

HUDSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RE:

REGULAR MEETING : TRANSCRIPT OF
OF THE :
HUDSON COUNTY BOARD OF : PROCEEDINGS
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS :
:

O P E N S E S S I O N

Hudson County
Administration Building,
Commissioners Chambers
567 Pavonia Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey
Thursday, September 10, 2026
4:30 p.m.

B E F O R E:

ANTHONY ROMANO, Chairman
YRAIDA APONTE-LIPSKI, Commissioner
ROBERT BASELICE, Commissioner
FANNY CEDEÑO, Commissioner
ALBERT CIFELLI, Commissioner
KENNETH KOPACZ, Commissioner
WILLIAM O'DEA, Commissioner
CARIDAD RODRIGUEZ, Commissioner
CELESTE WILLIAMS, Commissioner

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

EDWARD J. FLORIO, ESQ., Board Counsel
ALBERICO DE PIERRO, Hudson County Counsel
ABRAHAM ANTUN, County Administrator
CAROL JEAN DOYLE, County Commissioner Clerk
Reported by: Shari Cathey, CCR, RPR

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Aponte-
2 Lipski.

3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Here.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.
5 Commissioner Cedeño.

6 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Here.

7 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

8 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

10 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Present.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Present.

17 THE CLERK: And Chairman Romano.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Please stand to salute
20 the flag.

21 (Flag Salute.)

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Before you
23 continue, please. Tomorrow marks the 25th
24 anniversary of the tragedy, the terrorist attack on
25 the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon and those

1 in Pennsylvania to all the victims and their
2 families that suffered. We asked for a moment of
3 silence. Please stand up.

4 (Moment of Silence.)

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

6 THE CLERK: Adequate notice of this
7 meeting has been provided as follows: Posting
8 notice of Resolution 419-8-2026 on the County
9 Commissioner Bulletin Board, first floor of the
10 Administration Building Annex in Jersey City, New
11 Jersey.

12 Copies of the above-mentioned resolution
13 have been sent to the County Clerk, posted on the
14 Commissioner's website online for the public's
15 notice.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Madam Clerk, before
17 we start, the County Executive would like a minute.
18 County Executive.

19 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Thank you,
20 Chairman. Thank you, Board. I'd like to take two
21 minutes, three minutes at a time to address some of
22 the questions surrounding the Courthouse Park slash
23 demolition of 595 Newark Avenue.

24 Myself, Mayor Solomon and Judge Katz met
25 yesterday, and we talked for a long time about --

1 about the project. And we talked about any other,
2 if none of us or any of us were thinking, were not
3 thinking the right way, where we could consider
4 alternative locations that were financially
5 responsible to house the civil courts other than
6 595. I spoke to Commissioner O'Dea this morning and
7 I just -- I did send over, I know we sent it over
8 earlier. We did send over a letter, a directive
9 from Michael Blee, who is the Acting Administrative
10 Director of the courts, the state, who would not
11 consider the request of virtual courts, the civil
12 courts going virtual for any amount of time.

13 I've also, one of the questions that were
14 posed yesterday and this morning to Judge Katz was,
15 could we simultaneously do work at 583 and maintain
16 some semblance of courtroom activity at the same
17 time? And that answer is a no. The judicial courts
18 and the State at this point will now not allow their
19 employees, to a lesser extent our employees, be
20 subject to any of the potential health problems that
21 could result as a result of having work done at the
22 same time.

23 The judge related some issues about when
24 we did do a small amount of work here prior, and
25 there were a number of problems that came along with

1 that. And thus, the assignment judge and his
2 supervisory judicial people will not acquiesce and
3 go along with working on this building at the same
4 time as civil courts are. We do have myself and
5 Mayor Solomon agreed to, on a short timeline, look
6 at potential alternatives. We don't know if they're
7 going to face -- if they're going to pass judicial
8 muster and/or financial muster.

9 I can't balance the checkbook of Hudson
10 County on the backs of all the taxpayers, no less
11 Jersey City taxpayers. So we have to be financially
12 prudent in if there's an alternative and how much
13 that would cost. And the Mayor of Jersey City has
14 offered assistance with the financial responsibility
15 for this. It's about -- unless the Commissioners
16 have questions, I wanted to bring you up to date on
17 where we're at.

18 THE CLERK: Mr. Chairman, everyone
19 has the letter on their desk that the County
20 Executive is referring to.

21 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: One last
22 thing, Commissioners. I spoke to Building Trades
23 President Patty Kellerher, who took the bid for the
24 rebid and shared it with as many vendors within the
25 Building Trades that do this type of work. And

1 we're hoping, could be pie in the sky, we're hoping
2 for a more competitive response from our union shops
3 that handle this kind of work. Thank you for your
4 time.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes, question.
6 Sorry, Al. Al, go ahead.

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Executive,
8 when you say that you had a discussion with Patty
9 Kellerher, you're referring to, I think, the HVAC
10 project that's planned for Brennan.

11 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Al, I can
12 barely hear you. I'm sorry.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm sorry.
14 When you mentioned that you shared with, you had a
15 discussion with Patty Kellerher from the Hudson
16 County Building Trades about seeking out other
17 contractors who might be interested in the project.
18 When you say the project, do you mean the HVAC for
19 Brennan Courthouse?

20 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Both projects,
21 eventually. The HVAC, first and foremost, and the
22 potential demolition, the future demolition of 595.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And based upon
24 the discussion you had with the courts, Judge Katz
25 and whoever, my impression is that the demolition,

1 whoever's responsible financially, which we're going
2 to have to have a serious discussion about that.
3 But when that takes place, that can't take place,
4 according to the courts, until Brennan, 583, the
5 Brennan Courthouse, is completely vacant, correct?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Craig, did you hear
7 that?

8 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Yeah, I miss
9 it. Al, could you kind of restate?

10 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Well, you said
11 you had, there was a three-way discussion among
12 Judge, Mayor Solomon, Judge Katz, and yourself.

13 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Correct.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And to the
15 effect that, as I understood it, that the courts,
16 Judge Katz and the people that supervise Judge Katz
17 above him, they are dead set against having any work
18 done at Brennan while any judiciary personnel is
19 occupying that building.

20 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Correct.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. And so
22 the relocation, we would have to relocate the civil
23 courts and whatever associated personnel in Brennan,
24 we have to relocate them, at least on a temporary
25 basis, to another location. And virtual is not

1 acceptable to the judiciary.

2 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Correct.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So it would
4 have to be, so by default, unless I hear some better
5 news, I think that the only place that they could be
6 relocated would be across the street at the building
7 I'm looking at right now, which is 595.

8 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Correct.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Is that right?

10 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Well,
11 Commissioner, we don't know that. That's why we're
12 leaving options open.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.

14 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: If there is
15 another compatible courthouse building or courthouse
16 compatible building that we could habitat over the
17 next 18, 26 months.

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: The 18, 26
19 month duration is what it might take to complete the
20 HVAC for Brennan?

21 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Once it's
23 vacated.

24 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Once it's
25 vacated. But keep in mind too, Commissioner,

1 wherever location, if it was determined to be
2 suitable, we or the project would be costing
3 additional money to retrofit that particular
4 building to fit the needs of the judiciary.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: On the
6 temporary move? Absolutely.

7 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Correct. And
8 at the end of that move, and at the end of that
9 move, that X amount of millions of dollars would be
10 lost money unless another court --

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's right.
12 I know.

13 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Take it over.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm asking the
15 question. One last thing Commissioners that, I
16 spoke to Commissioner Lipski a little while ago, who
17 has been, you know, has been integral in the
18 conversations on a daily basis with potential
19 resolution here.

20 This is a park for -- this is a park
21 that's located in Jersey City, right? But this is a
22 park that this administration is advocating strongly
23 for because of the needs for the people within
24 Jersey City. This is just not a park that Mayor
25 Solomon and his counsel are saying, Well, we need

1 this park for only Jersey City and it's Jersey City
2 or bust.

3 You know, I would, you know, and I'll let
4 the -- let the jurors -- let the Commissioners speak
5 for themselves. But this is a park that this
6 Administration strongly supports in its effort to
7 continue with more open green space in a -- in a
8 really tight urban area.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Another
10 question and then we'll get on with our meeting.
11 But the other question is about the -- the 64, I
12 would say thousand dollar question, but probably
13 more like \$64 million question is the cost of the
14 demo and the remediation of 595.

15 My impression has always been when -- when
16 the new courthouse project took -- took flight
17 several years ago was that ultimately 595 would be
18 demolished. We all know that it's got a history of
19 environmental issues, asbestos being probably the
20 main issue. My impression has been to date until
21 the last couple of months was that Jersey City was
22 going to be responsible for the demo costs. And in
23 return, they would get a deed to the property and
24 they could make into a park or whatever else they
25 wanted to make it into. That would be Jersey City's

1 issue.

