



Central Pine Barrens Commission  
Meeting of May 20, 2026  
Adopted Resolution to Approve  
645 Grumman Boulevard Core Preservation Area Hardship Waiver  
645 Grumman Boulevard, Calverton, Town of Riverhead  
SCTM Number 600-141-2-2.1

Present:

- Mr. McGarry, for the New York State Governor
- Mr. Sweeney, for the Suffolk County Executive
- Ms. DiBrita, for the Brookhaven Town Supervisor
- Mr. Charters, for the Riverhead Town Supervisor
- Ms. Moore, Southampton Town Supervisor

**I. The Project and Project Site**

Ryan P. McGarry  
*Chairman*

Jerome Halpin  
*Member*

Maria Z. Moore  
*Member*

Daniel J. Panico  
*Member*

Edward P. Romaine  
*Member*

645 Grumman Boulevard LLC by its co-managing member (the Applicant) submitted an application to the Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission (the Commission) to reuse three existing buildings for indoor agriculture/horticulture (the Project) on a 20-acre Project Site in the Core Preservation Area of the Central Pine Barrens.

The Project is development as defined by Article 57 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) and, as such, the Applicant is seeking a waiver of the Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act's prohibition on new development in the Core Preservation Area from the Commission to proceed.

The Project Site is located at 645 Grumman Boulevard in Calverton, in the Town of Riverhead. The Project Site is in the Natural Resources Protection zoning district and has approximately 894.92 linear feet of frontage on Grumman Boulevard. The property is owned by Signature Partners, LLC. The Applicant purchased the property for \$750,000 in November 2025.

Approximately 10 acres of the Project Site is developed with three primary buildings, outbuildings including maintenance sheds, a parking lot with 337 spaces. The three primary structures, totaling 126,500 square feet, include: Building 1, which is two stories, contains 66,000 square feet; Building 2, which is three stories, contains 51,000 square feet; and Building 3 contains 9,500 square feet. Approximately 10 acres of the site contains an intact pine barrens ecological community.

**II. The Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act of 1993, the Commission, Development and the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

The New York State Legislature approved the Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act (Act) and codified it in Article 57 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), which was signed into law on July 13, 1993. The Act, among other things, created the Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission (Commission), to, among other

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things, oversee land use activities within the specially designated Central Pine Barrens Area. In furtherance of its mission and in compliance with the directives set forth in the Act, the Commission drafted the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan (the Plan), which was adopted on June 28, 1995.

ECL §57-0107 defines development to be the “performance of any building activity, . . . , the making of any material change in use or intensity of use of any structure or land. Without limitation the following uses shall be taken for the purposes of this article to involve development . . . (b) a material increase in the intensity of use of land or environmental impacts as a result thereof.” ECL §57-0123 provides that “no application for development within the Central Pine Barrens area shall be approved by any municipality, or county or agency thereof or the [C]ommission . . . unless such approval or grant conforms to the provisions” of the Plan and Environmental Conservation Law Section. The Project constitutes development as defined in the Act.

### **III. The Application, SEQRA, Public Hearing, Public Process and Supplemental Materials**

#### **Application**

On January 9, 2026, the Applicant submitted a request for determination for the Project. On January 21, the Commission determined the Project constitutes development pursuant to the definitions in ECL Article 57.

On February 2, 2026, the Applicant submitted a Core Preservation Area Hardship Waiver Application with a cover letter and a written description, an Environmental Assessment Form Part I, building elevations and floor plans, a survey, site plan and drone photographs of the Project Site. Details and specifications concerning the Applicant’s proposal are depicted on the Site Plan prepared by Sendlewski Architects, P.C. last dated December 16, 2025 and the property survey dated November 5, 2025 prepared by Galls Surveying Group.

The Project, according to the Application, would proceed in a two-phased development plan. Each building on the Project Site is in a different condition of disrepair. Phase 1 is the priority and covers renovations to Building 1, built in 1988. Phase 1 also covers the parking lot rehabilitation including grading and resurfacing. Building 1 appears to require only aesthetic renovations including painting, window replacements and interior renovations including floor and bathroom repairs and sprinkler system upgrades.

