

CITY OF UNION CITY
HUDSON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
PLANNING BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF
PROCEEDINGS

Union City High School
Media Center
2500 Kennedy Boulevard
Union City, New Jersey

Tuesday, February 24, 2026
Commencing at 6:00 p.m.

M E M B E R S P R E S E N T :

ALEJANDRO VELAZQUEZ, Chairperson
YDALIA GENAO
ALICIA MOREJON
JOSE GUARENO, Alternate #1
HECTOR OSEGUERA, Alternate #2

M E M B E R S A B S E N T :

BRIAN T. STACK, Mayor
CELIN J. VALDIVIA, Commissioner
CAROLINA FERNANDEZ
FRANKLIN MEDINA

A L S O P R E S E N T :

BRIAN CHEWCASKIE, ESQ.
Board Counsel

CARLOS VALLEJO, Board Secretary

SUSAN BISCHOFF CCR CO.
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A P P E A R A N C E S:

NEIL D. MAROTTA, ESQ.
Attorney for Applicant, Union City
Public Library

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1 MR. VALLEJO: May I have your attention,
2 please.

3 Please take notice that on Tuesday,
4 February 24, 2026, at 6:00 PM, a regular meeting
5 is scheduled for the City of Union City Planning
6 Board to be held in the Union City High School
7 located at 2500 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Union
8 City, New Jersey.

9 Opening statement: This meeting is
10 called in compliance with Chapter 231 Public Law
11 of 1975, Open Public Meeting Act. Adequate notice
12 of this meeting has been provided as follows:
13 Notice of this meeting setting forth the time,
14 date, location, and the agenda to the extent known
15 was forwarded to The Record, and The Star Ledger,
16 has been posted on the bulletin board in City Hall
17 and has been made available to the public in the
18 office of the municipal clerk, and also has been
19 published at ucnj.com, the official website of the
20 City of Union City.

21 Before we call roll for tonight's
22 meeting, can everybody kindly rise to salute the
23 flag?

24
25 (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance is

1 recited.)

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3 **ROLL CALL:**

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5 MR. VALLEJO: Thank you. Roll call for
6 tonight's meeting.

7 Mayor Stack is absent.

8 Mr. Velazquez.

9 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Here.

10 MR. VALLEJO: Commissioner Valdivia is
11 absent.

12 Ms. Genao.

13 MS. GENAO: Yes.

14 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Morejon.

15 MS. MOREJON: Yes.

16 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Fernandez is absent.

17 Mr. Medina is absent.

18 Mr. Guareno.

19 MR. GUARENO: Yes.

20 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Oseguera.

21 MR. OSEGUERA: Here.

22 MR. VALLEJO: Let the record indicate
23 there are five present.

24

25

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

MR. VALLEJO: Next, we're going to adoption of minutes of January 27, 2026. Can I have a motion?

CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: I make a motion.

MR. VALLEJO: Motion by Mr. Velazquez.

MS. MOREJON: Second.

MR. VALLEJO: Seconded by Ms. Morejon.

Roll call on the motion.

Mr. Velazquez.

CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Yes.

MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Genao.

MS. GENAO: Yes.

MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Guareno.

MR. GUARENO: Yes.

MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Morejon.

MS. MOREJON: Yes.

MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Oseguera.

MR. OSEGUERA: Yes.

MR. VALLEJO: Five in favor, motion pass.

HEARINGS/APPLICATIONS:

Affordable Housing Ordinance:

MR. VALLEJO: All right. We're going to first hearing on tonight's agenda. Go ahead, sir.

MR. CHEWCASKIE: If I may, Mr. Chairman, the City of Union City adopted an updated affordable housing ordinance to conform with the fourth round affordable housing requirements under the amendments to the Fair Housing Act. This ordinance replaces, in its entirety, the existing ordinance and establishes the affordability controls under the regulations for affordable housing units in the city. This ordinance was introduced on February 20th, which was Friday and the City intends to adopt it at the next available meeting, that's why it's before the Planning Board this evening.

What this ordinance does, as I've indicated, it establishes the parameters for the regulation of affordable housing units as they are built in the City of Union City and the restrictions that are imposed on those units. The form of ordinance that has been provided to the Board is consistent with the model ordinance that

1 has been promulgated by the Department of
2 Community Affairs. The ordinance is before the
3 Board tonight solely for review and
4 recommendation.

5 I don't know if any Board Members have
6 any questions, but being familiar with this type
7 of ordinance, I see nothing extraordinary in there
8 that's different from any other community in the
9 state. If the Board accepts this form of
10 ordinance, I will send a letter or email tomorrow
11 to the Board of Commissioners indicating same,
12 that same could be adopted. So I don't know if
13 anyone has any questions?