2 But now it sounds like the other 11
3 municipalities are being called upon to contribute
4 to the demo costs of that building, which is
5 something that I did not anticipate. I was over
6 another impression. I don't know when that came to
7 change, but we'll find out that that will come out
8 in the --

9 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Commissioner,
10 and that's why I said that this is a park for Hudson
11 County. It's a park for Jersey City. It's a park
12 that strongly is -- is needed for Jersey City. And
13 just like we would consider building a park or
14 constructing something in being that you're raising
15 a question in West Hudson. You know, I would hope
16 that your colleagues would be in support of
17 something that would be important to you or
18 important to the West Hudson side of Hudson County.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And I would
20 like to think so as well. But whether it's
21 something that costs a million dollars or \$70
22 million, that's where the rubber meets the road. So
23 we'll talk about that later.

24 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Okay. Thank
25 you, Commissioner.

1 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Just keep the
2 Commissioners in the loop on that. The date that
3 the negotiations are -- most of us sitting here have
4 not been engaged in that. We're on the outside
5 looking in.

6 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Commissioners,
7 and we don't need to flush this out now, but we have
8 been sending -- I know my office has been sending a
9 steady stream of correspondence to the Commissioners
10 on some very hot button items. Whether it be the
11 virtual courts, whether it be another item that
12 should have come to you, Commissioners. When we
13 asked, and I know Commissioner O'Dea and Romano
14 referred to this a couple of meetings ago.

15 When the Administration asked the vendor
16 that was originally awarded the bid if he would hold
17 this price for 60 to 90 days, and they came back
18 with a resounding no, quickly. And the Mayor of
19 Jersey City, although it hasn't been formalized yet,
20 has agreed to talk about compensation for the
21 County. If in fact that pricing is increased by
22 whoever gets the next bid.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So Craig, basically
24 two things then that everyone should know. That we
25 requested an extension from the current contractor

1 who refused. And that they went out to bid last
2 Tuesday. And hopefully they'll be back in time so
3 we can have a vote sometime in November, correct?

4 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And that the cost,
6 obviously, they didn't want to stay at the same
7 cost.

8 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

10 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Thank you.

11 Thank you, Commissioners.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Craig, hold on.
13 Hold on. Billy.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So on the issue
15 of the park, demo of the building, asbestos
16 remediation of the building and park. Yeah, we
17 should continue and move that dialogue forward, and
18 bring it to a direction and resolution as soon as
19 possible. That park, while located in Jersey City,
20 will be a great benefit to the County because it's
21 physically located across from the Guarini
22 Courthouse by Brennan and by our building.

23 And during the hours of eight a.m. to five
24 or six p.m., Monday to Friday, the people that will
25 be there, the people that work here, jurors that are

1 jurors in the buildings, et cetera. So, you know, I
2 guess, Al, I was in the loop because I'm Jersey City
3 and speak to the mayor somewhat regularly. But,
4 yeah, I mean, let's just get that resolved. And
5 hopefully we have the support of the Board to move
6 that item forward. Because, you know, one of the
7 flip sides of it, because we talked about the issue
8 of if the bids now coming in higher and what the
9 mayor, Jersey City, may be putting some dollars into
10 to assist if that happens. I was not privy to that
11 conversation.

12 Similarly, a building that should be
13 turned over next month and was always presented to
14 be turned over actually a year ago. But for the
15 issues at the Guarini Courthouse, over which we
16 didn't anticipate or expect but happened, that
17 caused that courthouse to be occupied one year
18 later. All costs related to remediating and
19 demolition continue to go up. Like all construction
20 costs continue to go up.

21 So I look forward to having an ongoing
22 sooner rather than later discussion and resolution
23 as to not only who's going to pay, but also what
24 timing can take place to allow as much of the
25 remediation of the building to occur on the lower

1 floors while the upper floors are occupied by the
2 civil courts.

3 Secondly, the ability to do the design and
4 layout of the park and potentially the ability to
5 construct the park in phases such that some of the
6 park could be built before that building is even
7 taken down. So I think that those are strong issues
8 because the residents from the community groups in
9 the neighborhood had anticipated that that building
10 would have been in the hands of Jersey City a year
11 ago. And, you know, the remediation underway if the
12 demolition aren't underway.

13 So I don't want to debate the entire
14 subject. I look forward to doing that. But I think
15 now that we know everything, now that all the cats
16 are out of the bag, let's figure out how we get
17 everything lined up and who's going to do what, pay
18 for what, and when certain things are going to
19 happen.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: One last comment.
21 I think we have to work together as a Board,
22 legislative branch, working with the executive
23 branch to ensure that this is done to everybody's
24 satisfaction. Craig, any other issues? Anything
25 else?

1 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Thank you.
2 Thank you for the time.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you,
4 Craig. I have one question on that with regard --
5 the underground garage, it's structurally unsound?
6 Just whoever, the engineer or whatever?

7 MR. ANTUN: No.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: What's the story
9 with the underground garage?

10 MR. ANTUN: No, it's not that it's
11 structurally unsound, but the problem is that it
12 cannot remain there once we demo the building.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Why?

14 MR. ANTUN: That's where it becomes
15 structurally unsound.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Because I figure if
17 there's a building on it and it's okay, now we're
18 taking a building off with the grass on top.

19 MR. ANTUN: Well, that's why then it
20 becomes structurally, because now you've removed the
21 building.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, okay. That's
23 why I'm not an engineer.

24 THE CLERK: Okay.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Just a cop.

1 THE CLERK: May I have a motion to
2 approve the minutes of the Caucus Meeting of August
3 11th, 2026, and the Regular Meeting minutes of
4 August 13th, 2026?

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's Fanny and
6 Carrie on a motion.

7 THE CLERK: Commissioner
8 Aponte-Lipski.

9 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

10 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

11 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

13 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.

16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

17 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

18 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm going to
20 vote yes. Can you e-mail me the minutes of the
21 meeting itself?

22 THE CLERK: We'll do that.
23 Commissioner Rodriguez.

24 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

25 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

1 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

2 THE CLERK: And Chairman O'Dea. We
3 have three --

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You got to wait
5 a few years for that problem.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

7 THE CLERK: Okay. We have three
8 laudatories.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.
10 Continue.

11 THE CLERK: Congratulating and
12 commending the High Tech High School Consumer Bowl
13 Team upon capturing the 2026 Hudson County
14 Championship title.

15 Whereas, the Board of Commissioners of the
16 County of Hudson take immense pride in celebrating
17 the remarkable achievements of our youth, who
18 through discipline, teamwork, and strategic
19 brilliance elevate Hudson County on the national
20 stage; and

21 Whereas, from May 15th to May 17th, 2026,
22 the High Tech High School eSports and Chess Teams
23 traveled to San Antonio, Texas, to compete in the
24 prestigious Electronic Gaming Federation National
25 Championship, standing triumphant amidst a fiercely

1 competitive field of over 300 schools from across
2 the United States.

3 Whereas, under the visionary guidance and
4 dedicated leadership of Head Coach Jared Krinsky,
5 this victory marks a monumental milestone as the
6 fourth consecutive year he has led High Tech High
7 School to national championship title; and

8 Whereas, the High Tech High School Super
9 Smash Bros. Ultimate Crew Team Compromising National
10 Champions, Maiteo Amy, Noah Saputo, Eduardo Reyes,
11 and Samuel Zea-Kislinger, demonstrated unmatched
12 synergy and skill to capture first place and the
13 national championship title.

14 Whereas, Senior Mateo Amy achieved
15 extraordinary individual acclaim by winning first
16 place in solos and being honored with a prestigious
17 EGF MVP 2026 Forge Award for the High School League.

18 Whereas, Noah Saputo showcased resilience
19 and competitive mastery by securing first place in
20 the consolation bracket competition.

21 Whereas, the High Tech High School Chess
22 Team, led by Captain Ali Issa and featuring
23 brilliant teammates, Nicholas Noguerras, Omkaar
24 Sampigeadi, I mispronounced that name, Raunak Verma,
25 and Mohammed Gezzaz, executed a flawless strategy to

1 secure a commanding 2-0 sweep to claim their
2 national championship; and

3 Whereas, these landmark victories reflect
4 the relentless dedication of these student-athletes
5 and stand as a testament to the culture of
6 excellence fostered by High Tech High School, its
7 educators, and the Hudson County Schools of
8 Technology District.