Phase 2 is expected to commence within one year of the completion of Phase 1. It consists of renovations to Building 2, built in 1966. Building 2 is in greater disrepair, containing mold and asbestos and may need full replacement in its existing footprint. Building 3, built in 1984, also requires renovations including façade changes and will be renovated in Phase 2. The Applicant intends to “strip the buildings to their structural steel and concrete and then rebuild the exterior walls and interiors without changing the footprint or massing of the buildings.” Remediation of asbestos lead paint, mold and other items that need to be removed in a code compliant manner. Underground oil tanks and furnaces will also be removed in Phase 2.

The application indicates that once the Applicant completes building inspections, site and building evaluations and secures all required approvals, the Applicant would then determine which buildings

require aesthetic renovations and where significant structural modifications are necessary. Utility connections are required for the Project including electric and public water. The Site Plan identifies existing sanitary systems that would remain and those that would be removed.

The Applicant, if the application is approved, offers to preserve the existing 10 acres of existing natural pine barrens ecosystem that remains on the Project Site and protect it in a conservation easement to remain natural in perpetuity and revegetate 1.3 acres of the Project Site with native vegetation.

### **Public Hearing, Public Process and Supplemental Materials**

On February 18, 2026 the Commission scheduled a public hearing on the Application and it was held on March 18. During the hearing, the Commission reviewed the Staff Report and Exhibits prepared for the hearing and received heard testimony from the Applicant. During the hearing, the Applicant detailed the project, and restated its application on how the Project satisfies the criteria required to demonstrate a hardship. The Applicant noted that it plans to offer the space, if approved, for agricultural uses, including potential wholesale cannabis grower. It stated that there will be no retail operations based on the Project Site.

In response to a question from a member of the Commission, the Applicant said that leases have not been secured for tenants yet. The mechanics of the wholesale business were discussed as well as renovations to buildings, uses of outbuildings and the amount of parking needed for the use.

One member of the public spoke, former Congressman George Hochbrueckner, who also submitted written comments and email correspondence in support of the Project, Hochbrueckner was involved in the transfer of 2,900 acres of Federally owned property to Riverhead Town in the 1990s and also previously worked on the Project Site on the Grumman F-14 'Tomcat Aircraft' for six years. The former Congressman expressed, it was believed, that the people of Riverhead would realize financial benefits from the re-activation of this property if the Application is approved.

The hearing was closed with the written comment period held open until April 15.

On March 31, supplemental materials were submitted by the Applicant including a letter and revised site plan prepared by Sendlewski Architects, P.C. last dated March 31, 2026, to address comments made at the public hearing. The letter explained that the revised site plan reflects a 94-space reduction in parking, allowing 57,657 square feet (1.3 acres) to be restored with native plants. On May 7, the Applicant provided additional clarity on work in each development phase. No other materials were received during the written comment period. A transcript of the hearing was received and distributed to the Commission and posted on the Commission website.

### **State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and Other Required Approvals**

The Project is a Type I Action pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.5(c)(9) of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) because work on facilities in the Project, a non-residential use, exceeds 4,000 square feet (Part 617.5(c)(9)), and as an Unlisted Action, it exceeds the 25 percent threshold since it is contiguous to publicly-owned open space (Part 617.4(b)(10)).

On February 18, the Commission commenced the SEQRA process to coordinate the Project for Lead Agency. Responses were received from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) and Riverhead Town. No other agency requested lead agency status.

NYSDEC commented by letter dated March 12 on several environmental subjects including freshwater wetlands, listed wildlife and other jurisdictional authorities, groundwater remediation and the source of water supply for the Project. The letter discussed the nearby presence of regulated freshwater wetlands and the site's location within the Scenic River corridor of the Peconic River designated under the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System pursuant to ECL Article 15. The letter noted the presence of federally-listed endangered species, regulated under Articles 11 and 15, and an endangered wildlife habitat within its jurisdiction requiring review under endangered species regulations, 6 NYCRR Part 182 in the vicinity of the Project Site.

