

## Knowlton Township Land Use Board

### Minutes

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

The reorganization and regular meeting of the Knowlton Township Land Use Board was held on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. Secretary Apgar led the Board in the flag salute at 7:00 p.m. She announced that adequate notice of the meeting has been provided in accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" by publishing notice of all regularly scheduled meetings in the NJ Herald and Express Times legal advertising edition, as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk's Office and the official Township Website. A moment of silence was held for our Military Personnel serving in harm's way.

#### **Swearing in of Board Members:**

Secretary Apgar administered the Oath of Office to Rene Mathez, James Mazza, Matt Baley, Tom Drake, Nancy O'Neill and Vince Gaeta. Each member then signed their oath of office statement, and they were notarized by the secretary.

#### **Roll call:**

**Present:** Baley, Allen, Mathez, Mazza, O'Neill, Smith, Gaeta, Drake, Mezzanotte and Taylor.

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** None

#### **Election of Chairperson:**

Secretary Apgar asked for a nomination for Chairperson. A motion was made by Mr. Baley to nominate Clayton Taylor as Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mathez. Hearing no other nominations, in a roll call vote, all were in favor of nominating Mr. Taylor as Chairperson.

#### **Election of Vice Chairperson:**

The meeting was then handed over to Chairman Taylor who asked for a nomination for Vice Chairperson. A motion was made by Mr. Smith to appoint Ms. O'Neill as Vice Chair. Motion was seconded by Mr. Drake. Hearing no other nominations, in a roll call vote all were in favor of nominating Ms. O'Neill as Vice Chairperson.

#### **Appointment of Board Professionals:**

The resolution for appointments along with the professionals' contracts were distributed prior to the meeting. Chairman Taylor asked if everyone had a chance to review the contracts from our Board Attorney, Glenn Gavan, Board Engineer, French & Parrello and Board Planner, Daniel Bloch. He also inquired if anyone had any alternate professionals they were interested in. Mr. Smith had a question about one of our professionals. This was regarding a recent application. The applicant didn't supply necessary information needed to make an accurate decision on the property. Our engineer provided that work for him. He questioned if the town got billed for that, how does he get paid for that and is that a conflict of interest. Chairman Taylor thought the applicant was given advice, he was not aware work was done for him.

Mr. Smith said possibly the engineer could clarify that at some point in time, as this is something he was concerned with. Mr. Mathez believed the applicant was being helped because the gentleman was having a hard time. Chairman Taylor noted giving advise is different than doing work for the applicant. Discussion took place under what circumstances this could be considered a conflict of interest and if either party were billed. This is something we will need to bring up and check with our attorney on also. With no other discussion on the professional's appointment resolution, Chairman Taylor asked if there was a motion on appointing these 3 professionals. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Mathez and seconded by Mr. Smith. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

**Appointment of Board Secretary:**

Chairman Taylor noted a board member can also be the secretary. He then made a motion to appoint Doreen Apgar as board secretary. Motion was seconded by Ms. O'Neill. With no other nominations, in a voice vote all were in favor.

**Designation of Meeting Dates:**

The list of meeting dates was distributed prior to the meeting. Meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. With no objections, in a voice vote all were in favor.

**Designation of Official Newspapers:**

The resolution listing the official newspapers of the town was distributed prior to the meeting. The official newspapers are: The New Jersey Herald and the Express Times legal advertising on-line edition (as needed). And in addition, according to new state rules effective March 1, 2026 all legal ads will be placed on the town's official website along with the New Jersey secretary of state's legal notices webpage. Discussion took place regarding the shortage of published newspapers available, and the new rules established by the state of New Jersey regarding legal advertising. Mr. Baley confirmed the same was discussed by the township clerk at the last township meeting. Chairman Taylor noted both the board and the township need to adhere to the same requirements. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Chairman Taylor and seconded by Ms. O'Neill. In a voice vote all were in favor.