9 And now, therefore, be it resolved that
10 Chairman Anthony Romano, Jr., and the Hudson County
11 Board of Commissioners extend their highest
12 commendations, heartfelt congratulations, and
13 sincere admiration to Head Coach Jared Krinsky and
14 the student-athletes Matteo Amy, Noah Saputo,
15 Eduardo Reyes, Samuel Zea-Kislinger, Ali Issa,
16 Nicholas Noguerras, Omar Sampigeadi, Raunak Verma,
17 and Mohamed Gezzaz of the High Tech High School
18 eSports and Chess Teams on their national champion
19 triumphs; and

20 Therefore, be it resolved that individual
21 copies of this laudatory resolution be presented to
22 the Head Coach and each student champion as an
23 enduring symbol of Hudson County's profound pride in
24 their historic national triumphs.

25 Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

1 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: She said aye.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

4 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I just want
5 to say, this year, up until this point, Hudson
6 County children, teenagers, et cetera, have made us
7 very, very proud. We're not even done yet.
8 Congratulations. Aye.

9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

10 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Aye.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

14 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

19 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

20 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

21 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah, just one
23 comment also. I see in there, there's two words,
24 discipline and teamwork. Not only do you represent
25 one city, like as Bayonne has done in baseball with

1 the Little League, you represent this County
2 proudly. It's a unification of sorts, which seems
3 to be lacking in today's youth. And hopefully that
4 you're the exemplary examples of what is supposed to
5 take place in our schools and in our youth. And I'm
6 glad to see that our Superintendent of Schools is
7 present also. So when you do come up.

8 THE CLERK: Chairman, is this --

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The
10 superintendent's here?

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Oh, can we go to
13 closed session to talk about some of the contractual
14 stuff?

15 THE CLERK: Chairman, is this for the
16 whole Board? Is the whole Board moving on this?

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes, Board as a
18 whole.

19 THE CLERK: Got it.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Come up for a photo
21 and we have proclamations for each and every one of
22 you. Come up to the front.

23 (Photo Opportunity.)

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: On deck next should
25 be the teacher, right?

1 THE CLERK: No. Yeah. The next one.
2 I switched order. I was requested. She's a High
3 Tech.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So do High Tech
5 next.

6 THE CLERK: The teacher of the year.
7 Chairman, you want me to go out of order? I was --
8 I had a request.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Because they're
10 here, the kids for High Tech. So let them see their
11 teacher.

12 THE CLERK: Okay. Next one. All
13 right. Congratulating and commending Dr. Shelly
14 Witham, lead academic -- Academy Instructor at the
15 Hudson County Schools of Technology upon selection
16 as the 2026-2027 Hudson County Teacher of the Year.

17 Whereas, the Board of County
18 Commissioners, of the County of Hudson takes immense
19 pride in recognizing outstanding educators. Whose
20 passion, except for no exceptional leadership and
21 commitment to scientific inquiry enrich the lives of
22 Hudson County students.

23 Whereas Dr. Shelley Witham, a
24 distinguished Earth and Environmental Science
25 teacher at High Tech High School has devoted 25

1 years of masterful teaching to inspiring the next
2 generation of young scientists and problem solvers.

3 Whereas, a fundamental pillar and leader
4 of the Environmental Science Academy, Dr. Witham has
5 created invaluable, hands-on, authentic learning
6 pipelines that enable high school students to earn
7 college credits while fostering a deep sense of
8 civic and ecological responsibility.

9 Whereas, in August, 2026, the New Jersey
10 Department of Education officially named Dr. Shelly
11 Witham the 2026-2027 Hudson County Teacher of the
12 Year, making the second consecutive year an educator
13 of the Hudson County Schools of Technology District
14 has achieved this elite regional honor; and

15 Whereas Dr. Witham's extensive dedication
16 spans far beyond her core curriculum into tireless
17 student mentorship, leadership in the FFA, robust
18 community outreach, and regional environmental
19 sustainability initiatives.

20 Now, therefore be it resolved by the Board
21 of County Commissioners of the County of Hudson
22 State of New Jersey, that this Board hereby extends
23 its highest commendations, congratulations, and
24 gratitude to Dr. Shelly Witham on being named the
25 2026-2027 Hudson County Teacher of the Year, and

1 Be it further resolved that this Board
2 wishes Dr. Witham the absolute best of luck as she
3 advances to represent Hudson County in the upcoming
4 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year selection
5 process.

6 Is this the Board as a whole?

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

8 THE CLERK: Okay. Commissioner
9 Aponte-Lipski.

10 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

12 COMMISSIONER BASELICE:

13 Congratulations. And also the teachers make us
14 proud of Hudson County. Yes.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

16 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI:

19 Congratulations. Aye.

20 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

21 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

22 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

24 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

25 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

2 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

3 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. This takes
5 someone very good. You could say a few words.
6 We'll take a photo with you, and then you can say a
7 few words.

8 DR. WITHAM: I just want to thank you
9 so much for this honor, for the recognition today.
10 I'll be very, very brief. I appreciate everything
11 you do to support students in Hudson County.
12 Twenty-five years, and I'm still going, hopefully
13 I'll see you in another 25. Thank you.

14 (Photo Opportunity.)

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, County
16 Executive. Craig.

17 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Quick one. I
18 want to congratulate our Teacher of the Year as
19 well. You know, what you do every day is God's
20 work. And the other thing, you know, being that we
21 have a superintendent there, you know, I just want
22 to alert the Commissioners keeping them in the loop.
23 We should share with you, if you don't know it
24 already, some of the academic accolades that the
25 School of Technology has received over the last two

1 or three months.

2 So for a while there, the school slipped,
3 and I'm happy to say most recently that the academic
4 work that we're doing in the School of Technology,
5 your support is climbing. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, County
7 Executive.

8 THE CLERK: Okay. The next laudatory
9 is honoring and congratulating Ms. Jacqueline Jetter
10 of Jersey City and Fort Lee, 2026 Miss New Jersey
11 Senior America.

12 Whereas, Ms. Jacqueline Jetter, a resident
13 of Jersey City and Fort Lee of Hudson County, was
14 crowned Miss New Jersey Senior America 2026, on
15 Sunday, May 28th, 2026 at Harrah's Casino in
16 Atlantic City, prevailing among 12 accomplished
17 contestants in the annual event celebrating the age
18 of excellence; and

19 Whereas, the competition recognized
20 excellent in talent, evening gown presentation,
21 personal interview, and philosophy of life, and Ms.
22 Jetter distinguished herself with grace, poise, and
23 confidence throughout.

24 Whereas, Ms. Jetter's accomplishment is a
25 source of pride for Hudson County and serves as an

1 inspiration to residents of all ages, reflecting the
2 grace, leadership, and community spirit that define
3 the very best of our County.

4 Whereas, her achievement reflects the
5 positive and continuing contributions that older
6 adults make throughout New Jersey. And she will
7 proudly represent Hudson County in the state of New
8 Jersey at the National Miss Senior America Pageant
9 this fall at the Tropicana in Atlantic City; and

10 Whereas, the Hudson County Board of County
11 Commissioners take pride in recognizing residents
12 whose achievements bring distinction and honor to
13 our County.

14 Therefore, be it resolved by the Hudson
15 County Board of County Commissioners that the Board
16 hereby recognizes and extends its heartfelt
17 congratulations to Ms. Jacqueline Jetter on being
18 crowned 2026 Miss New Jersey Senior America and
19 wishes her continued success as she represents
20 Hudson County on the national stage.

21 That's as a Board, right?

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: The Board as a
23 whole.

24 THE CLERK: Commissioner
25 Aponte-Lipski?

1 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI:

2 Absolutely, aye.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

4 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: We've done
5 the full spectrum. Children, teachers, seniors.

6 THE CLERK: There you go.

7 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I would have
8 thought you were Miss Teen New Jersey.
9 Congratulations, yes.

10 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño?

11 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli?

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Absolutely,
14 yes.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

16 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yea.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea?

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Couldn't go to a
19 nicer person.

20 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

21 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ:

22 Congratulations.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

24 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

25 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes, congrats.

2 Yeah, is she going to say a few words first.

3 MS. JETTER: Yeah, it felt like this
4 one called my name and I was shocked. I didn't
5 expect it. I can be Jersey City, the onions in my
6 brassiere. I'm so -- my tears. But I want to thank
7 you guys. Wow. Where is Rochelle? She's there.

8 Okay. Good evening. Chairman Anthony
9 Romano, Commissioner Bill O'Dea, County Executive
10 Craig Guy, and Members of the Board of
11 Commissioners, distinguished guests, colleagues,
12 friends, and my beautiful sisterhood. Being
13 recognized as Miss New Jersey Senior America 2026,
14 by the County I have had the privilege of serving is
15 deeply personal.

16 Chairman Romano, thank you for your
17 leadership and this recognition. Commissioner
18 O'Dea, thank you for believing this accomplishment
19 is worthy of recognition by the Board. County
20 Executive Craig Guy, thank you for your leadership
21 and your support, and for supporting Hudson County's
22 Classic Women of Elegance. We've come a long way,
23 baby. To Jenny Davis, ShaRonda Walker, Cheryl
24 Fuller, Darice Toon, Marilyn Cintron, and Rochelle
25 Hoffman. Thank you for believing in me and

1 demonstrating the power of women who lift other
2 women.