NYSDEC advised, "This parcel is located adjacent to a state superfund program named Calverton NWIRP, Site Code: 152136, and is within the PFAS plume of this former Navy site." The letter also noted, "The applicant intends to utilize an existing non-community well as the water supply for the building. This may require a new water withdrawal permit from NYSDEC Division of Water and that division should be included in any future correspondence related to water supply."

Riverhead Town responded on March 16 deferring Lead Agency status to the Commission.

Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS), by letter dated February 27, deferred lead agency status and commented on Sanitary Code and SCDHS jurisdiction including:

- The Department's Office of Wastewater Management has received a commercial wastewater application for the above referenced parcel on 7/7/2000, filed under reference # C06-00-0025, as required by Article VI of the Suffolk County Sanitary Code. The commercial application is as of 2/27/2026 pending.
- The SCDHS maintains jurisdiction over the final use and size of the property. The applicant, therefore, should not undertake the subdivision without Health Department approval. Density and complete site plan details are essential to the review of this project. These considerations are reviewed completely at the time of SCDHS application.

#### **IV. The Project Site, Immediate Vicinity and Study Area**

The Project Site is on the south side of Grumman Boulevard. It is immediately bound by a private golf course, Swan Lake Golf Course, to the east and public land to the south and west.

The Staff Report defined a Study Area which analyzed, in general, the land use and ownership of property within a one-half mile radius of the Project Site.

Within the Study Area, north of the Project Site in the Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL), where a substantial amount of Riverhead Town-owned land, developed and undeveloped, is present. Developed commercial and industrial land uses are also present at EPCAL. The dominant land use in the Study Area south of Grumman Boulevard and west of the Project Site is public open space.

To determine the Project’s potential impact on historic and cultural resources in the immediate area of the Project site, the Commission requested information from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). By letter dated April 8, 2026, the OPRHP replied, “No properties, including archaeological and/or historic resources, listed in or eligible for the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places will be impacted by this project.”

## **V. Precedential Applications Considered by the Commission**

The Commission finds the approval of the Hardship Exemption Waiver would be consistent with its prior Hardship Exemption Waiver decisions.

Within the Study Area, in a prior matter, on October 17, 2001, the Commission approved the Core Hardship Waiver application of Swan Lake Golf Course to construct two building additions totaling 2,729 square feet to an existing 3,951-square-foot clubhouse building and construction of a septic system.

Prior matters identified outside of the Study Area include:

- On June 15, 2011, the Commission approved the Core Hardship Waiver application of JCJC Holding Company, Inc. in the Core in Hampton Bays for a use variance, for a commercial use in a residential zone, to reuse a building and site that was formerly occupied by police barracks to a landscape contractor with no additional clearing activity or building expansion.
- On June 21, 2017, the Commission approved the Core Hardship Waiver application of Starbucks in the Core in Manorville for a use variance to reuse a building and site formerly occupied by a bank for a drive through restaurant. The application was procedurally similar. The Project did not expand the building and there was no material alteration of grade or vegetation or excavation.
- On March 17, 2021, the Commission determined that the activity at the site of Kent Animal Shelter in the Core in Calverton to renovate existing buildings and construct an on-site alternative septic system for the existing shelter was “non development,” pursuant to the definitions in the Act.
- On November 15, 2023, the Commission approved the Core Hardship Waiver application for Taco Bell Mangogna in Manorville to demolish an abandoned restaurant and rebuild the site with a new drive through restaurant.

