

**RESOLUTION R:01-2024**

**TOWNSHIP OF MONROE RENT LEVELING BOARD  
APPLICATION NO. RLB-2024-001 – FRIENDLY VILLAGE MAJOR CAPITAL  
IMPROVEMENTS**

**BLOCK 9001, LOT 5**

**PROPERTY ADDRESS: FRIENDLY VILLAGE, 123 MAIN STREET, TOWNSHIP OF  
MONROE, GLOUCESTER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**A RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE RENT LEVELING BOARD'S APPROVAL  
OF A MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY  
FRIENDLY VILLAGE**

**WHEREAS**, Friendly Village (the "Applicant"), represented by **Chris Hanlon, Esq.**, filed a Major Capital Improvements application with the Township of Monroe Rent Leveling Board ("Board") for the property known as Block 9001, Lot 5 ("Property"), located at 123 Main Street, Township of Monroe, New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, the Applicant submitted its application to the Rent Leveling Board on **April 30, 2024**. The application initially proposed a rent increase of **\$12.69 per unit**, based on the total projected costs of the capital improvements. The application was initially scheduled for a hearing on **June 24, 2024**, but at the request of the Applicant, the hearing was postponed to **August 17, 2024**; and

**WHEREAS**, the Applicant submitted documents in support of its application, including invoices and supporting documentation for capital improvements, including but not limited to:

1. Repaving and road crack remediation.
2. Pool resurfacing and pump replacement.
3. Drainage improvements.
4. Lighting improvements (conversion to LEDs).
5. Shuffleboard court renovations; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing on the application was duly advertised and held before the Rent Leveling Board on **August 17, 2024**, during which the Applicant, represented by **Chris Hanlon, Esq.**, and various individuals provided testimony regarding the improvements, their associated costs, and the need for rent increases to recover the expenses; and

**WHEREAS**, the following individuals provided detailed testimony during the hearing:

1. **Brian Temple (Managing Member, Friendly Village MHP, LLC):**
  - **Testimony on Repaving and Crack Remediation:** Mr. Temple testified about the **repaving project**, which included resurfacing the roads in the older section of Friendly Village. He explained that the roads had not been repaved since the 1970s, and temporary solutions like crack sealing and slurry treatments were no longer effective. The decision was made to mill the roads and lay new asphalt. Additionally, **catch basin work** was needed, requiring the replacement or

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adjustment of stormwater drainage systems and curbs to support the new pavement.

- **Testimony on Pool Resurfacing and Pump Replacement:** Mr. Temple discussed the **pool renovations**, explaining that the pool had not been resurfaced since the 1990s. He described significant wear on the pool's surface, necessitating a complete resurfacing and replacement of the pool pump. The total cost for the project was **\$66,350**, covering both the resurfacing and pump replacement.
- **Testimony on Shuffleboard Court Renovation:** Mr. Temple testified about the **shuffleboard court renovations**, which involved replacing the old surface with new sports tiles and ensuring ADA-compliant features were included, such as ramp edges. The renovation was part of efforts to maintain the recreational facilities within the community.
- **Testimony on Drainage Improvements:** During the road repaving project, drainage issues were uncovered, necessitating improvements. The **drainage improvements** involved replacing concrete swales and ensuring the stormwater system was functioning efficiently.
- **Questions and Answers:**
  - **Mr. Hanlon:** "What condition were the roads in before the project began?"
  - **Mr. Temple:** "They were in very poor condition. Residents had been asking for repairs for years, but the roads had not been fully repaved since the 1970s. Crack sealing was no longer sufficient."
  - **Board Member:** "Why was it necessary to completely resurface the pool?"
  - **Mr. Temple:** "The pool's surface had deteriorated to a point where simple repairs would not suffice. We had to do a complete resurfacing and replace the pump to maintain safety standards."