**Rules of the Land Use Board:**

The list of rules for the Land Use Board for 2026 was distributed prior to the meeting. Chairman Taylor noted a misprint in both the agenda and rules list stating "Planning Board" instead of Land Use Board. Secretary Apgar noted the error and will revise. There was discussion on item #17 noting the submission date of 2 weeks. Ms. Mezzanotte thought it was discussed last year to add business days. Chairman Taylor noted if a holiday were to fall in there, that is not a business day. With no other recommendations and the Planning Board correction noted, a motion to accept was made by Mr. Mathez and seconded by Mr. Smith. In a voice vote all were in favor.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The December 23, 2025 minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. With no corrections or additions needed. A motion was made by Ms. Mezzanotte to adopt the minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Mathez. Roll call vote: Baley – abstain, Allen – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza - yes, O’Neill – yes, Smith – yes, Gaeta- abstain, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

**Adoption of Resolutions:**

**#25-002 Steven Kaijala, Block 72, Lot 9**

Chairman Taylor asked if there was a motion to approve the resolution. Motion was made to approve by Mr. Mathez. Motion was seconded by Ms. Mezzanotte. There was no discussion on the resolution. Roll call vote: Baley – abstain, Allen – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O’Neill – yes, Smith – abstain, Gaeta – abstain, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte - yes, Taylor – yes.

**#23-004 Daniel Deroche, Block 12, Lots 7, 8 and 9**

This resolution was deeming the application incomplete. The applicant’s legal counsel had asked to carry the completeness review. Chairman Taylor asked for a motion on this. Motion was made by Mr. Mathez. Motion was seconded by Ms. O’Neill. Mr. Mazza questioned the applicant’s name on the agenda only listed as Daniel Deroche. Chairman Taylor noted the resolution prepared by our attorney listed both the applicant’s name and business, Quiet Valley Printing. Roll call vote: Baley – abstain, Allen – yes, Mathez – yes, Mazza – yes, O’Neill – yes, Smith – abstain, Gaeta – abstain, Drake – yes, Mezzanotte – yes, Taylor – yes.

**New Business:**

Ms. Mezzanotte spoke regarding Warren County Commissioner Kern having concerns with data centers. He acted on behalf of the county and sent out a draft ordinance prohibiting data centers. She believes the township committee received the email; she was surprised that it did come to the Land Use Board. She then questioned the township committee liaisons if the committee is doing anything about this draft ordinance. Mr. Baley said he had heard nothing. Since she doesn’t believe the township committee is taking this up, would the board like her to jump on this and bring the information to the next board meeting. Chairman Taylor noted we could request the committee supply that information to the LUB. Ms. Mezzanotte would like to get ahead of this and rather not go that route. That would be another month. Chairman Taylor stated he was not suggesting one or the other he was suggesting both. The board members can bring anything to the board any time they want to. Ms. Mezzanotte said she had supplied some of the information included in the draft to Commissioner Kern, so she would like to also provide that information to the town. She stated she was surprised that the ordinance was prohibiting. But reasoned it was a detriment to the town. Chairman Taylor asked for the board’s feelings on this. Mr. Mathez imagined there is no place now in our land use ordinance that includes data centers. Chairman Taylor replied no, he would imagine any commercial zone it would be permitted. It is not specifically prohibited. It is a commercial business, and we have zones where commercial businesses are permitted. But he doesn’t know if we even have enough acreage in any zone that it would be allowed. Mr. Mazza noted they like to put them by sub-stations, or they put a sub-station in that has to feed the grid.

No one had an objection to Ms. Mezzanotte bringing this information to the board. Mr. Mazza and Mr. Baley will let the township committee know.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Other Business:**

There were no other business comments from the board.


**Approval of Bills:**

Chairman Taylor asked if everyone had a chance to look at the bills. Was there a motion to approve the bills? Mr. Smith made the motion to approve payment of the bills. Mr. Mazza questioned the bills for application 23-004 being submitted in different names. Is the property owned by the business or under the applicant's name? Mr. Smith noted if one of the applications with that particular name gets approved for completeness and then it comes back with a different name on it, the one for completeness can get approved by default. He feels this is an issue. Chairman Taylor said as part of the application there is usually a consent of owner form that identifies anybody with major interests in that property or in that business. So that is a paper trail that ties one to the other. Mr. Mazza is just looking for consistency. Discussion took place as to whether the land owner was the same as the business owner (we could check the tax book). Chairman Taylor noted you can have 2 separate entities, that one owns the business and one owns the land. With no other discussion, the motion was seconded by Mr. Mazza. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

**Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Allen and seconded by Mr. Smith. In a voice vote all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Doreen Apgar,  
Board Secretary