

BOROUGH OF TOTOWA PLANNING BOARD

PASSAIC COUNTY
NEW JERSEY



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 19, 2025

Chairman Hanrahan called the Special Planning Board meeting of Thursday, June 19, 2025 to order at 7:30 p.m. for the Borough of Totowa.

PRESENT:

Commissioner Sabatino	Commissioner Zarek	Mayor Coiro	Commissioner Murphy
Councilman D'Angelo	Commissioner Schell	Commissioner Festa	Vice Chairman Coiro
Chairman Hanrahan	Paul Danner, ESQ	Tom Czerniecki, Planner	

The clerk read the statement of the meeting as follows: The meeting of the Planning Board to be held on the 19th day of June 2025 is in accordance with the Schedule of Annual Notice, which is posted, and in accordance with Chapter 231 P.L. 1975 of the State of New Jersey. The agenda for this meeting has been prepared and distributed to the members of the Planning Board, posted on the Borough's website and a copy has been on file in the Construction Official's Office. The Planning Board Agenda has also been posted on the entrance doors to the Municipal Building including the entranceway for handicapped individuals.

ITEM #1

BOROUGH OF TOTOWA HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN

Adoption By Borough of Totowa Planning Board

The Planning Board held a special meeting on June 19, 2025, to adopt the 2025 HEFSP as part of Totowa's Master Plan. The Borough of Totowa is committed to fulfilling its affordable housing obligations for 2025-2035 through planned developments, adjustments, and compliance with state regulations.

Chairman Hanrahan read into the record identifying notices provided as follows:

- Notice of the Special Meeting was published by the Record/Herald on June 8, 2025.
- A copy of the Notice was posted on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building.
- A copy of the Notice was sent via certified mail R/R/R to the adjoining municipalities, to wit: Township of Little Falls, Borough of Haledon, Borough of Woodland Park, City of Paterson, and Township of Wayne.
- A copy of the Notice and Housing Element & Fair Share Plan was sent via certified mail R/R/R to Passaic County Planning Board, attn.: Jason Miranda and State of New Jersey, Office of Planning Advocacy, attn.: Donna Rendeiro.
- A copy of the Notice and Housing Element & Fair Share Plan was hand delivered to the Planning Board Members on June 5, 2025.

The Town Planner, Thomas Czerniecki, MPA, PP, AICP, appeared before the Planning Board and provided a Power Point presentation detailing the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan – 2025 ("Plan"). He started the presentation with a historical discussion of the State's affordable housing requirements, the application of those requirements, and the obligations of the Borough to comply therewith.

Mr. Czerniecki explained that "Fair Share" refers to the number of affordable housing units each New Jersey municipality is legally required to provide, based on statewide housing needs established by the courts and Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The Fair Share Act, which governs, was amended in March 2024, implementing the next (Fourth) round of affordable-housing obligations (2025-2035).

Mr. Czerniecki testified that a municipality's fair share number is calculated based on several factors, including population growth, available land, employment trends, infrastructure capacity, and past housing development patterns. The number of housing units have been historically determined by "rounds". By adopting a certified Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, a municipality can satisfy its obligation and maintain control over zoning, helping to avoid legal challenges.

Mr. Czerniecki explained that the Borough is not building any affordable housing units. Instead, the Plan ensures that the Borough's zoning provides a realistic opportunity for people to construct affordable housing in way that is both realistic and rational for the Borough. Moreover, as Mr. Czerniecki stated, municipalities must adopt a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP) by June 30, 2025, and finalize zoning ordinances by March 15, 2026. The "Housing Element" must be part of the municipal Master Plan and identify existing and future housing needs, particularly for low- and moderate-income households. The "Fair Share" component details how the municipality will meet its affordable housing obligation (rehabilitation, prior round, and prospective need), and must include zoning, land use strategies, and compliance mechanisms.

Next, Mr. Czerniecki provided a discussion about the Borough's current population, housing stock overview, resident demographics and employment. He presented several charts detailing this information.

Turning to the events surrounding round four, Mr. Czerniecki advised that the DCA informed Totowa there were 28.2 usable acres in the Borough. This resulted in a fourth-round assignment of 528 units. The Borough challenged the assignment concluding that there was 7.28 acres of usable land, which reduced the Borough's number to 390 units/credits. The Plan presented to the Planning Board is based on the Borough's 390 figure, which, after being adjusted as per the prevailing matrix, resulted in an adjusted prospective need of 91 units.

The Plan identifies specific locations for affordable housing development, which will 100% satisfy its need, including: existing sites (95 Shepherds Lane already provides 15 units), and potential future sites for 2025, *i.e.*, 78 Highview Avenue and 1 Ottilio Terrace, with remaining obligations totaling 33 units. Mr. Czerniecki further stated that the Borough will continue to explore alternative affordable housing options, such as converting existing buildings, and will seek durational adjustments due to environmental and spatial constraints.

A motion was offered by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Zarek to open the public portion of the meeting.

Nine agreed to a roll call vote... 9-0

NO PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

A motion was offered by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Zarek to close the public portion of the meeting.

Nine agreed to a roll call vote... 9-0

A motion was offered by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Festa to officially adopted the 2025 HEFSP as an amendment to Totowa's Master Plan, ensuring compliance with state laws and addressing affordable housing needs.

Nine agreed to a roll call vote... 9-0

RESOLUTIONS:

A motion was offered by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Festa to approve the resolution for Borough of Totowa Housing Element and Fair Share Plan as prepared.

Nine agreed to a roll call vote... 9-0

Planning Board Clerk apprised Board Members that there were no applicants for the regular scheduled Planning Board meeting of June 26, 2025. After a discussion, it was decided to cancel the Planning Board meeting of June 26th.

All were in favor.....9-0

There being no other business, a motion was offered by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Festa to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor.....9-0

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Murphy, Secretary

Patricia Paulson
Board Clerk

Date Approved