

**MINUTES FOR BOROUGH OF RIVERTON PLANNING BOARD
OCTOBER 28, 2025**

Chairman Threston called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the salute to the flag. Chairman Threston also read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement – Public Notice of this meeting has been given in the following manner:

- a. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board and the door of the Borough Hall on January 30, 2025
- b. Having written notice published in the Burlington County Times on February 2, 2025.
- c. Forwarding written notice for informational purposes only to the Courier Post on January 30, 2025

Roll call

Mr. Aird	Present
Vice Chair Brandt	Present
Mr. Byers	Present
Mr. Della Penna	Present
Mr. Ehrenreich	present
Mr. Levins	Present
Mr. Martin	Present
Mr. Paszkiewicz	Present
Mayor Quinn	Present
Ms. Reis	Present
Mr. Ruggiano	Present
Chairman Threston	Present
Councilman Wilburn	Present

Approval of Minutes

- December 17, 2024
- June 24, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes of December 17, 2024: Mr. Martin Second: Mr. Ruggiano

Chairman Threston	Yes
Vice Chair Brant	Abstain
Mayor Quinn	Yes
Mr. Ruggiano	Yes
Mr. Wilburn	Yes
Ms. Reis	Yes
Mr. Paszkiewicz	Abstain
Mr. Martin	Yes
Mr. Della Penna	Yes
Mr. Aird	Yes
Mr. Levins	Yes
Mr. Ehrenreich	Abstain
Mr. Byers	Abstain

Motion to approve the minutes of June 24, 2025: Mr. Martin Second: Mr. Della Penna

Chairman Threston	Yes
Vice Chair Brant	Abstain
Mayor Quinn	Yes
Mr. Ruggiano	Yes
Mr. Wilburn	Yes
Ms. Reis	Yes
Mr. Paszkiewicz	Abstain
Mr. Martin	Yes
Mr. Della Penna	Yes
Mr. Aird	Yes
Mr. Levins	Yes
Mr. Ehrenreich	Abstain
Mr. Byers	Yes

2. New Business

- 401 Marthas Lane- Informal Review – The public was advised that this application was deemed incomplete and removed from agenda. Mr. Koutsouris explained that there is no mechanism to review an application under the zoning authority of the Board and if the applicant needs zoning approval a complete formal application will need to be submitted. Mr. Threston stated that for anyone who has questions the Board can address, to the extent allowed, in public comment. Mr. Koutsouris added that public comment is just that for comment and not a question and answer session, but the Board can answer questions that will not prejudice any future applications.
- Review of Ordinance No. 2025-10 for Master Plan consistency. Mr. Threston stated that the Council has been working to amend the HPC Ordinance to define their scope of review and approval. An amended ordinance was introduced by

Council last week and the Board will review that Ordinance for consistency with the Master Plan. Mr. Wilburn stated that it seems to be popular and he is not aware of anyone being unhappy with the Ordinance. Mayor Quinn added that this project has been ongoing for a while and when the HPC was originally formed they had 5 goals in mind, and this Ordinance is the embodiment of those goals.

Mr. Brandt stated that he does not think the Ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan. He added that it takes away property rights in a very serious way for two-thirds of the properties in the Borough, which under the NJ constitution when you take value away from a property owner you must compensate the property owner. Mr. Brandt added that the Master Plan says to encourage people to have stewardship over their property and there is a difference between encouraging stewardship and requiring it. Further he stated that there are no real standards in this Ordinance, and he feels it is very subjective and vague.

Mr. Koutsouris stated that the Ordinance was adopted on 1st reading by Borough Council and then it is sent to the Planning Board for review and the Board recommends whether they are in support or not in support. Mr. Koutsouris added that the Board should not delay the response to the Council. Mr. Brandt mentioned that the Board only got this Ordinance last week and he does feel there was enough time to review. Mr. Koutsouris responded that the Board can decide whether it likes certain language and recommend any changes to Council. Mr. Brandt expressed concern that this Ordinance gives the HPC teeth other than for just decisions on demolition.