3 I would be remiss not to mention that my
4 winning pageant question centered on my resume of
5 service and reintegration and workforce development.
6 I stand on the shoulders of giants. Frank Mazza,
7 Oscar Aviles, Roger Jones, thank you for the
8 opportunities, mentorship, and unwavering support.
9 And to Donato Battista, the wind beneath my wings, I
10 thank you.

11 Senior America is about far more than a
12 crown. It celebrates the accomplishments, talent,
13 service, wisdom, and continual relevance of women 60
14 and beyond. My mission is equally clear. People
15 should never be defined by their age, their
16 circumstances, or the chapter they happen to be
17 living in.

18 During my reign, I want this platform to
19 reach our reintegration population, veterans, women
20 throughout Hudson County, and younger generations
21 who need to see that possibility exist at every age.
22 That mission also inspired my nonprofit, Timeless
23 Opulence, empowering women 50 and beyond through
24 wellness, confidence, financial literacy,
25 entrepreneurship, connection, and personal growth.

1 I am also proud to serve with the Hudson
2 County Chamber of Commerce Women's Committee and the
3 Hudson County Mission on the Status of Women and
4 Girls. My message is simply, your next chapter can
5 still be your best chapter. I returned to college
6 at 55, earned my bachelor's and master's degrees by
7 60, and now at 65, I am heading to the nationals.
8 Apparently, retirement and I have not been formally
9 introduced.

10 I cannot close without my pageant -- I
11 cannot close without my pageant family, Suzanne
12 Claire La Rosa, my fellow finalist and cherished
13 member of my court. She is actually my third
14 runner-up. My Cameo sisters slash pageant sisters,
15 and our incredible pageant leadership, Diane and
16 Bill Meacham. Thank you. Denise Meacham, who drove
17 from South Jersey. Joanne Santori, Terry Meade,
18 Sherry McGee, Carolyn Harding, Joanne Gordon, and
19 Lenore Lambert.

20 I tried to drop out three times. They
21 apparently did not accept my resignation. And to my
22 fellow 2026 contestants, thank you for giving me an
23 honor I treasure almost as much as this crown. They
24 voted me Miss Congeniality. When I took this crown,
25 every rhinestone represents a Cameo sister, queen

1 sister, pageant sister, or contestant who helped me
2 get here. But one woman may wear the crown, but no
3 queen gets there alone. And together, ladies, we
4 have enough rhinestone to light up all of Hudson
5 County.

6 As I head to nationals on October 15th, at
7 the Tropicana Atlantic City, I am carrying a little
8 extra pressure. New Jersey hasn't brought home the
9 national crown since 2017. But I will proudly carry
10 Hudson County and Jersey City onto that national
11 stage with me, remembering the crown may identify
12 the queen, but how she serves others defines her
13 reign. And of course, my signature lines, and if
14 you ladies will help me, age is only a number, and
15 mine is unlisted.

16 Thank you, Hudson County, and a heartfelt
17 thank you to the Commission.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Can you come
19 down for a photo, please? Wow. Your majesty.

20 (Photo Opportunity.)

21 THE CLERK: I have one additional
22 resolution, which will be No. 38. It is on your
23 table. It's a resolution in support of the Better
24 Light Rail campaign and urging New Jersey Transit
25 and State leaders to upgrade and expand the Hudson

1 Bergen light rail.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner

4 Aponte-Lipski.

5 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baseline.

7 COMMISSIONER BASELINE: Yes.

8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

9 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

10 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

13 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

18 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

19 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

20 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

22 THE CLERK: Next order of business to
23 turn it over to the Administration.

24 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, I have no
25 additional item.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue, Madam
2 Clerk.

3 THE CLERK: According to the policy
4 set by the Board of County Commissioners, members of
5 the public are asked to limit their comments to five
6 minutes when discussing agenda items and three
7 minutes at the conclusion of the meeting for persons
8 who submitted a written request to discuss matters
9 of public interest.

10 At this time, the public may address the
11 Board on any item on the agenda only. Please keep
12 your comments limited to five minutes. Are there
13 any speakers on the agenda item only?

14 MR. BLOOMBERG: All right. You had
15 kids, you had seniors, teachers. I don't know how
16 you're going to classify me, how I distinguish
17 myself.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We need police
19 officers next.

20 MR. BLOOMBERG: All right. Yeah,
21 middle-aged men just don't. All right. I'd like to
22 talk about Open Space funding, Resolution 31.

23 As Commissioner Romano suggested at the
24 end of the July hearing, I tried to initiate further
25 discussion on the topic but was unsuccessful. So I

1 hope you'll indulge me today as there's a fair
2 amount of detail to get into. I might get into the
3 weeds a little bit. Regarding these grants,
4 Commissioner Baselice noted in an e-mail that he has
5 confidence in the review committee and would rely on
6 their recommendations.

7 But what if the committee isn't paying
8 attention to all the details and isn't following its
9 own guidelines for awarding grants? In regard to
10 Stan Newman Memorial Field, that's exactly what's
11 going on. Open Space funding guidelines are being
12 ignored, and the committee didn't seem to consider
13 duplicate scopes of work with previous grant
14 applications or inconsistencies with grant
15 extensions to previous grant awards.

16 By now, you've each received numerous
17 e-mails from County residents which detail some of
18 the guidelines that aren't being enforced. If you
19 haven't seen them in your in-box, you need to read
20 them before you vote today. In addition to what's
21 on those e-mails, the funding guidelines
22 specifically state that banking or stockpiling of
23 grants is not permitted. However, from the summary
24 report that the Open Space Committee published, this
25 year's grant is for stormwater management, which

1 appears to be identical to the project that received
2 funding last year.

3 However, if you look at North Bergen's
4 application, this year made no mention of stormwater
5 management as part of the scope. Instead, its scope
6 focused on improvements such as new AstroTurf,
7 renovating the field house, improved lighting, and
8 replacing bleachers. All of those were parts of
9 grants from previous years. So it's not totally
10 clear what this year's grant is for. It's not for
11 anything new. And it just seems to be stuff for
12 items that have already received grants.

13 And none of the money that was granted
14 over the last three years has been spent as of the
15 end of this August, because none of the work has
16 been initiated. If this isn't stockpiling, I'm not
17 sure, you know, what is at this point. So contrast
18 this with Hoboken's Church Square Park, which
19 received a grant in 2024, and is slated to receive
20 another this year. They clearly delineated two
21 separate projects with different scope and even
22 submitted the first one as a phase one and the next
23 one as a phase two.

24 Meanwhile, North Bergen has been lumping
25 all the other year's grants together, even though

1 the guidelines limit allocations for a recreational
2 project to \$750,000. This summer, North Bergen
3 requested extensions for the 2023 and 2024 grants,
4 which is required. In those applications, they
5 provided lump sum figures for the entire scope of
6 all work at Newman Field across all years, \$5.4
7 million.

8 And if those requests for extensions --
9 and in those requests for extensions, when they
10 listed other matches, they aggregated all of the
11 Open Space funds they had received. Those two
12 extensions propose identical timelines for the
13 projects to review bids and award contracts and
14 identical finish dates. While that makes sense from
15 North Bergen's perspective for potentially saving
16 money, this isn't how Open Space project funding is
17 supposed to be utilized. You're not allowed to
18 bankroll it from year to year to year to year as
19 they're doing.

20 The grant committee failed to notice that
21 the diagram of the proposed improvements of the
22 grant request also didn't include any details about
23 stormwater management, nor did they notice that some
24 of the improvements are located on a property across
25 the street, which is not owned by North Bergen. And

1 this is all on top of the wasteful spending that I
2 noted back in July. Which I'd like to add, when I
3 spoke offline after the meeting last time,
4 Commissioner Baselice kind of commented, you know,
5 that if you looked hard enough, you could probably
6 find wasteful spending in all of these projects, and
7 I would like to think that our Commissioners would
8 take the time to actually uncover that if that's
9 actually the case.

10 So I urge the commissioners to disregard
11 the committee's recommendations. Please do not
12 approve the grant for Stan Newman Field. I do
13 support all the Open Space funding for all the other
14 projects, and I believe Commissioner O'Dea had asked
15 for each of them to be voted on individually at this
16 meeting.

17 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Thank you.
18 Mr. Bloomberg, I just want to comment on the last
19 comment you made about what I said. I said, I don't
20 know where the numbers come from. I'm assuming
21 engineers, et cetera, come up with the numbers when
22 you put in an application. You're talking about
23 overspending in North Bergen. I said, I'm sure that
24 there might be overspending. But since then, I also
25 asked the planning department to respond to some of

1 your questions. And I'm going to have the planning
2 department come up and talk to those at some point
3 in time.