2. **Jeff Chu (Project Manager, Friendly Village):**

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- **Testimony on Lighting Improvements:** Mr. Chu provided testimony on the **LED lighting improvements**, stating that the existing lighting system was outdated and inefficient. The replacement project involved upgrading the entire lighting system to modern LED fixtures, which would significantly reduce energy costs and improve safety throughout the community. The project also ensured compliance with current energy-efficiency standards.
- **Testimony on Loan and Debt Service:** During questioning by the Board, Mr. Chu also discussed the relationship between **Temple Properties** and the entity that provided the loan, **Stoneman Corporation**. He explained that Stoneman Corporation is a related entity, but the loan was structured at a standard interest rate. Mr. Chu acknowledged that the debt instrument was created shortly before the hearing and that its timing was part of the financing arrangement for the improvements.
- **Questions and Answers:**
  - **Board Member:** “Why was it necessary to replace the entire lighting system, rather than just the bulbs?”
  - **Mr. Chu:** “The old fixtures were incompatible with LED technology. It was necessary to replace the entire system to meet modern energy standards and ensure long-term savings.”

**WHEREAS**, members of the Board raised the following concerns and questions during the hearing:

1. **Board Members** raised concerns regarding the Applicant’s inclusion of **debt service** in the application. Several members, including **Mr. Richard Coe**, questioned the legitimacy of the debt service, noting that the promissory note for the claimed debt was created just two weeks prior to the August hearing date. Additionally, questions were raised about the relationship between **Temple Properties** and **Stoneman Corporation**, the lender. The Board expressed concerns about the proximity of the debt instrument to the filing date of the application.

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2. **Ms. Gina Burton** and **Mr. Joe Fisona** highlighted concerns about the timing of the application and the **18-month limit** on eligible expenses. They insisted on excluding any expenses outside the ordinance's allowed timeframe.
3. **Board Members** inquired about the necessity of some of the smaller projects, such as the shuffleboard court renovation. The Applicant responded by detailing the safety benefits and the importance of the renovations for maintaining property value and resident satisfaction.
4. The Board instructed the Applicant to provide updated calculations removing any claims for **debt service** and excluding expenses incurred more than 18 months prior to the application filing date of April 30, 2024. The Applicant was given **10 business days** to submit revised calculations.

**WHEREAS**, members of the public provided comments during the hearing, with multiple residents expressing concerns about the financial burden that the proposed rent increase would place on tenants, especially those with fixed incomes. Residents requested clarification on how the rent increase would be implemented and whether it would coincide with other scheduled increases.

The Board clarified that the capital improvement surcharge was separate from any regular rent adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and would apply uniformly across all tenants. The Board ensured that sufficient notice would be given to tenants before the increase took effect.

**WHEREAS**, the Applicant presented revised calculations following the Board's instruction to remove any expenses outside the 18-month window and exclude debt service. The revised total cost of the improvements was **\$543,870.85**, broken down as follows:

1. Repaving: \$450,502.55
2. Pool renovation: \$66,350.00
3. Stormwater drainage: \$0.00
4. Lighting improvements: \$7,332.30
5. Shuffleboard court renovation: \$0.00

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**WHEREAS**, based on the revised calculations, the **total increase per unit** was determined to be **\$3.81** per month.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township of Monroe Rent Leveling Board as follows:

1. **Approval of Capital Improvements:** The Board grants approval of the capital improvements, specifically repaving, pool renovations, and lighting upgrades, and allows the Applicant to recover the eligible portion of the costs through a rent increase.
2. **Exclusion of Debt Service and Old Invoices:** The Board excludes any claim for debt service and any invoice older than 18 months from the filing date.
3. **Final Rent Increase:** The total rent increase per unit is approved at **\$3.81** per month, based on the revised cost calculation, for a period not to exceed 20 years as per the amortization schedule and testimony provided.
4. **Implementation of Rent Increase:** The rent increase will take effect **no earlier than November 1, 2024**, provided the Applicant complies with all notice requirements to tenants.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**AYES:** Richard Coe, Gina Burton, Joe Fisona

**NAYS:** Eric Fooder

**RECUSED:** John Romano, Rosemary Dilolle

**ADOPTED on September 30, 2024.**