

UPPER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 30, 2025

The regular meeting of the Upper Township Planning Board was held at Township Hall at 2100 Tuckahoe Road, Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

SUNSHINE ANNOUNCEMENT
SALUTE TO THE FLAG
ROLL CALL

Member	Attendance
Mayor Curtis Class I	Present
Matthew Davidson, Class IV	Absent
Brooke Fisher, Alt	Present
Joseph Harney, Class IV	Present
Rich Kaczmariski, Class II	Present
Ted Kingston, Class IV Vice Chair	Present

Member	Attendance
Chris McGuire, Class IV	Absent
Colby Meloy Alt	Absent
Samuel Palombo, Class III	Present
Gary Riordan, Class IV	Present
Sean Whelan, Chair	Absent

Also, in attendance were Jeffrey Barnes, Board Solicitor Liz Oaks, Board Secretary and Paul Kates, Board Engineer.

Tiffany Morrissey, Township Planner, was sworn by Jeff Barnes, Board Attorney.

NEW BUSINESS

AMENDMENT TO THE TOWNSHIP’S MASTER PLAN

Upper Township’s Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”). The purpose of the meeting is to hear public comment on the adoption of the Township’s Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”), which will amend the Township’s Master Plan. After public comment, the Planning Board shall consider adoption of the Fourth Round HEFSP by way of resolution.

Ms. Morrissey addressed the board.

Context and Purpose

- The Township is submitting an updated Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in compliance with Fourth Round affordable housing regulations, adopted by New Jersey in 2024.
- June 30, 2025 is the state-imposed deadline for municipalities to file their housing plans in order to maintain protection from builder’s remedy lawsuits.
- The plan must be uploaded to the state housing portal by midnight to protect the municipality’s immunity.

Overview of Housing Obligations

COAH Rounds Summary:

- Round 1 (1987–1999): 317-unit obligation.
- Round 2 (1999–2025): 233 units (settled with Fair Share Housing, though a 2018 court ruling would have reduced it to 168).
- Round 4 (2025–2035): 47 credit obligation.

Total: 597 units, broken down into:

- 550 units (Rounds 1–3)
- 47 credits for Round 4

Fourth Round Highlights

- Present Need Obligation (rehabilitating substandard units): 0 units, unlike in previous rounds.
- Prospective Need Obligation: 47 credits, not necessarily 47 physical units (bonus credits apply).

Strategy to Fulfill Obligations

Past Achievements:

- 111 credits completed through already approved and constructed projects.
- Durational Adjustment: Deferred part of the obligation (440 units) due to lack of sewer infrastructure and public support.
- Partnerships:
 - Habitat for Humanity: 5 units.
 - Market-to-Affordable Program: 5 units (3 completed, 2 proposed).
 - Osprey Cove: Completed project.
 - Heritage Acres Mobile Home Park: Still viable though incomplete.
 - Group homes and units like Holly Berry included for credit.

Planned & Ongoing Developments

Beesley's Point Redevelopment (New for Round 4)

- 154 affordable units planned.
- Includes 80 family rental units and 74 mixed-age units.
- Provides 156 credits, covering:
 - 47 credits for Round 4.
 - Remaining credits for unmet obligations from earlier rounds.
- 20% set-aside requirement, possibly reduced to 15% under certain market conditions.

Stagecoach Road Senior Housing

- Originally 79 senior affordable units on a ~58-acre parcel.
- New plan moves those units to a 10-acre municipal property across the street (next to the senior center).
- The site will now function as a senior housing and community center hub.
- Development still subject to site plan, redevelopment agreement, zoning approvals, and possible variances (e.g., building length limit of 180 ft).
- May be a single-building or multi-building setup, to be determined during negotiation.

Legal and Procedural Details

- Plan submission secures protection from builder's remedy lawsuits.
- From July 1 to August 31, third parties can object to the plan.
- Any objections will be reviewed and potentially mediated by:
 - The Program (formerly COAH)
 - Courts
 - Affordable Housing Dispute Committee arbitrators
- Final approval expected by Dec 31, 2025.
- Any necessary ordinances must be adopted by March 15, 2026.

Other Key Elements

- Market to Affordable Program:
 - Revolving fund (~\$1.7 million) used to purchase market-rate homes, convert them to affordable units, and resell them under deed restrictions (30-year minimum).

- Program continues despite challenges with rising market prices.
- Very Low-Income Requirement:
 - At least 13% of new affordable units must be designated for very low-income households.
 - Can be achieved through group homes, senior housing, or buy-downs using trust fund dollars.
- Planning Board Authority:
 - All redevelopment plans and site plans must return to the Planning Board for review and approval.
 - Township retains full negotiation rights and final say, particularly since it owns key parcels like the senior center site.

Demographics & Trends

- Although not discussed in depth, the presenter noted that demographic trends (e.g., population growth or decline) do not directly reduce the housing obligation.
- The obligation is calculated using a complex formula that includes land availability, income levels, infrastructure capacity, etc.

Summary of Action Items

- The Township Planning Board must:
 1. Open the meeting to the public (though no public was present).
 2. Approve the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.
 3. Adopt a resolution supporting the plan.
 4. File documents by midnight to ensure protection.

Final Remarks

- The Township is in a strong position, with viable sites, funding, partnerships, and a comprehensive plan.
- Key projects like Beesley's Point Redevelopment and Stagecoach Senior Housing will satisfy both short-term and long-term obligations.
- The Township has added land into the affordable housing inventory rather than removing it, strengthening its case to the state.

Comments from the Board

- Mayor Corson asked if new site could handle 79 units and senior center.
 - Ms. Morrissey assured the board it could work since the planning board declared the site was in need of rehabilitation.
- Mr. Harney stated that only two multiple dwelling buildings with 20 units max per Upper Township code 20.6-4 f are permitted on 8 acres site.
- Mayor Corson suggested leaving the 58 acres of block 549 lots 70, 87, 102, 103, & 104 as part of affordable housing plan.
- Mr. Harney confirmed (prior to the vote) the following two items.
 - Mayor Corson's suggestion about leaving the Old Stagecoach block 549 lots in the plan.
 - The planning board would have the opportunity to review site plans if redevelopment plan would occur.

PUBLIC PORTION

The meeting was open to the public. Seeing no one and hearing no one this portion was closed.

A motion to approve the proposal was made by: Mayor Corson
Seconded by: Mr. Riordan
In favor: Harney, Fisher, Kaczmarski, Palombo, Riordan, Corson, Kingston

RESOLUTIONS

HEFSP

A motion to approve the resolution was made by: Mayor Corson
Seconded by: Mr. Riordan
In favor: Harney, Fisher, Kaczmarski, Palombo, Riordan, Corson, Kingston

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mayor Corson and seconded by Mr. Riordan to adjourn the meeting, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Submitted by,
Liz Oaks