4 MR. BLOOMBERG: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr.
6 Bloomberg. Continue, Madam Clerk.

7 THE CLERK: We have no ordinances.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, time out.
9 Sorry, go ahead, Francesca.

10 MS. GIARRATANA: Sorry.

11 Sure. Hi, Commissioners. Francesca Giarratana,
12 Deputy Director of Planning and Business
13 Opportunity. And I help oversee the Hudson County
14 Open Space Trust Fund.

15 Commissioner Baselice, can you specify
16 which questions you'd like me to respond to?

17 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: There have
18 been some comments about how proposals or applicants
19 come up with the numbers for, let's say, turf,
20 lighting, et cetera. And that's the one I'm meaning
21 here.

22 MS. GIARRATANA: Sure. Yeah,
23 absolutely. So you know, during the design process,
24 usually, you know, either a landscape architect or
25 an engineer puts together a plan, and then that

1 coincides with a cost estimate. So that's the
2 submission that we get for the application. Those
3 get put into their bid documents, but it doesn't end
4 up necessarily being how much they spent on the
5 project.

6 If we notice, in addition, for the cost
7 estimates, when we review them, if there's something
8 that we notice that seems out of line with what
9 would be comparable prices we've seen before, we
10 would ask to eliminate it. And also, you know, when
11 we do approve the project, the eligible costs get
12 put into the grant agreement, and that's what will
13 be reimbursed for that money. And that's the
14 binding grant agreement.

15 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Madam Clerk.

17 THE CLERK: We have no ordinances for
18 introduction, but we have four ordinances for second
19 reading. A-1.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: We have not
21 voted on any of the resolutions yet. What we did
22 was the --

23 THE CLERK: Oh, I'm sorry. Thank
24 you. May I have a motion to approve all the items
25 listed on the consent agenda?

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Motion by Fanny.

2 Seconded by Carrie.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner
4 Aponte-Lipski.

5 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

7 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

9 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

10 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

13 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Vote yes. I
16 just want to double check something. But yes for
17 me.

18 THE CLERK: Okay. Commissioner
19 Rodriguez.

20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

21 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

22 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

23 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. Billy voted
25 yes.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'll let this
2 come back. I just want to make sure.

3 THE CLERK: A-1. An ordinance
4 authorizing resident parking on John F. Kennedy
5 Boulevard, Secaucus Road, 5th Street and Paterson
6 Plank Road in the City of Jersey City.

7 This is the time fixed for a public
8 hearing of this ordinance, which was introduced at
9 the meeting of August 13th, 2026, advertised as
10 required by law, together with the notice of hearing
11 for this time. It's been posted on the County
12 commissioner's bulletin board and made available to
13 the general public.

14 Are there any speakers on this ordinance?

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Motion to close.

16 THE CLERK: All in favor?

17 (The Board votes unanimously to close
18 the Hearing.)

19 THE CLERK: Opposed? On the final
20 adoption, commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

21 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

22 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

23 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

24 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

25 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

4 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

5 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

7 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

8 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

10 Chairman Romano.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

12 THE CLERK: The ordinance has been
13 adopted. A-2. Ordinance amending Chapter 200,
14 Article 8.11 of the Administrative Code to establish
15 a restricted parking space for a person with a
16 disability at 221 Garden Street, City of Hoboken,
17 for Usha D. Gandhi.

18 This is the time fixed for the public
19 hearing of this ordinance, which was introduced at
20 the meeting of August 13th, 2026, advertised as
21 required by law together with a notice of hearing
22 for this time. It's been posted on the County
23 Commissioner's bulletin board and made available to
24 the general public.

25 Are there any speakers on this ordinance?

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Motion to close.
2 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Second.
3 THE CLERK: All in favor?
4 (The Board votes unanimously to close
5 the Hearing.)
6 THE CLERK: Opposed? On the final
7 adoption, Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.
8 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.
9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.
10 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.
11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.
12 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.
13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.
15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.
16 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.
17 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.
18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.
19 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.
20 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
21 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.
22 Commissioner Williams?
23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Celeste?
24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: She's not there
25 anymore.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Celeste?

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: She's no longer
3 up there. She's gone.

4 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

6 THE CLERK: The ordinance has been
7 adopted. A-3. Ordinance providing for the
8 modernization and general improvements of the
9 historic William J. Brennan Courthouse by and in the
10 County of Hudson, State of New Jersey; appropriating
11 \$45,044,332 therefor and authorizing the issuance of
12 \$42,899,363 Bonds or Notes to Finance part of the
13 cost thereof.

14 This is the time fixed for the public
15 hearing of this ordinance, which was introduced at
16 the meeting of August 13th, 2026, advertised as
17 required by law, together with a notice of hearing
18 for this time. It's been posted on the County
19 Commissioner's bulletin board and made available to
20 the general public. Are there any speakers on this
21 ordinance?

22 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Motion to
23 close.

24 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Motion to
25 close.

1 THE CLERK: All in favor?

2 (The Board votes unanimously to close
3 the Hearing.)

4 THE CLERK: Opposed? On the final
5 adoption, Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

6 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

7 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baseline.

8 COMMISSIONER BASELINE: Yes.

9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

10 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

14 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

19 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

20 Chairman Romano.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

22 THE CLERK: The ordinance has been
23 adopted. 4-A. Ordinance of the County of Hudson,
24 State of New Jersey amending Lease Ordinance No.
25 193-3-2016, finally adopted on March 24, 2016, to

1 approve and authorize the entering into, execution
2 and delivery of an amendment to County Leases, as
3 applicable, including an amendment to a lease with
4 the Hudson County Improvement Authority to amend the
5 County's rent payments in connection with the
6 refunding of the Authority's County Secured Lease
7 Revenue Bonds, Series 2016 through the issuance of
8 County Secured Lease Revenue Refunding Bonds, series
9 2026, of the Hudson County Improvement Authority.

10 This is the time fixed for a public
11 hearing of this ordinance, which was introduced at
12 the meeting of August 13th, 2026, advertised by law
13 together with a notice of hearing for this time.
14 Are there any speakers on this ordinance?

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Seeing none.

16 THE CLERK: All in favor?

17 (The Board votes unanimously to close
18 the Hearing.

19 THE CLERK: Opposed? On the final
20 adoption, Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

21 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

22 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

23 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

24 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

25 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.
3 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.
4 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.
5 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.
6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.
7 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.
8 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.
10 Chairman Romano.
11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.
12 THE CLERK: The ordinance has been
13 adopted. This concludes the items of business on
14 today's agenda. Are there any comments from the
15 Commissioners on business of the Board?
16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Bill, go ahead
17 first.
18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Just a couple of
19 quick things. On Item No. 25, I'm glad to see that
20 we put that --
21 THE CLERK: On the agenda?
22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.
23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah, I just
24 wanted to note, I'm glad to see that go through.
25 I've visited the facility. It's a very good,

1 well-run, high success rate facility. I note that
2 the other facility that we pulled from the last
3 agenda never made it on this agenda. I'm curious
4 why they're not. What happened to them?

5 MR. DEPIERRO: The reason why is we
6 are still doing the research and waiting for Jersey
7 City. I believe that because of the fact that it
8 was passed previously and there's a memo that was
9 provided years ago to the Board from the law
10 department that basically states that it does not
11 require any different permit from the city. So we
12 just want to confirm that before we put it back on
13 the next agenda.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It's a different
15 location. Just so you understand, whatever that
16 letter you may have from years ago, they're no
17 longer at that location. They've moved to like a
18 two-family house.

19 MR. DEPIERRO: That's exactly why
20 we're doing the additional research. I don't want
21 to bring anything before the Board until we finish
22 our research.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I think they've
24 moved at least twice.

25 MR. DEPIERRO: That's why we're doing

1 our research.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then I know
3 that we did a talk. We did a call with the
4 gentleman in this with yourself and Mr. Mazza. I
5 know that he's still trying to resolve a hardship
6 from a couple of years ago when the other facility
7 began some of their operations.

8 Abe, is there any way that we could have
9 like the EDC reach out to him? Because I think like
10 the gentleman had to take out like a line of credit
11 just to pay the bills because they didn't get enough
12 beds booked on a regular basis. And I think the
13 line of credits running out was probably at eight
14 percent in a short period. And I mean, it's a good
15 facility.

16 I wouldn't want to see it -- I mean, he's
17 raised some issues which I don't want to get into as
18 to whether there's another way we can compensate for
19 what happened back then. But short of being able to
20 resolve that in the short term, I hope that maybe
21 there's something with some of the funding that EDC
22 has. It's not, it's probably an amount, I don't
23 know, \$30,000, \$35,000. It's not in an unreasonable
24 amount of money.

