

UPPER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 2025

The regular meeting of the Upper Township Planning Board was held at Township Hall, 2100 Tuckahoe Road, Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

SUNSHINE ANNOUNCEMENT

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

Member	Attendance
Mayor Curtis Corson, Class I	Present
Matthew Davidson, Class IV	Absent
Brooke Fisher, Alt	Absent
Joseph Harney, Class IV	Present
Rich Kaczmarski, 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	Present

Also in attendance were Richard King, Substitute Board Solicitor; Liz Oaks, Board Secretary; and Joseph Iudica, Substitute Board Engineer.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes was made by:
 Seconded by:
 In favor: Harney, Kaczmarski, Palombo, Riordan, Corson, Kingston
 Abstain: Whelan

Mr. Harney
 Mr. Kaczmarski

PRESENTATION

Climate Change Resilience (Colliers Engineering & Design)

- Presenter: Nick Dickerson, Colliers Engineering & Design.
- Program: Firm engaged under a New Jersey DEP initiative to provide technical guidance to municipalities.

Project Background

- Project work began in 2021 with a Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHVA) - now an MLUL master plan requirement.
- DEP provided additional funding to implement CCRHVA recommendations; funding has a finite use period.

Resilient New Jersey Context

- The work proceeds under the Resilient New Jersey umbrella.
- CCRHVA evaluates social/physical vulnerability, municipal infrastructure, and natural resources.
- Upper Township focus areas: flooding and wildfire risk.

Implementation Approach

- Initial “wish list” included flood-area identification, survey work, CRS (Community Rating System) improvements, and master plan updates.
- Due to schedule constraints, effort is now focused on updating master plan elements, which will also support items such as nuisance-flooding identification, critical-infrastructure mapping, and potential CRS benefits.

Master Plan Elements to Update

- Land Use Element (originally adopted 1994).
- Conservation Element.
- Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).
- These updates align with the Planning Implementation Agreement with the State Planning Commission.
- Presenter noted the compressed schedule compared to typical 8+- month master plan efforts.

Research & Goals

- Office-based research underway: existing conditions, demographics, land-use change analysis.
- Goal: prepare a draft for Township/Board review prior to submittal.

- Update the NRI with new data (maps + narrative) to inform the Conservation Plan Element.

Timeline & Feedback

- “Pencils down” target: end of March (some flexibility possible).
- Anticipated return to the Board with materials in early 2026.
- Presenter requested feedback on priorities (“hot topics”) and items that are outdated. Contact information to be shared.

Scope Clarification

- Focus is not a full comprehensive master plan update; scope is limited to land use, conservation, and natural resources, per DEP guidance and time limits.

Data Collection

- Team compiling a current snapshot of demographics and land use; draft existing land-use maps (derived from tax data) will be shared for Township verification.
- Team reviewing prior master plan documents on the Township website for past recommendations and their status.
- NRI is being refreshed with current datasets and mapping.

Feedback & “Wish List”

- Presenter encourages feedback from officials and public; may contact local stakeholders on recommendations not yet adopted.

Board Member Comments

- Major issues noted: beach and Back Bay conditions; living shoreline initiative aimed at marsh growth/elevation (permit still pending despite secured funding).
- Bulkhead ordinance requires standardized elevation by 2028; NRI must be updated given substantial post-storm changes (inlet/beach).
- Advocate for native vegetation in buffer standards.
- Suggests public input opportunities as drafts take shape.

The meeting was open to the public.

Ralph Cooper, 6 Gladwyn Drive, was sworn in. Mr. Cooper, a member of the Township’s Green Team and the Business Association, showed concern about input from the public and asked who was funding the work.

Mr. Dickerson explained that the DEP was funding the project. He expressed the importance of public input but noted the very limited time frame. Most often this would be an 18-month project, not just 8 months.

Nathalie Neiss, 759 Route 50, was sworn in. Ms. Neiss expressed the same concerns as Mr. Cooper regarding input from the public.

Elsie Jamison, 5 Sparks Court, was sworn in. Ms. Jamison questioned what type of input would be expected of the public. Would this be about ground contamination? Rezoning?

Mayor Corson replied that this was not rezoning.

Mr. Dickerson agreed with Mayor Corson and added that this was more mapping, land use, zoning reports, etc.

Hearing no one else and seeing no one else, the public portion was closed.

No action was taken at this time.

DISCUSSION

Consistency Review of Resolution No. 256-2025

Review of Cape May County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, including the jurisdiction annex for Upper Township, as referred by the Township Committee.

- Discussion of school generator capacity: Elementary School lacks full-building power; Health Department provided a generator that is insufficient for whole-school loads; Fire Department generators are not building-suitable.
- Middle School has power-generation capability. School Board governs school assets.
- Suggested actions: conduct study to size appropriate generator; send letter to School Board; explore federal funding partnerships.
- Concern noted about Red Cross shelter identification for the Elementary School without adequate backup power.

The meeting was open to the public.

Mr. Cooper, previously sworn in, asked if there was a red-line list of risks added/removed versus the prior plan.

Mr. Whelan stated there was no red-line list available.

Hearing no one else and seeing no one else, the public portion was closed.

A motion was made by Mr. Harney to recommend adoption of the above changes to the Township Committee, seconded by Mr. Riordan.

In favor: Harney, Kaczmarek, Kingston, Palombo, Riordan, Corson, Whelan.

Review and Possible Amendments to Chapter 20 of the Revised General Ordinances of the Township of Upper

- Definition of pools and spas
 - Discussion on defining spas/hot tubs/swim spas.
 - Pool Definition
 - Water surface area 101 square feet and above, and
 - Depth of 43 inches or greater.
 - Spas/Hot Tubs/Swim Spas
 - Water surface area 100 square feet and under, and
 - Depth of 42 inches and under.
- Sign Ordinance
 - Discussion on feather signs; recommended to permit one temporary feather sign per business in lieu of a sandwich board, subject to:
 - Maximum height 15 ft.
 - Good condition/maintenance at all times.
 - Minimum 10 ft setback from edge of pavement.
 - Maximum one per business.
- Note: If altered during first reading, the item may need to return for further review.

The meeting was open to the public.

Mr. Cooper, previously sworn, questioned the process of the sign ordinance being passed.

Mr. Whelan explained that this would go to the Committee for review. The Planning Board does not make the decision but makes recommendations to the governing body. It will be on the Committee agenda for a public meeting.

Seeing no one and hearing no one else, the public portion was closed.

A motion was made by Mr. Whelan to recommend adoption of the above changes to the Township Committee, seconded by Mr. Harney.

In favor: Harney, Kaczmarek, Kingston, Palombo, Riordan, Corson, Whelan.

Referral from Township Committee - Update

Resolution directing the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether block 599, lots 37, 51, 52, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63 (Study Area) qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment (Non-Condensation) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5.

Mr. Iudica explained that his office has been in contact with the Township Planner, Tiffany Morrissey. Ms. Morrissey is actively working on the report, and their office will continue to keep the board updated. No action taken.

PUBLIC PORTION

The meeting was open to the public. Hearing no one and seeing no one, the public portion was closed.

RESOLUTIONS

Azeez Farms, LLC - block 12, lot 15 – SD 02-2025

A motion to approve the resolution was made by:

Mr. Kingston

Seconded by:

Mr. Kaczmarek

In favor: Harney, Kaczmarek, Kingston, Palombo, Riordan, Corson, Whelan.

BILLS

A motion to approve the bills was made by Mr. Kingston and seconded by Mr. Riordan, with all board members present voting in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Harney and seconded by Mr. Riordan to adjourn the meeting, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by,
Elizabeth Oaks