Treatment Works Approval from DEP to extend the sewer line on across those lots and tie in the new lots to that sewer line. His understanding is that the applicant is in the process of preparing that application for DEP. Mr. Orlando did confirm that the Treatment works application has been submitted to the Borough for signatures. The Borough asked that they obtain approval from the Planning Board before the application was signed.

m. Mr. Foster stated going through his review, he pointed out that there were a couple locations where they did have overhead wires going across the properties without easements, so, he raised that question during his review so that they are going to be eliminating those overhead wires. Mr. Orlando confirmed that it is the plan to eliminate the overhead wires. Mr. Foster also noted that the water and gas main are existing long Lake Drive.

n. Mr. Remy asked if the applicant was planning on developing the lots or would sell each lot. Mr. Catanese was unaware of what the applicant intends to do.

o. Ms. MacKenzie stated that the Environmental Commission did review the application and did not have any concerns at this time.

p. Mr. VanEmbden stated this is an application for minor subdivision approval for a property which does not require variances to establish lot lines to create lots which are all conforming. An affirmative resolution would be to approve the application as submitted.

q. The application was opened to the public at 7:26pm on a motion from Mayor VanHeeswyk and a second from Mr. Rusnak.
r. No members of the public spoke on the application.
s. Public comment was closed at 7:27pm on a motion from Dr. Farrell and a second from Mr. Murphy.
t. Mr. Rusnak made a motion to approve the application a submitted. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.
u. The application was approved with 9 Aye votes. (VanHeeswyk, Geiger, Brown, Farrell, MacKenzie, Murphy, Remy, Rusnak, Wallace)

3. **Master Planning Update:**
   a. Mr. Brown stated that per the New Jersey statute, Municipal Master Plans are a responsibility of the Planning Board. Cape May Point created its last Master Plan in 2007 with a Master Plan Reexamination in 2017. We're obligated by New Jersey statute every 10 years, to either do a reexamination or a brand-new Master Plan. That means by 2027, we have to do that. Cape May Point continues to evolve, but has not changed in a major way since 2017. Obviously, society continues to evolve, in particular, technology continues to evolve, and that puts some evolutionary drivers to our society. Since CMP last did the 2017 reexamination, there was a State Development and Redevelopment Plan in December 2025, and we took part in the cross-acceptance process and Cape May Point dedicated time and effort to creating a Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment in 2025 which is obligated to be an element of a Master Plan.
   b. Mr. Brown stated that in January, at that meeting, the board unanimously voted to move forward to begin meeting with our Borough Planner and evaluate the next steps for preparing a Master Plan and looking for volunteers. After January, we actually paused that effort because we had the New Jersey PACT/REAL regulation to understand, digest, and get ready for. We've spent much time at this body talking about that, and across The Municipality and The State. Since we last talked about it, The Governor has elected to postpone implementation of PACT/REAL and we're learning more about what that means as every day unfolds, but setting that aside now, allows us to get back to working on the Master Plan, which is what he's proposing tonight.
   c. Mr. Brown stated that since we last talked about this, he did meet with Michael Sullivan, the Borough Planner. They talked about how best to conduct oversight and drive forward master planning. Mr. Sullivan advises that we use a framework called a Master Plan Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from Cape May Point and he recommends that group as a model for overseeing a master plan or a reexamination. This master plan advisory committee would be beyond the membership of the planning board, who has ultimate authority in driving forward preparation of a master plan. Mr. Sullivan said there's a lot to benefit from having a master plan advisory committee which draws in people. Mr. Brown stated that Mr. Sullivan said mobilizing the MPAC soon would be important if we have a goal of completing a master plan by March 2027.
   d. Mr. Brown stated that Mr. Sullivan recommends that we do a Master Plan Reexamination and not a whole new Master Plan since Cape May Point does not have a lot open space that has not been developed. They also discussed pursuing the State Plan Endorsement which brings the state committees to get involved in the process. Mr. Sullivan came to the conclusion that the benefits of the State Plan Endorsement don't have much relevance or value to our small community.
   e. Mr. Brown would like to make the proposal that he would like to see whether the board wants to make a motion to agree with, or amend, a proposal for voting on tonight. His proposal is to lead formation of a MPAC and the MPAC would report to the Planning

Board. He recommends that the members of it be approximately 7 to 10 people in size, and that it include representation from the Planning Board, the Environmental Commission, the public, residents, non-residents, and from the Board of Commissioners. It is hoped that the MPAC members will represent a variety of expertise and perspective, because he thinks a variety of inputs will lead to a better master planning reexamination. The membership of the formal governance committees, Planning Board, EC and Commissioners, should be kept to a number that doesn't trigger OPMA requirements for the MPAC meeting. He recommends that MPAC members expect 2 hours per month to devote to meetings with additional offline work as well. The goal is to be completed by next March, he is recommending it be a reexamination process following the Borough Planner's recommendation and that we utilize the assistance of the Borough Planner as well.

f. There was some discussion regarding what the MPAC will do and what the Borough Planner will do. Mr. Brown stated that MPAC would take a lot of authority for the writing, which of course would come to the Planning Board for review, modification, and finalization and then go to the Planner to course correct to be consistent with state expectations.

g. Mayor VanHeeswyk made the motion to accept the proposal as outlined above. Mr. Remy seconded the motion.