14 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Any Board
15 Members have any questions? Do we have anyone
16 from the public?

17 MR. CHEWCASKIE: Mr. Velazquez, I would
18 ask for a motion by the Board to authorize me to
19 send a letter that there are no recommendations
20 regarding this ordinance and it should be adopted
21 in its present form.

22 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: I make a motion.

23 MS. MOREJON: Second.

24 MR. VALLEJO: Motion by Mr. Velazquez,
25 seconded by Ms. Morejon. Roll call on the motion.

1 Mr. Velazquez.

2 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Yes.

3 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Genao.

4 MS. GENAO: Yes.

5 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Guareno.

6 MR. GUARENO: Yes.

7 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Morejon.

8 MS. MOREJON: Yes.

9 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Oseguera.

10 MR. OSEGUERA: Yes.

11 MR. VALLEJO: Five in favor, motion
12 pass.

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1 **HEARINGS/APPLICATION:**

2 **2. UNION CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY:**

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4 MR. VALLEJO: We're going to item 2.

5 MR. CHEWCASKIE: Number 2 is Union City
6 Public Library is here this evening for what's
7 called a capital review of a project. So in
8 accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, in
9 particular Section 31(a), any time there's an
10 expenditure of public funds, there is to be a
11 review by the Planning Board for a review and
12 recommendation of the proposed project. That
13 review and recommendation is merely that, it's a
14 recommendation. So the library does not have to
15 accept any recommendations that you make, but in
16 the past, with any sort of capital projects, a lot
17 of times, is that if there are recommendations by
18 the Board, the public entity, whether it be the
19 city or an agency of the city, attempts to
20 implement those suggestions.

21 So, Mr. Marotta, the attorney for the
22 library board did submit a letter dated
23 February 23rd. Attached to that letter are
24 renderings and I believe he also brought with him
25 the library director to discuss the project. And

1 the way it's been described, there's an existing
2 library on this lot, it's New York Avenue and 43rd
3 Street, that library is to be demolished and an
4 entirely new library built. And I'll turn it over
5 to Mr. Marotta so he can go through what's being
6 proposed.

7 MR. MAROTTA: Thank you very much. Good
8 evening, everybody, pleased to be here tonight.
9 We're very excited about this project. The 43rd
10 Street main library has gone into disuse -- I mean
11 it was utilized, but the building is falling
12 apart. And we truly need a new building. So we
13 have plans, we've been working on it for some
14 time. Our director, Ms. Tsomaeva, is here tonight
15 if you have any questions. But basically we're
16 coming in with a new library, fully operational
17 state-of-the-art facility. It will be three
18 stories high, we're very pleased to say it will be
19 a garden on the one part, on the side of it. It
20 will also provide public access for facility
21 rooms. In fact, actually, I'm going to turn it
22 over to Ms. Tsomaeva because she knows it so much
23 better than me.

24 MR. CHEWCASKIE: If you could just give
25 us your name again and spell it.

1 MS. TSOMAEVA: Elena Tsomaeva, E-L-E-N-A
2 T-S-O-M-A-E-V-A.

3 MR. MAROTTA: Would you like her sworn?

4 MR. CHEWCASKIE: She does not need to be
5 sworn because it's only review and recommendation.

6 MS. TSOMAEVA: So with this project, we
7 increase the square footage of the library, much
8 needed, for the residents Union City. Instead of
9 roughly below 10,000 square feet, the new library
10 would be 15,000 square feet. We're extending the
11 facilities. Right now, there's only one bathroom
12 for children and one for adults. It would be
13 bathrooms on each floor, including family bathroom
14 on the first floor.

15 We also will be adding a young adult
16 room, which we're now lacking, state-of-the-art
17 computer lab on third floor. A community meeting
18 room that can be used during the library hours as
19 well as off-hours. And the design of the library
20 is such that during off-hours, if that room is
21 used, we don't have to staff the whole building,
22 we can just close the stairwells to the second and
23 third floor, turn off the elevators. And the
24 restrooms downstairs will provide public with
25 facilities and also main entrance as well as an

1 emergency exit.

2 We spending -- we'll have three --
3 additional to the large community meeting room,
4 we'll have three meeting rooms, medium sized and
5 two small tele-med or -- not private, but study
6 rooms on the second floor where the adult
7 department is located.