Mr. Brandt went over language in the Land Use Element of the Master Plan as well as past reexaminations which encouraged improving the sense of community and family-based community and in a survey prior to the 2018 reexamination 80 percent of residents felt that the Borough should offer non mandatory advise to preserve the historic character of the Borough. He added that he thinks this will blow up in the Council's faces. He feels it is an open door and an open checkbook when you look at amount of escrow. He added that he lives on a corner lot so his whole property is visible from the sidewalk so he would need to go to HPC for anything he would do to his property and also the requirements are very subjective and will be very arbitrary from year to year. Mr. Brandt stated that this isn't a zoning issue where you are balancing the rights of property owners but rather this goes many steps beyond that based on personal opinion. Mr. Brandt feels you will have some people that will ignore the Ordinance altogether and those that do follow the Ordinance will be spending a lot of money on the HPC review when they could be using that money to actually rehabilitate the houses. He pointed to one section that even goes as far as to say even if you are a victim of arson you have to restore the house to the way it was, and this could cause people to go bankrupt trying to do that. Mr. Brandt reiterated that he does not think the Ordinance is in accordance with Master Plan. He added that the Borough has always had an Architecture Review Committee, which he feels is the

same as the HPC, and he has gone before the ARC in the past, and he has taken some suggestions but was not required to take them all.

Mr. Threston asked if it was appropriate to have the two members of the HPC that are present to speak, and Mr. Koutsouris responded that the Chair sets agenda and can have Public Comment at any time.

Mr. Aird stated he had problems with the amount of escrows and feels they may be too high. It was mention that this is not a municipality with a historic area but rather a place where houses are spread throughout the Borough that are of historic nature and from different eras, therefore, it was hard to come up with language to treat all historic homes the same. It was mentioned that the folks that were involved with putting this Ordinance together have tried their best to consider the Master Plan and goals of the Master Plan and further the Master Plan will be reviewed again in a couple of years. It was also mentioned that there are always concern that you have bad people in a position of power and sometimes we just need to have a little faith. Those representatives on the HPC would be in favor of lowering the escrows.

Mr. Brandt stated that buying one of these houses is an act of love and when you start putting these mandatory regulations in place it becomes too costly. Mr. Threston responded that one of the concerns is that if these places are not upkeep the Borough will lose them to demolition. He added that it is a tricky balance and this is an attempt to get to that balance. He further stated that this Ordinance can be amended or deleted if it is too stringent or doesn't work.

Mr. Koutsouris explained that this Ordinance was introduced by the Borough Council on 1st reading and it will go back for 2nd reading and if there is a substantial change between 1st and 2nd reading the Ordinance would need to be amended prior to 2nd reading. If the Board feels they need more time the Borough Council can't be forced to give the Board more time but hopefully they could table the Ordinance to allow more time for the Planning Board to review. He added that the Planning Board also has the right, with 10 days' notice, to have a special meeting to consider before the next Council meeting.

Mayor Quinn stated that there are three classes of members for the HPC and the makeup of the body is very deliberate to ensure a body with the skill sets to make these decisions, for example one member must be an architect. Mr. Brandt does not believe there is a requirement for an architect, but even if that is the case it is still subjective. The make up of the Committee was discussed further.

Mr. Martin stated that the Master Plan is the consensus of the town, and he thinks the people that will administer this Ordinance will be fair. He agrees with the escrow requirements, and he added that the majority felt they do not want these historic homes to be demolished. He added that residents can appeal as well and he is not against amending the Ordinance if necessary.

Mr. Aird is also on the HPC and does agree that the escrows seem a little high and the same on application fees. Mr. Aird added that residents can present to the HPC Chair and that person can approve minor things without the need to come in front of the full board. He further added that the reason for this Ordinance is that currently there are no controls over new construction or flippers that come in and can do whatever they want, and they don't have to take the HPC recommendations. Mr. Aird stated that this Ordinance is far less restrictive than other towns and presently the HPC is not trying to control everything, just trying to keep the historic nature of the houses.