## **VI. Commission Review of Application and Findings**

### **ECL §57-0121(10)(a) Extraordinary Hardship Waiver Criteria Review**

In reviewing a Core Preservation Area Extraordinary Hardship Waiver Application, the Commission is required to consider the criteria set forth in ECL §57-0121(10)(a) and (c) to determine whether an applicant has established the existence of extraordinary hardship as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, whether the requested relief is consistent with the purposes, provisions of the Act, and if granted, would not result in a substantial impairment of the resources of the Central Pine Barrens area. An applicant demonstrates the existence of an extraordinary if it demonstrates, based on specific facts,

that the subject property does not have any beneficial use if used for its present use or developed as authorized by the provisions of this article, and that this inability to have a beneficial use results from unique circumstances peculiar to the subject property under certain conditions.

The Commission has considered the application, the Staff Report and Exhibits, transcripts of the hearings, and its prior decisions and finds that the Applicant has demonstrated that an extraordinary hardship exists.

The Applicant purchased the property to establish an indoor agricultural facility. The Applicant seeks to provide a suitable facility to grow crops indoors under secure and controlled conditions. Agriculture is a permitted use in the NRP zoning district. The former manufacturing use of the Project Site does not conform with the current zoning district governing the site's uses. The Applicant asserts it is re-establishing a use in the case of Buildings 1 and 3 and may reconstruct a replacement building of the same area and footprint in the case of Building 2.

The hardship is imposed by the presence of the site in the Core Preservation Area. No change in the footprint—there would be no expansion of structures that existed prior to the Act and no expansion of building envelopes—are proposed. The Project will reuse existing development in the Core Preservation Area and rehabilitate the site from its shuttered condition.

There are circumstances that are peculiar to the Project Site and do not affect other property in the immediate area because the existing development areas of EPCAL are in the CGA. These circumstances relate to or arise out of the characteristics of the subject property and not the personal circumstances of the Applicant because the site has been unoccupied and abandoned for three decades and the reuse of the site, buildings and parking lots, requires renovation and rehabilitation by an owner or occupant of the property that seeks to actively reuse it. They are not the result or any action or inaction of the Applicant because prior to the Applicant, the site fell into disrepair. Re-establishing a presence on the property requires renovations of facilities to conform with current building codes and other standards for occupancy, regardless of use or applicant.

The site presently has no beneficial use. Reusing the site without expanding the footprint, or size of the facilities provides a beneficial use to the Applicant. The Applicant states the Project's proposal and the geographically isolated location of the Project Site do not affect neighboring properties or properties in the Study Area. The use of the site is planned to be in harmony with the site's physical boundaries and results in no disturbance to the existing pine barrens ecosystem and groundwater resources.

The Applicant states the inability to have a beneficial use results from unique circumstances peculiar to the subject property which are not the result of any action or inaction by the Applicant or the owner or their predecessors in title, including any transfer of contiguous lands which were in common ownership on or after June 1, 1993. The Commission finds that the Applicant has demonstrated such criteria.

The Applicant states the Project will not be materially detrimental or injurious to other property or improvements in the area in which the subject property is located, increase the danger of fire, endanger public safety or result in substantial impairment of the resources of the Core Preservation Area. The Commission finds the Project will reuse developed area of the site while protecting the natural pine barrens located on the undeveloped area of the site. This activity demonstrates conformance with these criteria.

The Commission finds the waiver is consistent with the purposes, objectives or the general spirit and intent of Article 57 as the Project Site or portion thereof was developed prior to the Act, and the Project preserves the area of the Project Site that is presently a natural pine barrens ecosystem. Additionally, the Project will restore with native plants an area covering 1.3 acres of the Project Site that is not needed and is mitigation for the Project.

The Commission finds the waiver is the minimum relief necessary to relieve the extraordinary hardship on behalf of the Applicant to meet their needs and minimize adverse impacts on the Project Site in the Core Preservation Area to the greatest extent practicable. The reuse of developed areas with no expansions of built facilities and preservation of 10 acres of pine barrens habitat are the minimum relief necessary to grant a waiver.

The Commission finds that the Application is consistent with its precedential matters because the Project will renovate existing facilities with no expansions of buildings or footprints and no material alteration of grade or vegetation.

