

Franklin Borough Planning Board **Workshop Meeting Minutes for** **March 4, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04PM by Mr. Estes. Mr. Estes the assembly in the flag salute. Mr. Estes read the Statement of Compliance pursuant to the "Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, PL 1975."

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Floy Estes Chairman (Present)
Mrs. Keri Marino Vice Chairwomen (Present)
Mr. John Sowden, Mayor (Present)
Mr. Concetto Formica Councilman (Absent)
Mr. Suckey (Absent)
Mr. James Nidelko (Present)
Mr. Jim Williams (Present)
Ms. Sharon Schultz (Present)
Mr. George Drossel (Present)
Mr. James Affinto, Alternate #1 (Present)

ALSO PRESENT: Dave Brady, Planning Board Attorney
Jessica Caldwell, Planning Board Planner

PUBLIC HEARING:

The Housing Element and Fair Share Plan – Presented by Jessica Caldwell.

Mrs. Caldwell thanked Mr. Chairman and proceeded with her brief presentation on the Affordable housing and Fair Share Plan. Mrs. Caldwell stated that she would include in her presentation the memos from the town clerk in regards to the ordinances that the governing body are also looking to adopt by the March 15th deadline.

Mrs. Caldwell as you all know we have been going through the 4th round of the Affordable Housing Plan that came into effect late 2024. The Borough is currently following various deadlines.

On June 16th 2025 the Planning Board adopted the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

On June 30th the plans were submitted to the dispute resolution program.

They were filed and any interested party can review the plan if they desire. Any entity had until August 31st to challenge any of the filed plans. The Borough received two challenges one being from the Fair Share Housing Center who challenged about every town plan throughout the state. The second one was from the Zinc Mine developers.

From there myself and other representatives from our town would meet and come up with a plan to reach agreement/ settlement. The Borough was unable to settle with the Zinc Mine properties but we were able to come to a compromise with the Fair Share Plan and affordable housing committee.

Part of the agreement was to update the Housing and Fair Share Plan and adopt any new ordinances regarding these updated before March 15th 2026 which is why we are here tonight.

Mrs. Caldwell stated that right now it is unclear how any settlement will work out with the Zinc Mine developers at this time.

Mrs. Caldwell went into explain the changes that were made to the House & Fair Share Plan.

Mrs. Caldwell stated that there was more that stayed the same then changed which is always a good thing when you are dealing with these kinds of plans. The biggest change was the vacant land adjustments, new units 261 the present need is 25. 208 units that could realistically happen in the town.

HMF Zone, we increased the destiny of that zone. (Hospital Redevelopment Plan) This happens a lot when a property does not get developed over many years.

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The Zinc Mine development as you know is in the courts and are currently in negotiations working with both the parties to come up with a fair compromise

If the court deems the application, they get the 23 units to the acre and that's just the law essentially. If not, then the borough will amend the development to 21 units per acre.

Which is even lower by a decent amount from the prior ordinance that was in place.

Mrs. Caldwell stated that not too much else has changed in the plan.

Mrs. Caldwell went on to explain the changes from each ordinance.

Mrs. Caldwell stated that overall, it was a good agreement with very minor changes to the plan.

Mrs. Caldwell stated that she would take any questions from the board members at this time.

Ms. Schultz asked Mrs. Caldwell to clear up some numbers that she questioned regarding units and acres.

Ms. Schultz stated she found it hard to believe that the Builders remedy did not have a problem with us lowering the numbers.

Mrs. Caldwell stated that there were no other objections from any other objections from the Zinc Mine and the affordable housing center who challenged every plan in the state.

Mr. Estes stated that he would open the meeting to the public at this point.

Not seeing anyone in the meeting room Mr. Estes closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. Estes stated at this time we will go vote on the adoption of the Master Plan Housing Element and Fair Share plan.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Estes asked for a motion to approve the resolution **Adopting Master Plan Housing Element and Fair Share Plan as written.**

Mrs. Marino made the motion seconded by **Mr. Drossel**

Upon Roll Call Vote:

AYES: **Drossel, Estes, Marino, Schultz, Sowden, Nidelko, Williams, Affinto**

NAYS: NONE

ABSTENTIONS:

Mr. Estes stated that I will ask for a motion and second for each of the following Ordinances that have been approved by the town council. Mr. Estes stated there is no reason to go through each of the ordinances.

Mrs. Caldwell explained them thoroughly during the public hearing.

The board members were all in agreement.

Mr. Estes continued with the agenda items.

Master Plan Consistency Review

Ordinance 02-2026 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REVISE AND SUPPLEMENT CHAPTER 161, ENTITLED "LANDDEVELOPMENT", MOST NOTABLY SECTION 161-33, ENTITLED "HMF- HOSPITAL MULTIFAMILY ZONE.

Mr. Estes asked for a motion to approve Ordinance 02-2026. **Mrs. Marino** made the motion seconded by **Mr. Drossel**

Upon Roll Call Vote:

AYES: **Drossel, Estes, Marino, Schultz, Sowden, Nidelko, Williams, Affinto**

NAYS: NONE ABSTENTIONS:

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Ordinance 03-2026 TO AMMEND, REVISE AND SUPPLEMENT CHAPTER 161, ENTITLED "LAND DEVELOPMENT," MOST NOTABLY SECTION 161-57, ENTITLED "AFFORDABLE HOUSING"

Mr. Estes asked for a motion to approve ordinance 03-2026.

Mr. Affinto made the motion seconded by **Ms. Schultz**

Upon Roll Call Vote:

AYES: **Drossel, Estes, Marino, Schultz, Sowden, Nidelko, Williams, Affinto**

NAYS: NONE

ABSTENTIONS:

Ordinance 04-2026 ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, COUNTY OF SUSSEX AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY ADOPTING A REDVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 390 RUTHERFORD AVENUE REDVELOPMENT AREA, PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW, N.J.S.A.40A:12A-1

Mr. Estes asked for a motion to approve the Ordinance 04-2026

Mrs. Marino made the motion seconded by **Mr. Affinto**.

Upon Roll Call Vote:

AYES: **Drossel, Estes, Marino, Schultz, Sowden, Nidelko, Williams, Affinto**

NAYS: NONE

ABSTENTIONS:

Ordinance 05-2026 ORDINANCE 05-2026 "ORDINANCE OF BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, COUNTY OF SUSSEX AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY ADOPTING AMENDED REDVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE ZINC MINE REDEVELOPMENT AREA, PRSUANT TO THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW, N.J.S.A:12A-1, et. Seq.

Mr. Estes asked for a motion to approve ordinance 05-2026

Mr. Affinto made the motion seconded by **Mr. Drossel**

Upon Roll Call Vote:

AYES: **Drossel, Estes, Marino, Sowden, Nidelko, Williams, Affinto**

NAYS: NONE

ABSTENTIONS: **Schultz**

Mr. Estes asked if there were any other questions before continuing with the agenda items.

Mr. Williams asked if he could go back to the ordinance that addresses 390 Rutherford Ave.

Mr. Williams went on to say that he sees in the report that property would allow for a building to be 4 stories in height. Mr. Williams stated he is a member of the Franklin Fire Dept and he feels that the Fire Dept would not be able to accommodate for a building four stories high. Mr. Williams went on to explain that in an emergency situation the fire dept does not have the apparatus to accommodate a fire on the fourth floor of a building. Mr. Williams stated that they would need to call mutual aide from other towns which is great but in an emergency situation a few minutes feels like a lifetime waiting for another town to come in with their ladder truck.

Mr. Estes stated that unfortunately that ordinance was already voted on and we can not go back to it.

Mr. Estes stated that he hears Mr. Williams concerns but at this time we need to move on to the rest of the agenda items.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

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NEW BUSINESS

None

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:

Mr. Estes stated that he would open the meeting to the public.

There was no public in attendance. Mr. Estes closed the meeting to the public.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Estes stated that concludes the items on the agenda and asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Drossel made the motion Seconded by **Ms. Schultz**

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 P.M