

The Mayor and Council of Middletown

General Administration

19 W. Green Street
Middletown, DE 19709



PLANNING & ZONING MEETING

JULY 16, 2026

ATTENDEES: David Chillas, Chairman
Morris Deputy, Town Manager
Frank Bailey, Fire Chief
Donald Dibert
Donald Hall
Chuck McCausland
Jenn Parrish
Joe Pontak
Gretchen Rachko
Keith Thompson

AGENDA:

1. 306 N. Cass Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a financial planning and legal services business (The Ready Group) in an R-1A zoned area. CU-13-26. Tax Parcel No. 23-005.00-011.

Ryan Davis presented this request. The proposed business will provide:

- Financial planning services.
- Retirement planning services.
- Insurance and business consulting services.

Moved by Joe Pontak and seconded by Jenn Parrish to recommend Mayor and Council approve 306 N. Cass Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a financial planning and legal services business (The Ready Group) in an R-1A zoned area. CU-13-26. Motion Carried Unanimously.

2. 601 S. Broad Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a home-based flooring business (Varnes Flooring) that would be office use only, no customers, in an R-1A zoned area. CU-15-26. Tax Parcel No. 23-011.00-068.

Aaron Varnes is presenting this request.

- No customers will be present at the home.
- The home office will be used for bookkeeping purposes.
- All work is done at the specific job sites.
- A work vehicle will be at the home and materials will be stored in the detached garage.

Donald Hall asked what percentage of the home would be used for the business Mr. Varnes answered he believes the home is approximately 2,000 square-feet and the area to be used for the

home office is between 300-350 square-feet. Mr. Hall replied he believes the applicant was under the specific parameters for a home occupation.

Joe Pontak questioned what types of products would be stored at the residence. Mr. Varnes replied that flooring materials are purchased through a distributor and shipped directly to the job site. He stated he would only be storing equipment and supplies, such as sanders and sandpaper, at the home.

Mr. Pontak asked whether any finishing products would be stored on the property, noting concerns about the storage of potentially flammable materials. Mr. Varnes replied that he would be storing wood-based stain, which is flammable if handled improperly. Mr. Pontak asked Morris Deputy, Town Manager, whether Mr. Varnes would be required to obtain approval for storing flammable products. Mr. Deputy responded that Mr. Varnes would need to comply with Fire Marshal guidelines and the Town's Building Code. Mr. Pontak asked if this can be included in the request to Mayor and Council. Mr. Deputy replied that compliance with those guidelines can be established as a condition of approval.

Kristen Krenzer, Public Relations Officer, asked how much of the flammable product would be stored at the property. Mr. Varnes stated approximately 10 to 20 gallons would be stored. Jenn Parrish asked where the product would be kept. Mr. Varnes stated it would be stored in the detached garage.

Mr. Pontak further requested a condition be placed on the application requiring no products be stored more than the amount permitted under Fire Marshal guidelines and Building Code. Mrs. Krenzer stated a code official would follow up and review the regulations of the allowed materials stored at the property.

Moved by Chuck McCausland and seconded by Gretchen Rachko to recommend Mayor and Council approve 601 S. Broad Street – Conditional Use Permit request for a home-based flooring business (Varnes Flooring) that would be office use only, no customers, in an R-1A zoned area. CU-15-26. Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. 528 W. Main Street – Preliminary Major Land Development Plan for a 5,425 square-foot car wash to be developed within the existing Wawa parcel to include three (3) pay stations, vacuum stations and interparcel access, in a C-3 zoned area. Tax Parcel No. 23-008.00-001.

Steve Fortunado, with Bohler Engineering, appeared before the Commission to address questions and provide additional information requested during the June Planning and Zoning meeting. Below are the following questions/concerns the Commission requested additional information on:

1. Will there be a membership program for the proposed car wash?

Mr. Fortunado stated there will be a membership program for customers of the car wash. The membership is intended to primarily serve existing Wawa customers to enhance their experience while shopping at the convenience store. The full details of the membership plan have not been finalized.

2. Traffic concern/DelDOT traffic study:

Mr. Fortunado believes the traffic increase will be minimal due to the customer base staying the same with existing customers. Bohler Engineering met with DelDOT, and presented them with all the information for the project. DelDOT is not requiring any improvements to be done to the existing road or traffic pattern surrounding this project.

Donald Hall commented that even with DelDOT not requiring improvements to the road or traffic pattern, the entrance and exit off W. Main Street is hazardous and he is not in support of this project.

