

Minutes

SPECIAL MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 29, 2025 AT 4:00P.M. OR AS SOON THEREAFTER
VIA ZOOM

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

BOROUGH CLERK: this meeting is being held in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by forwarding a Sunshine notice which included the time, date and location of this public meeting of the Mayor and Council.

ROLL CALL:

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Councilman Fitzhenry, Councilwoman Cavadas, Councilman Karcic, Councilwoman Sheedy, Councilman Del Russo, Councilwoman Bocchino

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Daniel H. Pronti, Borough Clerk, Kathleen Moore, Borough Administrator, Stephen Lo Iacono, Borough Attorney, Randy Pearce

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RESOLUTION

R-176-25 RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NORTH ARLINGTON
ENDORING THE HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN ADOPTED BY THE
NORTH ARLINGTON PLANNING BOARD

INTRODUCED BY: Councilwoman Bocchino

SECONDED BY: Councilman Del Russo

ROLL CALL: AYES: Fitzhenry, Cavadas, Karcic, Sheedy, Del Russo, Bocchino

Borough Attorney Randy Pearce: This meeting was required because Governor Murphy put us under an intensive schedule to get this done. I want to thank Lyndsay and Neglia for the incredible work that they did putting the report together. We have a compliance date of Thursday. I also want to thank Councilwoman Bocchino for making sure that Planning Board hearing went forward last as scheduled and it was approved and it was sent to us today. If anyone in the public has questions for Lyndsay she will be more than happy to answer them. We will get this thing filed for compliance. Thank you.

MOTION TO OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Fitzhenry

SECONDED BY: Councilwoman Sheedy

ROLL CALL: AYES: Fitzhenry, Cavadas, Karcic, Sheedy, Del Russo, Bocchino

Mayor Pronti: I'd like some questions asked because we need to get some clarification on these things before the nonsense questions start up on social media. Does anyone have a question

pertaining to the resolution of the council endorsing the Housing Element and Fair Share plan adopted by the North Arlington Planning Board? I see John Balwierczak is on here. John, I don't know if you have a question regarding this, but if there is any speculation, this is the time when you can ask those questions. This is the appropriate format in the forum to do so. Be noted that John Balwierczak does not have a question pertaining to this.

No one wishes to be heard.

MOTION TO CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENTS

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Del Russo

SECONDED BY: Councilman Fitzhenry

ROLL CALL: AYES: Fitzhenry, Cavadas, Karcic, Sheedy, Del Russo, Bocchino

Lyndsay Knight from Neglia: It's a quick timeline, most of the municipalities have this common question and it's why is this happening so quickly? In February 2024 the State released a new legislative on how the 4th round of Affordable Housing was going to be determined for each municipality. At this time no obligations were given out yet they just set new rules, new crediting. There is so many different ways going about regulations and achieving Affordable Housing compliance. We are going to give each municipality their obligation in October, so between February 2024 and October 2024 we are kind of sitting ducky waiting for the obligations to be released. So fast forward to October 2024 the State and DCA released the numbers of every obligation for every single municipality within the State. During this time they released your present need obligation which is considered to be the rehabilitation obligation. So the rehabilitation obligation is going to be what is already existing within the municipality. The second is going to be your prospective need obligation...

[Unanticipated/inappropriate interruption requiring redaction of content]

Lyndsay Knight from Neglia continues: It's going to be 36 units within the municipality that will be rehabilitated through some kind of major system upgrade that can be from anything like an elevator, new windows, new roof things like that. The smaller items like painting a door will not qualify for that rehabilitation credit. You have ten years to do that it will be done through the Bergen County home improvement plan. The second number your present need DCA gave North Arlington a present need of 227 units that is just where we started with DCA they gave us the calculation on how this number was achieved and that was through a three factor calculation, the first is going to be your residential, none residential valuations so all properties within the Borough that were commercial property, industrial property and the valuation that changed from the previous round to this round and that is all tax assessor records. The next piece is going to be the income factor of all the residents reported by the census. The third is the land capacity factor DCA they gave us the calculations, but in October they did not give us the mapping system that was used, so we had to wait till December 2024. They gave us the first deadline for the fourth round which was 1/31/2025 we all rushed to get our reports written, where we went through the calculations and you as the governing body had to adopt a Resolution saying if you agree or disagree with DCA calculations. Randy and I looked at the numbers and we did not agree. I did an analysis of the land that were identified for North Arlington within the Meadowlands. I represent the number of municipalities located within the Meadowlands district the State DCA said that you

cannot include that land, it's very well documented that they are not developable at this time. So we removed that from the calculations and we were able to take our number down to 197 and that's when we adopted a Resolution, we did say in the Resolution that at a later date we would be able to still have some type of adjustment, whether it was a vacant land adjustment or a durational adjustment. Between February and March that was the time the State gave the ability to challenge our report and our Resolution was challenged by the New Jersey Builder Association. Randy did a great job, we did not settle with them as many municipalities did, we continued fighting because we believed our report was accurate. In June we had to get a judgement from the Mount Laurel Judge from the County. We did not receive that till mid-June, I think it was like June 20th or around then. Since we did not receive that and the June 31st deadline to adopt a Housing Element and the Fair Share Plan was quickly approaching, we were given an extension on that deadline that's why we are here today. The first part is going to be the Housing Element which is going to be very census data heavy and this information is who is living within the Borough. The second piece is the Fair Share Plan that is where you address your obligation. We took a vacant land adjustment where we took all properties within the Borough that have been classified as vacant or public, so 1 or 15c and then we started applying the different layers that the State allows us to apply to remove those properties from the master list of developable land. When we started going through that we realized all of the properties that were vacant or public are not developable based on the constraints that the State allows us to use in this determination. So that's environmental constraints as well as, the size being able to develop enough units on those properties. After we did our vacant land adjustment we came to the determination that for the fourth round the Borough of North Arlington has a redevelopment potential of zero units since, as you are well aware, there is not developable land within the borough. So, at this time over the next 10 years, we will just have to approach the 36 present need obligation of rehabilitating 36 units.

Mayor Pronti: The 36 units was from which year?

Lyndsay Knight: That is what is located within the Borough already and anything in the next ten years. We have 36 units that we have to do some type of rehabilitation. There's an affordable housing trust fund that you can utilize for that rehabilitation, or create some type of incentive program to have those units rehabilitated.

Mayor Pronti: My question is when was it determined that there was 36, from 2nd round?

Lyndsay Knight: No, the second round had 23, 23 was the rehabilitation, whereas 36 is for the fourth round, that is part of the calculation that DCA gave us in October.

Mayor Pronti: So the original was 227, if we would have accepted that as we were recommended to do by political people from this town who said that we should have taken the 227 and do what the State told us to do, we would have been looking at 227 unit expansion in the town, correct?

Lyndsay Knight: So, typically you would multiply that by five because it's a 20% fair share is the gold standard. They like to stay away from 100% affordable projects. Because the numbers that came out in October DCA was very open and transparent about the numbers because they wanted to be an exercise where the municipalities worked with the State. There were options where you could sit down with DCA to go over your mapping. It was encouraged for you to almost check

their work. So that's why many of us planners went out looked at the work and the calculations, we were able to find discrepancies in the information.

Mayor Pronti: I want to say what a great job by yourself Lyndsay, Randy, Council and the Planning Board. I want to thank them for all of their hard work, because if we took the recommendation that some political minds were telling us to do over the past year, when they obviously don't know what they are talking about, they were making recommendation that we accept what the State offered and go about our business the way that we were told. We did the right thing and we now have 227 units that we are not responsible for. That's a great thing and I want to thank the both of you.

Councilman Karcic: Lyndsay, I just want to clarify one thing, what we are doing today is just part of the overall process of going through this and appealing and making sure that the calculations are right. This has nothing to do with any lawsuit or anything of that nature.

Lyndsay Knight: No, back in January, we started the process of what's called the program and we are trying to achieve compliance with the State to not be open to lawsuits, this is what we are doing to avoid a lawsuit.

Councilman Del Russo: I want to thank Randy and Lyndsay as well, we would have had over 1100 units in this town had we listened to these people. I thank the Planning Board as well. I concur with that.

Councilwoman Bocchino: I want to thank Luke as well; he was there last night he did a great job. That was his first Planning Board meeting and he did a great job. So tell Luke we said thanks.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT @4:25pm

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Fitzhenry

SECONDED BY: Councilwoman Sheedy

ROLL CALL: AYES: Fitzhenry, Cavadas, Karcic, Sheedy, Del Russo, Bocchino