

**BOROUGH OF ROOSEVELT  
PLANNING BOARD  
FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

Present: Arielle Debira, Allison Petrilla, Mayor Peggy Malkin, Fred Septak, Tim Hartley, Ron Scibetti, John Impellizeri, and Heidi Mendies

Absent: Esther Psarakis, Tina Kaufman-Marut and Margaret Katz

Also, Present: Board Attorney Michele Donato, Board Engineer Carmela Roberts, Board Planner Andy Thomas, and Board Secretary April Claudio

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act was provided to this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Borough bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice, and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

Mr. Septak offered a motion to table the approval of minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Malkin and approved unanimously.

Mayor & Council Report: None

Environmental Commission Report: Working with Mayor & Council on joining a watershed group. Asked the Borough Clerk about JCP&L being required to provide an annual report on herbicides and plants. Borough Clerk advised against it. Mr. Hartley read a summary of the JPC&L application he provided to the Environmental Commission.

JERSEY CENTRAL POWER & LIGHT

Ms. Donato explained there was an issue with the recorder at the last meeting therefore, the applicants are going to repeat their testimony so it's on the record. She also advised the applicant would like 7 voting members because of the "D" variance and a recording would be needed in order to do that.

Ben Nadell, attorney for JCP&L, reiterated the testimony from the prior meeting. The application is for five steel monopoles in the existing right of way corridor. Seeking a D1 variance for use and D6 variance for height. The corridor is located in the RAG400 zone. At the December meeting the testimony was that they would comply with the Borough engineer's review letters. Also at that meeting, the big discussion was about the tree clearing. He met with the Board's professionals and Mr. Hartley and provided an overview of JCP&L's standards for tree clearing. They proposed an offset for tree clearing even though they are in compliance with the Borough's ordinance that does not require them to replant trees. The proposal is to offer a pollinator habitat enhancement.

Ms. Donato remarked the exhibits into the record. Exhibit 1 and 2 were Mr. Hartley's drawings and exhibit 3 was the tree clearing plan.

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Gregory Brown explained the right of way is 180 feet with double circuit structures. There is 90 feet of clearance on both sides. The center pole to the outer conductor is 25 feet, the NEC requires 20 feet of horizontal clearance and 40ft for span, which leaves 5 feet for vegetation overgrowth.

Michael Haines spoke about the safety importance of proper clearances which also helps to avoid outages. FERC and NERC set standards and oversees First Energy's vegetation management program. Factsheet 003 sets standards and distance minimums. First Energy's strategy is to clear vegetation before it has the ability to encroach. Confirmed it is necessary to remove all the trees listed in the plan. It is necessary to ensure safety and to comply with the federal standards.

Mr. Septak explained clearance is also needed to maintain the poles. Mr. Haines agreed.

Mr. Scibetti explained they are only clearing the trees that are necessary; it's just more because of the wider poles. Mr. Haines agreed and further added it's also due to the increase in voltage.

Amy Jones spoke about the pollinator habitat proposal. All areas of tree removal and temporary disturbance would have added native pollinator seeds. Mr. Nadell stated this would be done with consent of the property owners because of the existing easement. Ms. Jones reiterated they will comply with First Energy's vegetation management plan. Each pollinator habitat will native seeds appropriate for its location. This includes flowers and plants that butterflies, bees, birds and caterpillars will benefit from. This would be done post construction.

Ms. Debira felt this is a moot point because one of the property owners stated he doesn't want the pollinator habitats. She suggested just using the money for the pollinators to plant trees.

Mr. Nadell referred back to the Borough's ordinance, which states they are exempt from planting trees.

Ms. Jones stated they will reseed areas where mating and stone will be removed. Mr. Thomas suggested a note be added to the site plans indicating where the seed mix will be added.

Mr. Nadell stated they will attach the SEC plan to the Boswell site plan and Boswell will add a note referencing it.

Ms. Donato stated Freehold Soil may need to approve the seed mixture. Ms. Jones stated she will handle it.

Mr. Hartley requested specifics on the seed mixture and a summary of Ms. Jones testimony to provide to the Environmental Commission.

Mr. Hartley asked if there was any conflict with the seeds and the use of herbicide. Mr. Haines stated selective herbicides are used and won't affect the vegetation. Mr. Hartley requested an annual report on the herbicide application to the Environmental Commission three months in advance of it being applied.

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Mr. Nadell stated they cannot accommodate that request and has never seen a town request that. Mr. Hartley was concerned the herbicide will not be controlled. Mr. Haines discussed the regulations they must follow and the application process for herbicide. The contractor that does the application is licensed with the State and there are State agencies that they must report to and also the must be EPA registered.

Mr. Septak asked if MSDS sheets can be provided. Mr. Haines stated they can be provided to the property owners should they request it.

Christine Cafone, Planner, reiterated her testimony. The application is for a D1 variance for use. This is inherently a beneficial use that provides resiliency. Aged infrastructure is being upgraded. The master plan has resiliency standards. This proposal will improve reliability and prevent outages. The Borough's ordinance exempts them from tree planting. They have agreed to comply with the Borough engineer's review letters. The application is also for a D6 variance for height. The area is already accustomed to the height because of the existing poles. She felt they have met the burden of proof for the Board to grant both variances.

Mr. Hartley asked if there is any increase risk to the birds because of the increased height. Ms. Jones stated the birds will not be affected because they will just sit on the top wire.

Mr. Nadell asked for a 3–5-minute recess. After the recess, Mr. Nadell summarized the application. There are benefits to Roosevelt and neighboring communities. Other municipalities have already approved similar plans. There has been no public opposition. One member of the public who has an easement with JCP&L spoke in favor of the plan. Thanked the Board for their time over the last few months. Understood Mr. Hartley's concerns however they feel they have addressed them in an appropriate way. He requested the Board move forward with only 6 of 7 eligible members.

No public comments.

Mr. Septak offered a motion to approve the application, which was seconded by Mr. Hartley and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Petrilla, Impellizzeri, Hartley, Septak, Debira and Scibetti.

Ms. Donato reiterated the conditions of the approval: Comply with engineering letters, place pollinator habitats, revise site plan to show areas and include SEC plan, and obtain Freehold Soil approval. The request from the Environmental Commission doesn't have to be agreed because they are just an advisory Board.

Public Comment: None

The Board discussed new members taking the required training course, the meeting schedule and dates that fall on religious holidays, and creating rules and regulations for the Board. Mr. Septak and Ms. Malkin volunteered to work together to prepare draft rules and regulations.

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Mr. Hartley requested names of the Board members be placed on the agenda so he can keep track of attendance.

Ms. Donato suggested the Board start doing some planning work; there are zones that need to be reviewed.

The Board discussed holding meetings with applications in person and meetings with no applications via zoo.

Mr. Septak offered a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Hartley and approved unanimously.