

The Chairperson called the meeting to order and stated it was being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" and had been duly noticed and published as required by law.

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Vandegrift, Mr. Rashatwar, Mr. Platt, Ms. Branch, Mr. Ravitz, Mr. Schallenhammer, Ms. Augustine, Mr. Schwenke

Absent: Mr. Nicini, Mr. Kleinman

Also present are Stuart Platt, Board Solicitor, and Jeremy Noll, Board Engineer

Mr. Platt swears in Board Engineer, Mr. Noll.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ITEMS

Review of the Voorhees Township Housing Element and Fair Share Plan 2025

The Township Affordable Housing Planner, Malvika Apte, of engineering firm CME associates approaches the board to testify on the 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. Ms. Apte goes through the history of the state's affordable housing efforts and the township's previous affordable housing rounds 1, 2, and 3, as well as the township's progress with its affordable housing obligations up to the present. She explains that for the 1st and 2nd rounds the township had an obligation of approximately 456 units and this was met through provision of a mix of senior, family, 100% affordable housing, and special needs housing. She states that the units added from these rounds totaled 467, providing a surplus of 11 units to the third-round obligation. Ms. Apte testifies that the township's third round obligation was 510 units, which was also met through the provision of senior, group home as well as 100% affordable housing. This produced a total of 511 units, giving 1 as surplus for the township's fourth round obligation. Ms. Apte discusses some upcoming sites that will have affordable housing developments as well, including 3 Sheppard Rd and Voorhees Town Center. Board solicitor Mr. Platt notes that both the Sheppard Rd and Voorhees Town Center developments have been approved by the courts. Ms. Apte testifies that the 4th round affordable housing period spans from 2025 to 2035, and the township's obligation was ultimately determined to be 181 units. She states that currently, municipalities have a deadline to have their 4th round affordable housing plans adopted by June 30, 2025 and any objectors to a municipality's housing plan has until August 31 to file. She testifies that the next deadline for municipalities is March 15, 2026, by which date all ordinances for new affordable housing zones must have been adopted by municipalities. Ms. Apte explains that the township's 4th round obligation will be met via two different 100% affordable housing developments. She states that 600 Centennial Blvd will be the site for one of these developments with 120 units planned.

Mr. DiNatale asks if any of the proposed AH developments require a contribution from the township's affordable housing fund. Board Solicitor Mr. Platt states that the development at 600 Centennial does not require a contribution, but the other property on Laurel Oak Rd is requesting \$500,000 from the fund.

Ms. Apte explains that in addition to the 120 credits that will be earned from the proposed 120 units at 600 Centennial Blvd, another 45 bonus credits will also be earned from the property as it will be redeveloping a former industrial site. Ms. Apte testifies that the other proposed site is behind the AMC movie theater off Laurel Oak Rd, and will be developed on the large overflow parking lot at the rear of the theater. She states that the current plan for the development is to have 60 units, which would bring the total number of units for the 4th round obligation to 226 units, allowing for a surplus of 45 credits for the 5th round in 2035. Ms. Apte adds that the township also has a rehab obligation of 9 units for the prior round, which will be met through usage of county and rehab programs.

Mr. Schallenhammer asks if there is an estimate for the 5th round housing obligation. Board solicitor Mr. Platt states that the obligation is determined through the census and legislation. Mr. Schallenhammer asks what happens when a municipality runs out of space to build affordable housing. Board solicitor Mr. Platt explains that there are processes such as vacant land adjustment that involve assessment of developable land in a municipality to determine if certain areas can be redeveloped for affordable housing. He adds that future housing obligations will also depend on legislation for later rounds.

Ms. Apte testifies that for affordable housing ordinances the township has some that will need to be updated to follow current affordable housing program regulations, but the deadline for adoption of these ordinances is March 10, 2026.

Mr. Platt asks about the affordable housing round obligations and if rounds will continue even if developable land becomes unavailable. Board solicitor Mr. Platt explains that without a successful challenge to current affordable housing law the rounds will continue, but down the line state laws will probably change as both affordable housing and environmental protection law are expanding simultaneously, and they will eventually collide with one another. He adds that future affordable housing laws may be more focused on redevelopment of existing, obsolete housing developments as developable land diminishes. Mr. Platt asks if there is any way to push deadlines for affordable housing rounds. Board solicitor Mr. Platt states that there is not as it is state law.