The Commission hereby determines the Hardship Waiver application, as submitted, satisfies the criteria for a Core Preservation Area Extraordinary Hardship Waiver pursuant to New York State ECL Article 57 §57-0121(10) for the reasons set forth in this resolution.

## **VII. SEQRA**

The Commission has considered all of the materials submitted in connection with the Application including the transcript of the public hearing and the Parts 2 and 3 of the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and finds the Applicant has established the existence of a hardship pursuant to the criteria set forth in the Act is consistent with the purposes and provisions of ECL §57-0123(3)(b) and would not result in substantial impairment of the resources of the Central Pine Barrens area. The Commission finds the approval of the hardship waiver application will not have a significant adverse environmental impact and hereby authorizes the issuance of a Negative Declaration pursuant to the SEQRA regulations.

An elaboration of the elements in Part II of the EAF is provided with no significant adverse environmental impacts identified as a result of the Project. No adverse environmental impacts will occur to existing air quality, ground or surface water quality or quantity, traffic or noise levels. Ground and surface water quality and quantity will not be affected by the Project. To the extent it is necessary, the Applicant will coordinate with agencies including NYSDEC and others, if and where applicable legacy contamination is identified and will seek coordinated opportunities for remediation for public health and safety to reuse the Project Site.

No adverse noise impacts will occur because of the Project. Construction activities will generate noise; however, construction impacts will be temporary and are not expected to result in adverse impacts on neighboring properties including commercial and industrial uses and residential properties in proximity to the Project Site.

Freshwater wetland habitat is situated in proximity to the Project Site; however, no disturbance will occur to the existing natural wooded area serving as a natural buffer to the developed portion of the Project Site. Therefore, no adverse impact to wetlands will occur. The Applicant will obtain a NYSDEC Freshwater Wetlands Permit at the direction of NYSDEC.

The Project will not create septage beyond the as-of-right amount. The Applicant will apply for review and approval of sanitary systems from the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. No increase in erosion or runoff will occur. The Project will adhere to stormwater control and stormwater pollution prevention measures to retain runoff on site and protect adjacent properties if and when site demolition and construction activities are planned. No increase in solid waste production or substantial increase in potential for erosion, flooding, leaching or drainage problems will occur because of the Project. Drainage structures to capture stormwater will be installed for the Project.

The existing parking lot will be regraded and resurfaced. Erosion control measures will be employed to avoid erosion, flooding and drainage impacts. No solid waste, beyond that customary to a construction project, will be produced by the Project.

NYSDEC, by letter dated March 12, 2026, raised the site's proximity to habitats of a federal and state-listed endangered mammal and a state-listed endangered amphibian and directed the Applicant to obtain any and all required permits to protect listed endangered species and their habitats. The Project retains approximately 10 acres of intact natural pine barrens habitat, and it will be protected in perpetuity through the filing of a conservation easement granted to the Commission.

The Project does not involve the removal or destruction of large quantities of vegetation or fauna, or the substantial interference with the movement of any resident or migratory wildlife species or cause significant adverse impacts on significant habitat areas. Therefore, no adverse impacts to natural resources will occur because of the Project.

The Project Site is within designated Critical Environmental Areas (CEA), the Central Suffolk Pine Barrens, designated by Suffolk County in 1988 to benefit health and protect drinking water. However, the Project does not adversely affect the CEA and potential former contamination will be remediated to public health and safety standards to accommodate the reuse of the site and buildings. The Project will not result in the material conflict with a community's current plans or goals as officially approved or adopted. The Project will reuse the portion of a site that is presently vacant and abandoned and contains development including buildings and parking lots and will leave intact and protect the undeveloped portion of the site that is presently a natural pine barrens ecosystem.

The Project will not result in the impairment of the character or quality of important architectural or aesthetic resources or of existing community or neighborhood character.

As noted, according to correspondence dated April 8, 2026 from the Division for Historic Preservation within the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation the "[p]roject will have no impact on archaeological and/or historic resources listed in or eligible for the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places."