8 This project is funded by Library
9 Construction Bond Act and also by capital project
10 fund from the state library.

11 MR. MAROTTA: Any questions?

12 MR. CHEWCASKIE: I just have one
13 question. What's the age of the current library,
14 if you know?

15 MS. TSOMAEVA: It's 121 years old and
16 it's showing it. It's original Carnegie building,
17 which is built in 1905.

18 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Does any Board
19 Members have any questions?

20 MR. CHEWCASKIE: Basically, as I
21 indicated, this matter is here for review and
22 recommendation. If there are no specific
23 recommendations, I would suggest that a motion be
24 made to authorize me to send a letter to the
25 library board indicating that review of the

1 project has been approved without any
2 recommendations based upon the submission by Mr.
3 Marotta and what we've heard from the director.

4 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Do any Board
5 Members have any questions? Anybody from the
6 public? Director, anything?

7 MS. TSOMAEVA: Thank you very much.

8 MR. CHEWCASKIE: I would just need a
9 motion.

10 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: I make a motion.

11 MS. MOREJON: Second.

12 MR. VALLEJO: Motion by Mr. Velazquez,
13 seconded by Ms. Morejon. Roll call on the motion.
14 Mr. Velazquez.

15 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Yes.

16 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Genao.

17 MS. GENAO: Yes.

18 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Guareno.

19 MR. GUARENO: Yes.

20 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Morejon.

21 MS. MOREJON: Yes.

22 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Oseguera.

23 MR. OSEGUERA: Yes.

24 MR. VALLEJO: Five in favor, motion
25 pass.

1 MR. MAROTTA: Just want to thank
2 everybody, especially counsel and Mr. Vallejo, for
3 getting us on the board meeting so quickly, much
4 appreciated.

5 MR. CHEWCASKIE: We were here. It looks
6 excellent.

7 MR. MAROTTA: It's exciting, it really
8 is.

9 MR. CHEWCASKIE: I looked at it today, I
10 love the rooftop.

11 MR. MAROTTA: Yeah, that's the high
12 point. Again --

13 MS. GENAO: I pass by 43rd Street every
14 day, I am so excited to see it.

15 MR. OSEGUERA: My kids will be in there
16 all the time.

17 MR. MAROTTA: I'm sure. It's one of the
18 best places for kids, they can spend all their
19 time, and our library was much smaller than this.
20 So thank you again.

21 MR. CHEWCASKIE: Everyone have a good
22 night.

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1 **ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS:**

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3 MR. CHEWCASKIE: The last matter we have
4 is the resolution on Hudson Yards West. This was
5 before the Board in January. This is the
6 modification of the existing project, the Board
7 approved the application with respect to the
8 conditions that were elicited during the course of
9 the hearing. And the applicant agrees to enter
10 into an agreement with the City to provide an
11 easement along Peter Street between Hudson Avenue
12 and Palisade Avenue, that's to accommodate the
13 sidewalk that was installed by the City.

14 I did not bring my transcript, so I know
15 that Mr. Velazquez and Mr. Guareno were here, but
16 I don't know who else was here.

17 MR. VALLEJO: Everybody here present at
18 this time was present at the previous meeting.

19 MR. CHEWCASKIE: So then everybody is
20 eligible to vote. So if there's a motion on this,
21 Mr. Chairman, on the resolution?

22 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: I make a motion.

23 MR. GUARENO: Second.

24 MR. VALLEJO: Motion by Mr. Velazquez,
25 seconded by Mr. Guareno. Roll call on the motion.

1 Mr. Velazquez.

2 CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Yes.

3 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Genao.

4 MS. GENAO: Yes.

5 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Guareno.

6 MR. GUARENO: Yes.

7 MR. VALLEJO: Ms. Morejon.

8 MS. MOREJON: Yes.

9 MR. VALLEJO: Mr. Oseguera.

10 MR. OSEGUERA: Yes.

11 MR. VALLEJO: Five in favor, motion
12 pass.

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ADJOURNMENT:

MR. VALLEJO: There being no other application on tonight's agenda, can I have a motion to close tonight's meeting?

MR. GUARENO: I make a motion.

MR. VALLEJO: Motion by Mr. Guareno.

CHAIRPERSON VELAZQUEZ: Second.

MR. VALLEJO: Seconded by Mr. Velazquez.

All in favor?

(All Board Members indicate in the affirmative.)

MR. VALLEJO: The ayes have it. Thank you. Let the record show that the meeting has ended. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony and proceedings as taken stenographically by me at the time, place, and on the date hereinbefore set forth.

SUSAN BISCHOFF, CCR, RPR
LICENSE NO. 30XI00233700