25 And then along those same lines, I've

1 never gotten any more updates as to issues I raised
2 with the EDC. That you and I were part of a
3 conversation concerning agreements with, I guess,
4 UCEDC agreements with maybe even the Hispanic
5 Chamber and things like that. I mean, do we have --
6 do you know -- can we bring the director here?

7 MR. ANTUN: Yes. I don't know the
8 status of that. One thing I can report though is
9 that I was informed that they did give us back the
10 money. That was one of the things that came up. I
11 don't know if you remember. So we do have that.
12 And Darice is making recommendations as to how that
13 money should be allocated.

14 In terms of those other two items that you
15 raised, I can't answer that. I don't know if
16 Director Richardson is here. If not --

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: No. But she
18 needs to come to the next caucus.

19 MR. ANTUN: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I mean, we were
21 new and in good faith. And then the third is the
22 inclusion of someone from this Board on the EDC
23 because that's the only way to ensure that we're
24 kept in the loop on everything that goes on. And
25 you and I, I don't want to quote you, but you were

1 like, that's something I believe we can work out.
2 So a couple of months later, let's get it worked out
3 now.

4 Darice, Director Toon, how much funding
5 did you get back from EDC?

6 DIRECTOR TOON: I believe it was
7 about \$1.4 million, Commissioner, give or take. I
8 don't know the precise number in my head, but it's
9 about 1.4.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. I just want
12 to make a comment. Yesterday, there was a spirited
13 discussion, but I think on behalf of the Board, it
14 was not meant to disparage our County Engineer or
15 our Director of Parks, who do a fine professional
16 job day in and day out and juggle many
17 responsibilities so.

18 And with regard to the issue, I know it's
19 being resolved. There's conversations ongoing
20 between Kenny and Abe and the County Executive. So
21 again, thank you for what you do and continue to do
22 the good work that you do do.

23 Madam Clerk, continue.

24 THE CLERK: Are there any comments --

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can we ensure

1 that because those discussions affect, you know, not
2 just -- I always had Kenny's back every step of the
3 way yesterday, but obviously people from my district
4 go to the park and use those fields. So can we all
5 be kept in the loop and, you know, by e-mail as
6 hopefully those issues get resolved sooner rather
7 than later?

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Ensure that
9 please, Abe. Continue, Madam Clerk.

10 THE CLERK: Are there any comments
11 from the Chief of Staff, County Executive?

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Patty McCarthy.
13 Oh, sorry. Jenny's still here. Jenny, anything?
14 Patty Boy. Patty, Lieutenant McCarthy. You here?
15 Okay, go ahead.

16 THE CLERK: This is the time --

17 MR. MCCARTHY: Yes, I am. I'm sorry.
18 No, I do not have anything to add.

19 THE CLERK: This is the time for
20 persons who submitted a timely written request to
21 address the board on any matter of public interest.
22 Please remember to limit your comments to three
23 minutes. We do have speakers.

24 The first one is Russell Fallacara.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He's not here.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Not here.

2 THE CLERK: Joel Siegler.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He's not here.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Not here.

5 THE CLERK: Raymond Mitchell.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He's not here.

7 THE CLERK: Maureen Foyle.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Maureen Foyle?

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Not here.

10 THE CLERK: Not here. Leroy Truth.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Present.

12 THE CLERK: Should I go to another
13 speaker? Share with you here.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. Don't
15 start the time till he gets on.

16 THE CLERK: I know. I'm not.

17 MR. TRUTH: Now I request two things.
18 Since what I have to share is extremely disturbing
19 and important. Can I have five minutes?

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. It's not
21 allowed by the -- it's not allowed according to the
22 rules of the Board.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I mean, we can
24 move on. Look, how many more speakers do we have?

25 THE CLERK: Four more.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I mean, I'll
2 move to let this, any speaker today speak five
3 minutes. There's only like three or four more
4 people. So I need a second, Al.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Al, are you
6 seconded? We have to do a vote.

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, I'll
8 second it.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All right.
10 There you go. You have to do a vote.

11 MR. TRUTH: I appreciate it very
12 much.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on, sir. Vote
14 on it.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Aponte
16 Lipski to extend it to five minutes.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: She said aye.

18 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

19 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

20 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

21 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

22 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

24 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes.

25 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

1 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: No. We have
2 rules that everyone has to follow. We should be
3 following the rules that we have all voted on. We
4 can't change rules for one individual because we
5 change for one and we change for all. And when we
6 don't have rules, we have chaos. And we should be
7 running our Boards with class and structure. So
8 nothing against you, Mr. Truth, but I vote no.

9 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah, I vote
11 aye. And my vote for aye was for any other speaker
12 that's today, not just for him.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: No.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.
16 Chairman Romano.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: No. No with
18 regard -- it's nothing against anyone speak above.
19 We start changing rules, it'll be a problem.

20 THE CLERK: We have five in the
21 affirmative. Three noes. So it's five minutes.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Five minutes.

23 MR. TRUTH: God bless you. For the
24 rest of the speakers. Just move it up. Thank you.
25 God bless you. Thank you. This is incredibly

1 important. And for anyone here who wants to speak
2 as well.

3 All right. So I am here, ladies and
4 gentlemen, because I am asking for your help,
5 Commissioners. There is a massive sexual predator
6 crisis in Union City schools. Victims came to me.
7 And Mayor and Senator Brian Stack is covering this
8 up. Not only covering this up, I am looking at five
9 years in state prison because I was set up. And you
10 can, any of you can look at the videos on my
11 Facebook or YouTube.

12 And a lying brainless police officer named
13 Lieutenant Glenn Gaston unlawfully grabbed me while
14 I'm peacefully filling out an OPRA request, and then
15 inexplicably releases me. Intentionally falls to
16 the ground, yells Aggravated assault. Then an
17 officer lies to the judge, very good Judge Boylan to
18 get probable cause found on a crime I didn't commit.
19 Sends me to County jail. I'm going to be right in
20 this building here on Tuesday, facing felony
21 aggravated assault charges that I didn't do.

22 I have the video proof I didn't do it.
23 And the lying Lieutenant who fell, he lied to the
24 grand jury. I have the proof and I have the video.
25 He lied and said I struck him forcefully in the

1 upper body, which I didn't do. That's the reward I
2 get from Mayor Senator Brian Stack.

3 Fanny, I guess I said, you're a good
4 person. Let this go to your conscience. Talk to
5 Stack, please. So I am trying to protect Union City
6 children. Edwin Marinas, he has allegedly sexually
7 assaulted and groomed hundreds of children over the
8 course of over 20 years. I didn't suddenly intuit
9 this or get this from a psychic. Victims came to
10 me. And here I'm going to let you hear from some of
11 them.

12 But first, I'm going to let you hear from
13 Barbara Valencia, who was the president of the
14 Teachers Union, who was covering up for a sexual
15 predator teacher, Daniel Palatino. Oh, by the way,
16 before I play this, there was a teacher named Mike
17 Francisco Realpe, who raped a student in Union City
18 schools, raped her. And did Brian Stack have Hudson
19 County prosecutors investigate? No.

20 He talked to the father, offered the
21 father a Board of Education job if he would keep his
22 mouth shut about his daughter's rape. And the
23 father said, yes. Then that teacher was transferred
24 to Jersey City schools where he sexually assaulted
25 other children here. Then he was arrested. Michael

1 Francisco Realpe. Fact. Look it up. So here's
2 some of the actual victims talking. But first,
3 here's a teacher covering up for the students.

4 (Audio Plays.)

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on. Hold on
6 one second.

7 MR. TRUTH: Please pause my time.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: It's paused.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Mr. Truth, I'm
10 going to try to do you a favor. And the favor is
11 you're talking about pending criminal charges that
12 involve you that you still have to answer for, as
13 you said, I mean, I guess you mean CJP. If I were
14 your attorney and I am an attorney, if I'm an
15 attorney, I'd shut up. I mean, why are you making
16 statements that could only jeopardize your legal
17 position? I'm doing you a favor by telling you
18 that.

19 The second thing is, I don't know that
20 it's appropriate for you to make statements about
21 other people that could be defamatory in this forum.
22 I don't think it's fair to those people. And it's
23 certainly not fair to us. It's inappropriate. You
24 have your channels where you can go and make those
25 complaints, and I'm sure you have or you will. But

1 right now, I think it's very inappropriate for you
2 to be naming names.

3 MR. TRUTH: You're covering up just
4 like everybody else. We don't know.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Excuse me.

6 MR. TRUTH: It's not up to you what
7 you say is appropriate or not.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Please, let's take
9 it down.

10 MR. FLORIO: Chairman, the clock has
11 been restarted on the speaker's time.

12 MR. TRUTH: I am looking for you to
13 help me because Edwin Marinas, the massive sexual
14 predator teacher, not alleged, he was just promoted
15 and transferred to Veterans Memorial School in Union
16 City Schools by Mayor Brian Stack, the entire school
17 board, and Superintendent Sylvia Botto. He is still
18 working with children right now.