Mr. Schwenke asks Ms. Apte if any consideration had been made as to further densifying the 600 Centennial development to getting all of the affordable housing obligation met so the Laurel Oak Rd development would not be needed. Ms. Apte explains that a combination of needing to maintain the design standards of the township and keeping the total number of units at a site within a threshold to qualify for low-income housing credits for developers were some reasons for the existing development proposals for both 600 Centennial Blvd and Laurel Oak Rd. Mr. Schwenke asks if schools also are a consideration in the affordable housing plans for the developments. Board solicitor Mr. Platt states that buses are arranged to take students from the new units to the nearest schools, and should those schools reach capacity they would be bussed to the next nearest schools in town. Mr. Ravitz states that the plans for school transportation can also sometimes be incorporated into developers agreements.

Mr. Platt makes a motion to approve the Housing Element & Fair Share Plan 2025 for the 4th round obligation, seconded by Ms. Augustine. Motion carries by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Vandegrift, Mr. Rashatwar, Mr. Platt, Ms. Branch, Mr. Ravitz, Ms. Augustine, Mr. Schwenke
ABSTAIN: Mr. Schallenhammer
NAYS: None

MEMORIALIZATION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Adopting Housing Element & Fair Share Plan 2025

Mr. DiNatale makes a motion to memorialize the resolution, seconded by Ms. Augustine. Motion carries by the following Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Vandegrift, Mr. Rashatwar, Mr. Platt, Ms. Branch, Mr. Ravitz, Ms. Augustine, Mr. Schwenke
ABSTAIN: Mr. Schallenhammer
NAYS: None

NEW BUSINESS

PC#25-008
FPS Rink, L.P.
601 Laurel Oak Rd
Block 161, Lot 23

Site Plan Waiver

The applicant's attorney, Michael Floyd of law firm Archer & Greiner approaches the board to testify on behalf of the applicant, FPS Rink. At this time, the following individuals from the applicant's team are sworn in: Matthew Walsh, applicant's engineer from firm PS&S, Jay Freeman, General Manager of the Flyers Skate Rink, and Justin Rocco, project manager for real estate firm JLL.

Mr. Floyd testifies that the applicant is proposing an updated freestanding pylon sign to the existing one onsite. He states that the new sign will be a reduction in height and total sign area from the current sign. He adds that there are also proposed improvements to the front and rear of the existing building: improvements to the existing curb and sidewalk as well as the installation of a 6-ft concrete pad at the front of the building. Mr. Floyd testifies that the improvements are to help facilitate concessions and food delivery to the Flyers Training Center. He states that they received the board engineer's review letter and issued a point-by-point response letter noting no issues with the items and conditions of the board engineer's letter.

The applicant's general manager, Jay Freeman testifies on behalf of the application. He states that the proposed improvements are part of the 2nd year of renovations to the overall skate center and the curb, sidewalk and pad improvements are to help make transportation for vendors smoother and the sign changes to help simplify the current signage.

The applicant's engineer, Matthew Walsh approaches to testify on the application. Mr. Walsh identifies the various areas of the site where the improvements are proposed and shows the board plans and renderings of the existing sign next to the new proposed sign. Board solicitor Mr. Platt asks if the proposed sign will be illuminated. Mr. Walsh states that it will indeed be illuminated internally. Mr. Walsh continues with the details of the proposed improvements, stating that the concrete pad will be 75 sq ft in area and a ramp will also be added at the rear of the building to help facilitate loading and unloading for vendors.

Board engineer Mr. Noll testifies that the applicant has no issues with their review letter and adds that their biggest comment was regarding designating the ADA route and ensuring crosswalks there are brought up to code. Mr. Walsh states that some existing striping will be added to the plans as well.

Mr. Platt asks the applicants' team about the sidewalk and corner curbs at the entrance of the skate rink and whether those could be altered to allow for smoother bike flow. Mr. Noll states that the sidewalks and curb ramps in that area were part of a township project that received NJDOT funding, and they were designed to follow ADA code hence their current design. He adds that the improvements are designed for pedestrian flow rather than for bikes as there is not sufficient space to add a bike path adjacent to the sidewalk along the street in that portion of the township.

Board solicitor Mr. Platt outlines for the board the conditions and stipulations for the site plan waiver application:

1. The applicant agrees to the conditions in the board engineer's review letter dated May 30, 2025

Ms. Augustine makes a motion to approve the site plan waiver application for freestanding signage, curbing, sidewalk, pad and ramp improvements for the property located at 601 Laurel Oak Rd, Block 161, Lot 23. Motion Seconded by Mr. Platt. Motion carries by the following Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Vandegrift, Mr. Rashatwar, Mr. Platt, Ms. Branch, Mr. Ravitz, Ms. Augustine, Mr. Schwenke

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

Seeing no further business, Mr. Schallenhammer makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ravitz. Motion carries by the assenting voice vote of all present board members.

Rashane Thapa

Voorhees Township Planning Board Secretary

Minutes prepared by Rashane Thapa. The minutes are intended to reflect the basic comments and action. Verbatim transcripts of all electronic recordings can be available upon proper request and payment