Mr. Koutsouris wondered why the fees are in the Ordinance and not in the Borough's annually adopted fee ordinance. He added that if the fees were in the fee schedule you would not need to redo this Ordinance every time you want to change fees, which could be done year to year by Borough Council.

Motion to open public comment on this Ordinance made by Mr. Martin and seconded by Mr. Aird. All were in favor. Motion carried and public comment was opened on this Ordinance only.

Mr. Feinstein, HPC member and 211 Linden Ave, stated that he is a Class C member of the HPC and he shares the concern about arbitrary decisions being made in the future when these members are no longer around.

Mr. Augustyn, 624 Elm Terrace, stated that he was part of the initial advisory group that worked to develop this Ordinance as far as to how to quantify the demolition and he feels this is really a good discussion.

Mr. Kerney, 311 Bank St., stated that he was also on the initial advisory committee and the discussion was how to prevent houses from going into disrepair. He indicated that there is a \$25000 loan available from the County for this purpose and it only needs to be paid back when the house is sold. He added that he agrees about the amount required for escrow because this money is for lawyers and professionals and that is not what they wanted. Mr. Kerney went over some properties that came before the HPD and how well it worked, and he added that with new construction this is important keeping flippers from coming in and doing whatever they want. Mayor Quinn commented on how well the first property Mr. Kerney mentioned turned out and added that when they came in and wanted to do a lot more and the HPC recommendations kept it in form. Mr. Kerney stated that he is not for the Ordinance as written.

Mr. Augustyn commented that the \$25,000 loan mentioned earlier is part of the CDBG and is for income qualified individuals to make improvements to their homes. Mr. Threston clarified that this applies if a person owns and lives in the home and it would not be available to a developer. He added there is money in the spending plan for rehab housing that can also be used.

Mr. Koutsouris asked if the HPC has professionals and if not, what is the escrow for. It was discussed that while the HPC does not have any professionals they can hire people to cross check whether a house can be saved or for major projects they can hire an architect or if another type of professional is needed the money is available. Mr. Koutsouris stated that if not used this money would be refunded to the applicant.

Motion made by Mr. Ruggiano and seconded by Mr. Della Penna to close public comment on this Ordinance. All were in favor. Motion carried and public comment on the Ordinance was closed.

Mr. Brandt asked if it is appropriate for a Planning Board member to go in front of the Council and make comments on this Ordinance and Mr. Koutsouris responded that as a resident in the Township you have a right to speak at public hearings.

Mr. Threston stated that there were a lot of comments about escrow and at a minimum there should be a recommendation to change the language regarding escrow in section 146-2 paragraphs C on page 15. Mr. Koutsouris stated that they could recommend it be changed to read "in an amount to be determined by the governing body in the boroughs fee schedule" and this recommendation could be put it in a resolution. Mr. Brandt would like to see a provision for the Chair to be able to waive the escrow if the applications warrant it based on the project. Mayor Quinn stated that the HPC has the ability to make those decisions for minor issues. Mr. Koutsouris suggested recommending that there is language to "grant the authority to the HPC Chair to waive the escrow or reinstate the escrow where deemed necessary".

Mr. Brandt made a motion seconded by Mr. Ruggiano to recommend that the Ordinance is not in accordance with the Master Plan.