19 Fanny, I hope you care about this. This is
20 true. And I'm asking you to call the FBI. They're
21 the only ones who will stop them. I've gone to the
22 governor. She's covering up. She won't
23 investigate. I've gone to the new Attorney General,
24 Jennifer Davenport, talked for hours to the
25 detectives. They won't investigate. They're

1 protecting Brian Stack. Hundreds of children have
2 been sexually assaulted.

3 (Audio Plays.)

4 MR. TRUTH: Edwin Marinas, a fourth
5 victim just came to me that I just published. And
6 he said that Edwin Marinas, present Union City
7 teacher who may be working in your Jersey City
8 school soon, exposed himself to him and all his
9 football classmates since he was six years old. Are
10 all these people lying to me?

11 Edwin Marinas, plus I have the names of 50
12 other teachers and administrators, 50. And I'm
13 looking at five years in prison because they set me
14 up to try to stop it and try to intimidate me from
15 exposing this, and I will not. And I'm a sexual
16 assault survivor from a Catholic priest for four
17 years as an altar boy starting at age seven. So I
18 appreciate your extra time. God bless you. Please
19 call the FBI. Please tell staff to suspend that
20 teacher.

21 THE CLERK: Next speaker is Reina
22 Silva.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Please state
24 your name.

25 MS. GONZALEZ: My name is Reina

1 Gonzalez, and I'm a Hudson County Sheriff. Good
2 evening, Commissioners. My name is Reina Gonzalez
3 and I stand before you today representing the men
4 and women of the Hudson County Sheriff's Office. We
5 are not only law enforcement officers. We are sons
6 and daughters, mothers and fathers.

7 Like so many working families, we are
8 struggling with the rising cost of living.
9 Receiving parking summonses that we simply cannot
10 afford places an additional financial burden on
11 officers who report to work every day to protect and
12 serve this County. We understand that the Hudson
13 County that Hudson County may be facing financial
14 challenges. However, we are not asking for
15 something unreasonable or for a solution that
16 requires millions of dollars.

17 We are simply asking for your assistance
18 in securing safe, accessible and permanent parking
19 for our officers. This has been an ongoing problem
20 for many years, including throughout the previous
21 administration. When no one stood up for us or
22 provide when -- when no one stood up for us or
23 provided a lasting solution, other County employees
24 are provided with parking while the officers who
25 took an oath to protect and serve this community

1 continue to struggle. How is this fair?

2 I have personally worked at Commissioners
3 meetings and witnessed residents come before this
4 board to express their concerns and request
5 assistance. I have seen many proposals considered
6 and approved from bike lanes to significant funding
7 for nonprofit organizations. These matters may be
8 important, but I respectfully ask why has parking
9 for the officers who protect this County not also
10 been treated as a priority?

11 Several proposals have been discussed,
12 including requiring officers to park in a gravel lot
13 and be transported back and forth from location far
14 from their work assignments. Unfortunately, that is
15 not a safe, reliable or practical solution. If an
16 officer has a family emergency that must they must
17 wait for someone to drive them back to their
18 vehicle. Just recently, several officers were left
19 waiting because no one had no one was available to
20 transport them to parking on Cornelison Avenue.
21 Eventually, an officer from another unit had to
22 leave their assignment to assist them.

23 What happens if an officer needs to leave
24 immediately because their child is sick? A loved
25 one is hospitalized and there is another serious

1 emergency? No parent or family member should be
2 forced to wait helpless for transportation to reach
3 their own vehicle. The financial burden is also
4 very real. Some officers bring home approximately
5 \$1,200 every two weeks and are receiving residential
6 parking summonses of approximately \$110. That is
7 money needed for rent, groceries, utilities, child
8 care and other household expenses. With today's
9 cost of living, another parking ticket is not a
10 minor inconvenience. It can create a genuine
11 hardship for an entire family.

12 Some officers walk to some officers walk
13 to work because they can't afford the cost of
14 parking or another summons. Other officers must
15 work second jobs as Uber drivers to make ends meet,
16 sometimes with their children accompanying them
17 because they cannot they do not have access to child
18 care. These officers protect and serve Hudson
19 County during the day, then work additional hours to
20 provide for their families.

21 With today's cost of living, another
22 parking ticket is not a minor inconvenience. It can
23 create a genuine hardship for an entire household.
24 A few months ago, our parking placards were taken
25 away because they displayed the former Sheriff's

1 name. Instead of replacing them, officers were
2 temporarily permitted to park at the Guarini
3 Complex. We are now left asking why some civilians
4 have received new placards displaying the new
5 Sheriff's name while officers themselves have been
6 left with nothing. Why are the officers responsible
7 for protecting County buildings, employees and
8 members of the public not being given the same
9 consideration?

10 Many officers who share these concerns are
11 not here today because they are afraid of
12 retaliation for speaking up. That fear alone should
13 be deeply concerning. I am standing here because
14 remaining silent is no longer an option. I am a
15 mother of four and after taxes and the everyday
16 expenses of supporting my family, these parking
17 costs and summons create a serious burden.

18 We have exhausted our efforts to solve
19 this matter through our other channels, which is why
20 we are coming here directly before you. This
21 situation is unfair and unjust. We are not asking
22 for special treatment. We are asking to be treated
23 with the same fairness and consideration provided to
24 other County employees. We are asking for permanent
25 parking that allows us to report to work, fulfill

1 our duties and reach our vehicles immediately when
2 an emergency occurs.

3 Commissioners, I respectfully come before
4 you asking for your understanding, your support and
5 your help in reaching a fair resolution. Please
6 stand with the officers who report to work every day
7 and honor their oath to protect and serve Hudson
8 County. We protect this County every day. Today,
9 we are simply asking the County to stand up for us.

10 THE CLERK: Mr. Chairman, can I ask
11 the speaker on the Foresight, you put your name down
12 as Reina Silva.

13 MS. GONZALEZ: Yeah.

14 THE CLERK: But you said a different
15 name last time.

16 MS. GONZALEZ: Gonzales.

17 THE CLERK: Gonzales. Okay. Thank
18 you.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Can I ask a
20 question, Officer? Officer, is there a difference
21 between the parking availability for your officers
22 at Cornelison and the Plaza or over here? Because
23 you have a complement that are across the street.

24 MS. GONZALEZ: We have -- the only
25 option that we had was the gravel lot. Other than

1 that, we have to park on the streets.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: There's no
3 parking available for the officers that are in a
4 complement that are attached to the courtroom
5 officers.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: If you're assigned
7 to the AB --

8 MS. GONZALEZ: There's no parking.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: The only
10 parking that is around is the one down at
11 Cornelison?

12 MS. GONZALEZ: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And there's
14 nothing over here? When I say "over here," I mean
15 at the administration.

16 MS. GONZALEZ: No.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I know that just
18 before the meeting, County Executive called me and
19 he said that he's going to be speaking, him and the
20 Sheriff are going to try to figure out some
21 resolution to the problem. Any commissions, Billy?

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So you got to
23 look at the reality. Where is there any physical
24 parking around here? The only thing that comes to
25 mind and it's not their lot, but it's a huge dirt

1 area that you could park on is Dickinson High
2 School. If you ever go to Dickinson High School,
3 there's a huge dirt area besides where their parking
4 lot is. Because short term, where's the parking?

5 I understand the idea of putting placards
6 and having you park on the streets, but there's no
7 guarantee on that either. Anyone else can park on
8 the street. So there's no guarantee. So the
9 ability to create dedicated parking, long term, and
10 I was in a meeting with the Chief of Staff and
11 something yesterday, where they're talking about
12 developing housing and affordable housing. And my
13 point was, wherever that is, create decks of parking
14 close by. And one of the sites is one corner over
15 there. The other one's Summit and Hoboken Avenue.

16 Deck parking, which during the day can be
17 used by Sheriff's officers and employees. But
18 short, short term, which is now, what physical areas
19 are there to create parking for you? The area by
20 Dickinson High School, that dirt area, you should be
21 able to create a significant amount of parking
22 spaces there.

23 So, you know, Mr. Administrator, we
24 connect you to the superintendent of schools. We
25 can connect you and the County Executive to the

1 principal of the school, who I've known personally
2 for many years. And maybe as a short term solution,
3 I mean, it's two blocks away. And if I'm the
4 principal of the school, I don't mind having 25, 30
5 Sheriff officers parking in my space. It makes my
6 area a lot safer. I mean, I'm just thinking short
7 term, right? Like long term solutions, long term
8 solution.

9 Did we provide enough parking spaces in
10 the Guarini building? The answer is no. No one's
11 going to say that we did, right? It wasn't done.
12 Whatever geniuses do their parking studies, right?
13 They don't -- they're usually not the people that
14 park there. So that's why they do their studies. So
15 long term, there's a need to develop more parking.
16 There's a need to create deck areas, deck parking.
17 And there's no reason you can't put residentials
18 above deck.

19 But now, like now is now. What do you do
20 now? And in thinking about where physically now is
21 the closest area that there would be significant
22 parking, right? That would be the closest by far.
23 So that's what I would suggest. The other one that
24 I've talked about, which isn't that close, and it's
25 probably equally as close as County Plaza, is at the

1 bottom of Newark Avenue, where that huge parking lot
2 is. It used to be the quarry warehouse. It's now
3 an art area. They have hundreds and hundreds of
4 spaces. But that's a hike. That's six blocks,
5 probably. And that's the only -- I'm just thinking,
6 physically, show me an area large enough for surface
7 parking right now.

8 Only thing that comes to my mind, and I
9 grew up in this neighborhood, five blocks, four
10 blocks from here, so I'm very familiar with it, is
11 the dirt area outside the parking lot of Dickinson
12 High School. So I will speak to the Administrator,
13 give him the number for both the Superintendent of
14 Schools, as well as the principal of Dickinson High
15 School.

16 And Mr. Administrator, I don't know the
17 value. If there's remote -- and they spoke about a
18 gravel lot, but if there's remote parking, remote
19 parking only works if there's a reliable, all-day
20 shuttle, not just a, you know, get you there in the
21 morning, and like you said, if something happens, if
22 something happens, you're on your own. Like that
23 would have to be within the building and roads
24 department, an ability to have someone with an
25 access to give somebody a ride if they need.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: My question, Abe,
2 is if the Guarini, the vehicles that were under the
3 AB are now shifting to Guarini, why in a temporary
4 solution couldn't they park underneath until the
5 building is going to be demolished?

6 MR. ANTUN: I can't answer that right
7 now, Commissioner, but I'll look into it.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I mean, to me, if
9 there's a vacay going on.

10 MR. ANTUN: Keep something in mind
11 that, you know, this is not just limited to the
12 Sheriff's office.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: No, I understand.

14 MR. ANTUN: You know, this is all
15 County employees so, and there isn't enough parking
16 to accommodate County employees that work in this
17 complex, as Commissioner O'Dea said.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So, even when the
19 Guarini is full, the underneath is also full?

20 MR. ANTUN: No, no. I said I would
21 look into it, but it's not going to accommodate.
22 Underneath, it's only about 100 spots. Well, you
23 need at least 100 more.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But it's 100
25 more than you got right now.

1 MR. ANTUN: But again, I have to look
2 into that. I don't know. I can't answer that
3 without having further discussions.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Because the
5 value that gets you, assuming we resolve the 28
6 months to renovate and remediate and then demo, and
7 that 28 months is a reasonable time period to create
8 a deck somewhere else, right? You've got your site
9 here on Baldwin and right here, right? Baldwin and
10 Oak Avenue, where you need to acquire one more
11 property. That's right. Based on the show
12 presentation yesterday.

13 So, if you do that, you have the ability
14 to do a three-level deck and do whatever residential
15 you want to do above it. If you access certain
16 government, state programs, they can underwrite a
17 net of half of the cost of building the deck. So, I
18 mean, you know. But somebody's got to look at it,
19 right? Talking about it. We're talking and we
20 leave and I have a great day, feel bad. And four
21 months later, you're all here again. That doesn't
22 serve anybody's purpose.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Recommendation.
24 Yeah.

25 MS. GONZALEZ: Mr. Chair, why can't

1 there be like just some parking that we can go first
2 come first serve? You know. You said it was
3 assigning parking. For now first come first serve.

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Why can't they just
5 like every other County, do the parking around the
6 courthouse?

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Yeah.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Officers and
9 officers cars around the courthouse.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right. We
11 can't have any dialogue. We'll do a dialogue at the
12 end of the meeting with you. At the end of the
13 meeting, we'll speak with you. My recommendation is
14 for union leadership to sit with the Sheriff and the
15 County Executive and brainstorm. See what can be
16 done to find some kind of immediate solution. And
17 as Commissioner O'Dea said, long-term thinking. And
18 when we call the meeting after, we'll meet with you.

19 MS. GONZALEZ: We are essential
20 workers. We are suffering right now. We have guys
21 coming in at 5:30 in the morning just to try to find
22 a parking in front of the courthouse.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We're going to talk
24 to you. We're going to talk to you after the
25 meeting. I will come over there.

1 THE CLERK: The next speaker I have
2 is Tilsia Dowling.

3 MS. GONZALEZ: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We'll talk to you
5 after the meeting, after it's adjourned.

6 THE CLERK: She's not here either.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

8 THE CLERK: And the last speaker I
9 have listed is Mark Bloomberg.

10 MR. BLOOMBERG: Thank you.
11 Commissioner Kopacz, you just said, when we don't
12 have rules, we have chaos. I just spoke about the
13 Open Space funding. I wasn't talking about cost
14 this time. I was talking about how the Open Space
15 Committee ignored its own guidelines in recommending
16 the project at Stan Newman Field. And you all
17 ignored those comments, in my opinion. Or you took
18 them into consideration and determined they weren't
19 important.

20 So Commissioner Cedeño, my understanding
21 is that you're a member of the Open Space Advisory
22 Board. So I'm asking you to oversee an
23 investigation on why extensions were approved for
24 North Bergen for their 2023 and 2024 Open Space
25 grants at Stan Newman Field. The regulations are

1 very clear. Grants must be used within two years.
2 Progress reports must be submitted quarterly. North
3 Bergen did not do either.

4 When North Bergen submitted requests for
5 extensions, they did not provide any reason why they
6 needed more time. They only provided high-level
7 progress reports. The guidelines are explicit.
8 Quote, extension requests will be considered in
9 cases of natural disasters or other unforeseen
10 circumstances in which the applicant had no control
11 over. North Bergen did not provide any reason.

12 The guidelines continue. If the applicant
13 fails to complete the project within the timeframe,
14 the grant agreement and the unused funds shall be
15 forfeited. This is the extension for the 2023 grant
16 from July of 2025. They said, at this point, much
17 of the design and engineering work has been
18 completed with bids anticipated to go out in the
19 fall for the construction portion of the work. The
20 goal is to award the contract in early 2026.

21 There's no reason for why they needed the
22 extension. One year later, they basically expanded
23 on that and said, at this point, the design work has
24 been completed, but more details about what their
25 progress was, which was essentially, they're finally

1 to appear to be shovel-ready. But a year later, the
2 previous one said, hey, we're going to be done in a
3 year. This one said, Oh, guess what? We need yet
4 another year. And then when you look at the grant
5 that they got in 2024, when they asked for an
6 extension on that, they copied and pasted the
7 identical information from one extension request to
8 the other extension request. No details on why.

9 And again, it's explicit. There was no
10 act of God. There was nothing beyond their control
11 that was mentioned as to why they were given
12 extensions. We're talking about a million dollars.
13 As I previously mentioned, with the 2026 open funds,
14 they are bankrolling the money. They're stockpiling
15 it. And the rules for Open Space funds explicitly
16 prevent them from doing it. So this must be
17 investigated as to why the guidelines aren't being
18 followed. And until this is resolved, I believe
19 that the grant should be frozen while it's
20 determined what their correct status should be.

21 So I'm asking if you will commit to doing
22 this or if you will assign somebody to be in charge
23 of this.

24 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: I will have
25 some discussions and I'll get back to you about it.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Madam Chief of
2 Staff, at the end of his speech, would you comment
3 if you wanted to?

4 MR. BLOOMBERG: Okay, I'm finished.
5 I'm finished.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Madam Chief of
7 Staff.

8 MS. DAVIS: I just feel the need to
9 say that I disagree with this characterization of
10 our committee. And I think that Francesca probably
11 had to go home for childcare. I don't know why, but
12 I assume her two little kids need her. So I'm sure
13 that Francesca as the head of this committee and
14 ShaRonda Walker can absolutely answer any questions
15 you have. And I disagree with the characterization.

16 MR. BLOOMBERG: Thank you.

17 MR. FLORIO: Chairman, that's the
18 last speaker. So a motion to adjourn would be in
19 order.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Kopacz and -- who
21 was it? Kopacz and Baselice. All in favor?

22 (Whereupon the proceeding is then
23 concluded at 6:12 p.m.)
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR, License No.
30XI00234700, and Notary Public of the State of New
Jersey, hereby certify that the proceedings herein
are from the notes taken by me of a Regular Meeting
of the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners,
held on Thursday, September 10, 2026; and that this
is a correct transcript of the same.



SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR

A NOTARY PUBLIC of the

State of New Jersey

I.D. No. 2283786

Commission Expires 2/4/27

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