

UPPER SADDLE RIVER PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026

Mr. Donato called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. The following statement was read:
Pursuant to The Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 proper notice of this meeting has been provided by e-mail to The Record and The Ridgewood News on December 11, 2025 at which time the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting was set forth. Notice was posted on the bulletin board in the Borough Hall and on the Borough Website: www.usrtday.org

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Madaio administered the Oath of Allegiance to the following Board members:
Mr. Donato, Mr. Putrino

Present: Mr. Preusch, Ms. Fox, Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Putrino, Mr. Wiederholz, Mr. Donato

Absent: Mayor Fardanesh, Ms. Drennan, Mr. Richardi

Also Present: Mark Madaio Esq, Planning Board Attorney
Nicki Louloudis PE, PP, CME/Colliers Engineering/Borough/Board Engineer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 14, 2026

A motion by Mr. Wiederholz to adopt the minutes of the January 14, 2026 meeting seconded by Ms. Fox.

Roll Call

Ayes: Mr. Preusch, Mr. Jacobs, Ms. Fox, Mr. Wiederholz

PUBLIC HEARING

The following plans and documents were filed and distributed to the Board:

A-1: PB Application Form; **A-2:** Existing/Demo Plan Ramsey Center LLC (7) sheets, prepared by Weissman Engineering, dated August 15, 2025; **A-3:** Drainage Area Maps Ramsey Center prepared by Weissman Engineering dated August 15, 2025; **A-4:** Traffic Impact Study Proposed 7 Brew Coffee prepared by Stonefield Engineering & Design LLC dated January 12, 2026; **B-1:** Colliers Engineering Review Letter dated November 18, 2025.

1. Application of **Ramsey Center II, LLC**
207 Route 17 South – Block 1301 – Lot 12
(Use Variance; Front Yard Buffer/New “7 Brew” Drive-thru Coffee Shop w Refrigerator Shed)

Bruce Whitaker Esq. representing the Applicant provided a brief history of the property previously owned

by GaGa Realty that was approved for a small retail operation by the Planning Board in 2013; Final Site Plan Approval was granted in 2015, but the project was never developed. The lot sat vacant for many years and has been purchased by Mr. Voskian, an Upper Saddle River resident. Due to environmental constraints, development of the property is limited. The property is located in the H-1 Zone, for which restaurant use is permitted, but drive-thru use is not permitted.

The Applicant is proposing to install a prefabricated 510 sf building, a 260-sf refrigeration shed, dumpster, patio, driveway and parking areas to be used by a “7 Brew Drive Thru” Coffee Franchise as the tenant.

The facility will have (2) drive-thru lanes and (1) by-pass lane. Customers are not permitted into the building as it offers no seating, food or public restrooms. Vehicles enter the site, orders are taken by employees using an I-Pad, processed and then delivered directly to the customer’s vehicle queued in line. (7) employee parking spaces are provided where (4) parking spaces are required. (1) space is for EV use.

Mr. Whitaker stated there is a need for a drive-thru coffee shop for which the property is particularly suited. In addition to the use variance to permit the drive-thru, bulk variances are required for the proposed pylon signs to be located within the setbacks from the highway and for a proposed (0) ft. front yard buffer vs. 10 ft. required.

Zachary Rosskamm, co- owner of the proposed “7 Brew” Franchise, was duly sworn by Mr. Madaio. Mr. Rosskamm testified this is a drive-thru streamlined operation that does not offer door dash or uber eats orders. The hours of operation are Monday – Thursday 5:30 am – 10 pm; Friday and Saturday 5:30 am – 11 pm; and Sunday 5:30 - 10 pm. Mr. Rosskamm testified from the time the customer drives into the site, order taken, delivered and exits the site is approximately three minutes and 30 seconds. The only food offered is a pre-packaged muffin. Twice weekly supplies are delivered off hours by a box truck off - loading directly into the building and to the refrigerated shed. Trash pick-up, consisting mostly of cartons and cardboard, is scheduled 2- 3 times per week. Thirty-five to 40 employees, work part time in staggered shifts. After the site is prepared, the pre-fabricated building will be operational in 3-4 weeks. Mr. Rosskamm testified “7 Brew” is community minded, reaching out to local communities, first responders and local charities, etc. Mr. Rosskamm testified he has visited the site and agreed it is suitable and will accommodate the operation.

In response to multiple comments from the Board, Mr. Rosskamm testified the customer is greeted by an employee at the first spot, and their order taken. Mr. Rosskamm reviewed traffic circulation and testified if there is a problem, the customer is asked to move into one of the empty parking spots. There is no pre-ordering, the customer places their order with an employee using an I-Pad. In respect to snow plowing and removal, safety being their top priority; should the weather be extreme they will consider closing.

In response to comments from the Board, Mr. Rosskamm testified employees will re-direct traffic should it backup onto Route 17. Customers are serviced by well – trained employees with speed and efficiency. Mr. Rosskamm testified he is the franchise owner of several other New Jersey locations; all located on a busy highway.

Ms. Louloudis PE, questioned if the Applicant had received of letter of no-interest from the NJDOT.

Mr. Whikaker advised the Application will be subject to all government approvals.

A Board Member questioned if there was an alternative exit onto Parkway.

A motion by Mr. Preusch to open the Hearing to Members of the public for questions regarding the testimony provided by Mr. Rosskamm seconded by Ms. Fox. No one from the public appeared to provide testimony.

Tom Donohue PE, duly sworn by Mr. Madaio, testified being familiar with the site having worked with Weissman Engineering preparing the Plan. Mr. Donohue testified to the existing conditions, location, and current uses of the surrounding properties. Mr. Donohue described the property as being irregular in shape with a stream bordering the rear of the property and the flood hazard area line transversing part of the property. The strip of the subject property does not extend over to Parkway to provide an exit. The existing well will be abandoned and all utilities on site will be disconnected with new services provided.

Mr. Donohue reviewed the NJDEP flood delineation of the FEMA based elevations extending across the rear portion of the site. All proposed work is outside that area and the area proposed for development is appropriate.

Mr. Donohue reviewed the proposed location for the pylon signs testifying they would be blocked by the adjacent building if set back any further. Mr. Donohue reviewed the proposed drainage system designed to reduce and control stormwater.

Ms. Louloudis advised a Storm Water Report is required.

Mr. Donohue reviewed the proposed lighting and landscaping plan.

Mr. Whitaker advised the Applicant will comply to all comments provided in the Colliers Engineering Review Letter dated November 18, 2025.

In response to comments from the Board regarding the size, location and number of proposed signs, Mr. Whitaker advised the Applicant will revisit the sign issues.

A motion by Mr. Preusch to open the Hearing to Members of the public regarding testimony provided by Mr. Donohue seconded by Ms. Fox. No one from the public appeared to provide testimony.

Nicholas Kennedy PE, Stonefield Engineering & Design, duly sworn by Mr. Madaio, testified to and reviewed the Traffic Impact Study dated January 12, 2026. Mr. Kennedy testified a traffic analysis was conducted of the heavily trafficked road used every day by approximately 100,000 vehicles. The Study determined even if the trip generation was doubled with added volumes, it would have a negligible impact on the roadway network. Mr. Kennedy testified the proposed "7 Brew" is a pit stop, with vehicles in and out, not a destination.

In response to comments from the Board, Mr. Kennedy testified the average service time is 3 ½ minutes for each vehicle, much quicker than competitors. Employees monitor traffic and control; the service provided is quick and sufficient. Mr. Kennedy testified the site is suitable for the proposed use and will be reviewed by the NJDOT.

Discussion ensued regarding the time frame that vehicles enter from Route 17 and the short runway to make a righthand turn and the time to accelerate and leave the site.

A motion by Mr. Jacobs to open the Hearing to Members of the public for questions regarding testimony provided by Mr. Kennedy seconded by Mr. Preusch. No one from the public appeared to provide testimony.

The Board recessed at 8:41 pm and reconvened at 8:48 pm.

Mr. Donohue PE, testified he would eliminate the proposed pylon sign and provide a monument sign under the tree. Mr. Donohue reviewed the location of the signs on the building shown on Page 4, depicting the sign on the front of the building, signs on the north and south sides and the pylon sign.

Mr. Whitaker advised the sign on the south side can be eliminated. Discussion followed regarding the Board's concern with the signs being illuminated 24/7. Mr. Whitaker advised all the franchises are identical and the Applicant would follow the standards set in Upper Saddle River.

Thomas Ricci PP, Stonefield Engineering & Design, duly sworn by Mr. Madaio, testified he was engaged by the Applicant to prepare an analysis of the site from a planning perspective after reviewing the site plans and exhibits.

Mr. Ricci testified to the existing conditions of the property that have sat vacant for almost 14 years, stating it is a long time not to have commercial activity on the highway. Mr. Ricci reviewed the particular reasons why the site is particularly suited for the proposed "7 Brew" franchise. The oddly shaped small sized commercial site in the area, with a stream crossing the rear, makes it disadvantageous for other uses. The proposed development with a very small building, having a drive-thru only business, requires minimal parking and fits within the constraints to the greatest extent possible. Comparing the (29) lots located in the H 1R district, only (2) other lots are comparable, one smaller lot is shared with another property; the other lot is maxed out with impervious coverage.

Mr. Ricci reviewed the requested "c" variances testifying they are justified. The proposed maximum wall sign is proportionate and not uncharacteristic for commercial businesses.

Mr. Ricci testified the proposed use satisfies the purposes of Municipal Land Use Law and meets the goals and objectives of the Borough's Master Plan by eliminating a long vacant property and developing a public commodity along the Route 17 corridor. Mr. Ricci stated this type of facility was not even contemplated when the Borough's Master Plan was adopted, but meets the needs of today's public.

Mr. Donato stated the main focus of the Board is safety regarding the curb cuts for ingress, egress and traffic control.

Mr. Whitaker advised the Applicant will revisit and amend the site plan.

A motion by Ms. Fox to open the Hearing to Members of the public regarding Mr. Ricci's testimony seconded by Mr. Wiederholz. No one from the public appeared to provide testimony.

Mr. Donato announced the Application is carried to the Wednesday, February 11, 2026 meeting at 7 pm without further noticing required.

A motion by Mr. Wiederholz to open the Meeting to Members of the public for general comments seconded by Ms. Fox.

Richard Loeffler, 15 Robin Ridge Road said his family have been happy residents for many years, advising he is a trained site planner and landscape architect. Mr. Loeffler expressed concern regarding the economic conditions driving the new development of large oversized houses resulting in a lot of houses and no leafy vegetation. Mr. Loeffler said the character of the town will be lost and urged the Planning Board to revisit and modify the current Ordinances without clamping down on a property owner's prerogative.

Mr. Madaio advised the only entity that can enact and adopt Ordinances is the Governing Body. Mr. Loeffler thanked the Board and advised he would attend the next Mayor and Council Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn by Ms. Fox seconded by Mr. Putrino was unanimously approved by all Members present. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Marmora, Clerk