No major change in the use of either the quantity or type of energy consumed on site will occur under the Project. No adverse impacts on human health will occur because of the Project.

The Project Site is not presently in an agricultural district; however, once the agriculture/horticulture use is in place, the owner/operator may seek to apply for an agricultural district classification.

It is reasonably anticipated, based on the Application, that the Project, as a wholesale agricultural business, will not encourage or attract a large number of people to the Project Site.

It is reasonably anticipated, based on the Application, that the Project will not result in the material conflict with a community's current plans or goals as officially approved or adopted.

No adverse cumulative impacts from two or more of the Project elements when considered together are anticipated to result in a substantial adverse impact on the environment. There are no reasonably related adverse long-term, short-term, direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from the Project.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing and upon review of the application, the Commission hereby grants the waiver requested by the Applicant. The Waiver is granted only for this specific project. No other uses or development of the site is permitted.

Aside from this Waiver, the Applicant must obtain any and all other permits and approvals from other agencies including the NYSDEC, SCDHS and the Town of Riverhead.

The 645 Grumman Boulevard Core Preservation Area Hardship Waiver is approved, as per the Site Development Plan prepared by Sendlewski Architects, P.C. last dated March 31, 2026, subject to conditions including:

1. The Waiver shall be valid for a period of five (5) years from the date of approval, and a new application will be required after 5 years even for the same project and survey.
2. The Waiver is granted only for this specific Project as shown on the Site Plan prepared by Sendlewski Architects, P.C. and dated March 31, 2026. Applicant must submit any updates in the Project if they occur. No material changes to the Project may be implemented without prior Commission written approval. If any changes occur in the Project, the Applicant must notify the Commission and submit an amended application, subject to review and approval.
3. Applicant must obtain all required permits and approvals for the Project prior to site disturbance, including prior to site work in preparation of building and parking lot renovations and general reuse, not including test borings or other minor activities for the purposes of surveying and data gathering, site testing and monitoring for potential contamination and remediation. Restoration or remediation of potential prior contamination should be noticed and presented for review to the Commission in advance of any site disturbance that involves the material alteration of vegetation, grade or excavation.
4. Applicant must obtain additional permits and approvals, as required by law, prior to commencement of activity related to the Project, including Town of Riverhead Planning, Building and Water District and SCDHS review and approval and any other approvals and permit requirements that apply to the Project.
5. Applicant must coordinate the Project with NYSDEC Region 1: Division of Environmental Permits to address all permit requirements, including protection of state and federally-listed

endangered species, freshwater wetlands and any other jurisdictional requirements and authorities; and NYSDEC Region 1 Division of Water for non-community well use, if applicable.

6. No Pine Barrens Credits can be redeemed on the Project Site, and no part of the Project Site is eligible for a credit allocation in the Pine Barrens Credit Program.
7. No clearing or disturbance of trees or other natural vegetation present on the Project Site shall occur other than removal of dead or hazardous trees growing in building foundations due to the abandoned condition of the site and deferred property maintenance.
8. Applicant must install snow fencing along the tree line and natural vegetation to protect the natural area during construction and remove snow fencing post-construction.
9. Applicant must prepare and submit a draft Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions granted to the Commission barring the construction of any other structure(s) and uses on the property.
10. Applicant must prepare a draft Conservation Easement to the satisfaction of the Commission, granted to the Commission, to protect the Project Site's 10 acres of existing natural vegetation.
11. Within six months of completion of the Project and issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the Applicant shall submit an As-Built Survey for the Commission's file record.

**645 Grumman Boulevard Calverton Core Preservation Area Hardship Waiver**

Town of Riverhead, SCTM # 600-141-2-2.1

Decision to Approve

Record of Motion:

Motion by: Mr. Charters

Seconded by: Mr. Sweeney

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstention: 0

Absent: 0

cc: Town of Riverhead Planning Department and Riverhead Water District  
NYSDEC Division of Environmental Permits Region 1 and NYSDEC Division of Water  
Suffolk County Department of Health Services