h. The proposal was approved with 9 Aye votes. (VanHeeswyk, Geiger, Brown, Farrell, MacKenzie, Murphy, Remy, Rusnak, Wallace)

i. Mr. Brown talked about the next step. He stated that the Board heard at the start of this meeting that in previous master planning cycles, a master plan survey was a very early step in gathering public input. It is not the only mechanism of getting public input, but at the same time, it does give an indication of where the MPAC should start focusing its energy by what the public is sharing. With that regard, he wanted to say that a community survey has been that early step. The LCA committee has shared with you what they found from previous survey cycles and that he is recommending that we implement a community survey as a first activity in master planning. More specifically, this survey of the community, he believes, should be designed to have similar questions as previous surveys, so that we can get consistency in comparing the data and that we should keep it short for an increased response rate. We should identify community preferences and concerns through it in a way that gives the MPAC information to do their work from a well-informed public basis. The new survey implementation should be low-cost, should strive to achieve the highest possible response rate, be easy for respondents to fill out and submit and also be relatively easy to collate and analyze the data.

j. Mr. Brown stated that he is recommending that this survey be implemented in a hybrid format, where we use electronic infrastructure to do that, to be cost-effective and easy analysis and broad reach.

k. Mr. Brown stated with that in mind, The LCA Subcommittee members have helped him develop a questionnaire that draws on the past surveys. What you're seeing here on slide 7 is the first half of a one-pager which is the demographic data and the second half of the one pager survey is shown on slide 8 which are the questions about what appeals to people using the weighted system of 1 to 10. He noted that in black text, those are words that were used on previous surveys. In red text, those are modifications or additions that weren't used on previous surveys, so you can see to what extent we are harnessing previous surveys for consistency, and proposing new information.

j. Mr. Rusnak suggested correcting a typo on question number 1, removing the word "partially" from question number 5 and adding in wildfire/brush fire to question number 7.

k. Ms. MacKenzie suggested using a weighted scale of 1 to 5 instead of 1 to 10.
l. Comm. Geiger had concerns about the question about the Borough right of way and what would be done with that information. Mr. Brown stated that it would be used to either support what the Commissioners are doing if they're making a modification on the Borough right-of-way code or to show whether the community is concerned with it or not. Comm. Geiger would like to propose that question 8 regarding the Borough right of way be removed from the survey.
m. There was some discussion regarding question number 7 and how people tend to not understand the Zoning Laws and Comm. Geiger suggested maybe the question should be, are you happy with the way the Borough looks.
n. Mr. Brown responded that many people have come to the Planning Board members and members of the Lot Coverage Awareness Subcommittee saying these zoning laws are too restrictive or these zoning laws are not strict enough. When you heard Mr. Wallace talk earlier, the earlier surveys found that there were people viewing both sides of that question, but they tended to net out, and meant that the zoning laws were maybe about right. Most importantly, the Master Plan is supposed to be the platform which, if necessary, drives zoning code changes. It has to support that. What we're trying with these questions is to determine, do we have it about right, or is the community feel we're leaning one way or another? This would be really helpful data to have.
o. Mayor VanHeeswyk agreed that most of the people from the 1993 survey were in the middle with this question. She thinks it would be good information to know but she is not sure people will fully understand the question.
p. Mr. Wallace stated that all we're trying to do is flag it if there's something on peoples mind and then we can go back later on and tighten it up through the MPAC representation of the community and other public events.
q. Mr. Remy stated that he thinks what we're trying to do was allow people to give some sort of feedback based upon what we've come across with people asking questions about all these different points that we've identified. That's why we put this list together. He thinks what Matt, Bill, and he tried to do is come up with some sort of solution to say, how do we rate this? They thought with the number system was a good opportunity for someone to say, I like it or I don't like it, type thing.
r. Mr. Brown took a quick poll and the majority of the members were in favor of keeping questions 7C and 7D on the survey.
s. There was some discussion about doing a pilot cycle. However, due to cost and time constraints, Mr. Brown suggested not to pause for a pilot cycle.
t. Mr. Brown proposed, if the Planning Board agrees, that the Master Planning process should initiate a survey to gather some data.
u. There was a suggestion to include a question regarding adequate community facilities such as public restrooms or meeting spaces.
v. Ms. Shufelt asked if there was any thought to getting more granular on some of the questions. Mr. Brown responded that the thought was given but they wanted to stay consistent with the level of detail of th rest of the questions.
w. Mr. Remy made a motion to implement a community survey for the Master Plan. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.
x. The motion was approved with 9 Aye votes. (Geiger, Brown, Farrell, MacKenzie, Murphy, Remy, Rusnak, Wallace, Shufelt)
y. Mr. Remy then made a motion to implement the survey as presented on slides 7 &8 with the modifications discussed by Mr. Rusnak, Ms. MacKenzie, along with deleting question 8 and updating options in questions 6 and 7 per the group discussion. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

z. The motion was approved with 9 Aye votes. (Geiger, Brown, Farrell, MacKenzie, Murphy, Remy, Rusnak, Wallace, Shufelt)

4. **Subcommittee Updates:**
    a. **Completeness Committee:** Mr. Murphy stated that there is one application, for 207 Central. that was recently deemed complete and will be heard in August and they also received a resubmission for another application.
    b. **Lot Coverage Awareness Subcommittee:** Mr. Wallace stated they are working a couple more topics but don't have anything immediate for presentation.
5. **Any and all pending matters:**
    a. None

Board Information:

c. None

Public Comment:

a. Public comment was opened at 8:25pm on a motion from Comm. Geiger and a second from Mr. Murphy.
b. No public comment.
c. Public comment was closed at 8:26pm on a motion from Dr. Farrell and a second from Mr. Rusnak.

Adjournment

They meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm on a motion from Mr. Remy and a second from Ms MacKenzie. All present voted Aye.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Kate Dunn
Board Secretary
Approved by Board 08/18/2026