Keith Thompson believes if a restaurant were to move in where Ruby Tuesday's once existed, it would generate more traffic than the proposed car wash. He noted that a restaurant would not come before the Commission, since it is already an approved use.

Jenn Parrish asked if a new traffic study was requested. Mr. Fortunado replied a new traffic study cannot be requested as DelDOT determines if one will be performed, and they have deemed it unnecessary. Mrs. Parrish asked if they met with DelDOT after the June meeting and Mr. Fortunado replied, yes.

Joe Pontak commented that the plan provided shows three lanes to be used for the car wash while a nearby carwash has two lanes, which can be deceptive to how busy this car wash will be.

Mrs. Parrish asked how many customers the car wash will see daily. Mr. Fortunado replied that projection is not available, but a Trip Generation has been provided to DelDOT. Mrs. Parrish asked if there is no customer count, how can there be a projection or estimate to the impact on traffic. Mr. Fortunado replied a nationally accredited ITE Trip Generation used across the country is published and determines what the trip generation will be.

Mr. Pontak questioned why studies from other car washes were not submitted and asked to see the data that was submitted to DelDOT for this project, to appease those on the Commission who are concerned about the traffic impact. Mr. Fortunado replied as with all projects, they are required to provide all approvals to the Town for review. The Town does not have a specific traffic code or have any authority over entrances. This is handled by DelDOT.

Mr. Hall commented that the model used does not work based on the specific traffic situation in Middletown. Mr. Fortunado respectfully disagreed with Mr. Hall's opinion, as other engineers that work with the Town have also investigated this. Mr. Hall stated he is a licensed engineer with the State of Delaware and reiterated the model does not work for Middletown. To that point, Mr. Fortunado suggested Mr. Hall contact the officials reviewing this project to express his concerns.

Mrs. Parrish confirmed with Mr. Deputy that the Town of Middletown does not oversee traffic related issues. Mr. Deputy replied, DelDOT handles all traffic analysis and studies. They have seen the projections based on the ITE Manual and based off their expert opinion, a traffic study is not warranted.

Chuck McCausland commented he does not believe this project will add a severe increase in traffic to the area.

Gretchen Rachko asked if data can be used from other stores with a car wash. Donald Dibert replied that this will be the first Wawa to have a car wash so there is no data to compare. Ms. Rachko stated she has a membership at Tommy's Car Wash and the lines do not back up causing traffic issues.

Mr. Pontak asked Mr. Deputy if there are any plans to improve the entrance/exit from W. Main Street. Mr. Deputy replied, no. There have been attempts, but the owner has declined. Mr. Chillas commented there is also a secondary entrance/exit by the Waffle House that can also be utilized.

3. Water usage/Drought concerns:

This site would have to comply with any Town mandated drought provisions set forth in the event water needed to be preserved. Since this site will be state-of-art, it will be water and energy efficient with a high reclaim.

Mr. Pontak asked if there is a filtration system on site. Mr. Fortunado replied, yes.

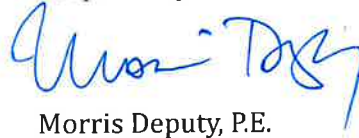
Moved by Keith Thompson and seconded by Chuck McCausland to recommend Mayor and Council approve 528 W. Main Street – Preliminary Major Land Development Plan for a 5,425 square-foot car wash to be developed within the existing Wawa parcel to include three (3) pay stations, vacuum stations and interparcel access, in a C-3 zoned area. Motion Carried 7-1. (Yes – Chillas, Dibert, McCausland, Parrish, Pontak, Rachko, Thompson; No – Hall. Frank Bailey excused himself early from the meeting due to a fire alarm sounding off).

Mr. Hall commented traffic conditions are hazardous at the W. Main Street entrance into the shopping center, and it is a safety concern to the citizens of the Town.

Moved by Joe Pontak and seconded by Donald Dibert to adjourn. Motion Carried Unanimously.

We believe these minutes accurately reflect what transpired; however, we will appreciate comments involving a different understanding of what occurred. Unless we are notified in writing to the contrary within 10 days after receipt, we will assume all in attendance concur with the accuracy of this transcription.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Morris Deputy", is written over the typed name.

Morris Deputy, P.E.
Town Manager

KJ – 7/24/26
Cc: Mayor & Council
P & Z Members
Verdantas