Roll call vote:

Chairman Threston	No
Vice Chair Brant	Yes
Mayor Quinn	Abstain
Mr. Ruggiano	Yes
Mr. Wilburn	Abstain
Ms. Reis	No
Mr. Paszkiewicz	Yes
Mr. Martin	No

Mr. Della Penna	No
Mr. Aird	No
Mr. Levins	No
Mr. Ehrenreich	Yes
Mr. Byers	No

Motion failed (4,7,2)

Motion made by Mr. Aird and seconded by Mr. Martin to recommend that the Ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan with the suggested recommendations made regarding escrow:

Chairman Threston	Yes
Vice Chair Brant	No
Mayor Quinn	Abstain
Mr. Ruggiano	No
Mr. Wilburn	Abstain
Ms. Reis	Yes
Mr. Paszkiewicz	No
Mr. Martin	Yes
Mr. Della Penna	Yes
Mr. Aird	Yes
Mr. Levins	Yes
Mr. Ehrenreich	No
Mr. Byers	Yes

Motion passes: (7,4,2)

3. Old Business

None

4. Reports

- a. Chairman – Mr. Threston stated that the Board should plan to meet next month and in December to get whatever Ordinances in front of Council and to get our

reports done. Mr. Koutsouris would like to meet with Chairman Threston, Vice-Chair Brandt and Mr. Aird as the Ordinance Committee.

- b. Council liaison – Mr. Wilburn reported that the Ordinance discussed tonight would be on for 2nd reading at the next Borough Council meeting and he encourages everyone to read it is online and check your location to see if you are in the district. He also mentioned that the Parking Ordinance will be on for 1st reading to clarify some definitions and an Ordinance regarding grass to regulate the height of grass and set some guidelines for plantings in the curb strip.
- c. HPC – Mr. Aird reported on the applications that were heard. He added they are still looking for a secretary and on procedures for the flow of applications and whether someone needs to come to the HPC. Mr. Koutsouris asked if the owner of 804 Main St. had a construction permit to demo 804 Main St. and Mr. Aird responded that they testified that they purchased the property with the garage there but when they came back it was gone. Mr. Koutsouris asked if there was a cross check with construction and zoning for properties that fall in the HPC jurisdiction and Mr. Ruggiano responded that permits are not released without HPC approval.
- d. Minor Site Plans – Mr. Ruggiano reported that 401 Martha would need to amend their application and come back to the Board. He reported that there is another application that was put on hold that is ready to come back to the Board for a dental office on Broad Street.

Mr. Martin asked about the Riverton Country Club and the fence issue and Mr. Ruggiano stated that he issued a permit for a fence but after consultation with the Township Solicitor and Planning Board Solicitor the permit was revoked. He added that they are in the process of making an application to appear before the Planning Board and they will also have to go to the HPC as well. There was further discussion that they were supposed to come to the HPC in August by did not. Mr. Ruggiano responded hopefully they will get their submission in for November.

5. Correspondence - None

- 6. Public Comment – Mr. Aird made a motion seconded by Mr. Ruggiano to open the public comment portion of the meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried and public comment was opened.

Mr. Kerney, 311 Bank Ave, stated that any comments he made earlier were not meant to be disrespectful.

Mr. Augustyn, 634 Elm terrace, recommended that when they do submit the application for the fence to make sure what their intention is for the fence, for example is it storage and if not allowed in the P zone they would be required to get a use variance.

Mr. Augustyn stated that Mr. Ruggiano has been staying on top of 401 Marthas Lane and he thanks Mr. Ruggiano and the Board for staying on top of this issue. He added that

when they do appear the Board should refer to the previous approvals and if they are storing over 40 trucks/trailers it is a truck operation and trailer storage and that would require a use variance.

Mr. Koutsouris reported that for the Riverton Country Club fence issue there was an appeal of Mr. Ruggiano's decision to issue of a permit and after review of the appeal the decision to issue the permit was reversed because the property has two frontages. Mr. Koutsouris added that it is not Mr. Ruggiano's job to determine what they are going to do with the fence or behind the fence.

Motion made by Mr. Ruggiano and seconded by Mr. Martin to close public comment. All were in favor. Motion carried and the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

7. Adjourn – Mr. Ruggiano made a motion seconded by Mr. Martin to adjourn. All were in favor. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 9: 10 PM.

Respectfully submitted



Patricia Clayton
Planning Board Secretary
Approved: