

**BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 25, 2025
Adopted August 19, 2025**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Vescio called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT ANNOUNCEMENT

Chairman Vescio read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Vescio lead the Flag Salute.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Moench	Absent	Mr. Banga	Absent
Councilman Kirsh	Present	Ms. Sikora	Present
Mr. Pappas	Present	Mr. Choudhury	Present
Mr. Magura	Present	Mr. Atkins	Absent
Chairman Vescio	Present	Ms. Chartowich	Absent
Mr. Wang	Present		

Mr. Pappas joined the meeting at 7:19pm, and Ms. Sikora joined the meeting at 7:30pm.
Others present: Mr. Mark Peck, Board Attorney, Ms. Katherine Sarmad, Board Planner, Ms. Darlene Green & Land Use Office Specialist Maria DeSimone.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Vescio opened the meeting to the public. There were no public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

APPLICATIONS

None

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

Election of Board Officers – Acting Board Secretary

Chairman Vescio called for nominations. Mr. Choudhury nominated Mr. Magura as Acting Secretary and Councilman Kirsh seconded the nomination. With there being no further nominations, this portion was closed.

The Board voted to appoint Mr. Magura as Acting Secretary of the Board based on the following roll call vote:

Aye:	Councilman Kirsch, Mr. Wang, Mr. Magura, Mr. Choudhury, and Chairman Vescio
Nay:	None
Abstain:	None
Not Eligible:	None
Absent:	Mayor Moench, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Banga, Ms. Sikora, Ms. Chartowich, and Mr. Atkins

Adoption of the Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan of the Master Plan

Ms. Darlene Green was introduced, and Mr. Peck swore her in. Ms. Green gave a brief history of how the Affordable Housing came about and the reason the Planning Board members are here today. The board members had questions regarding the reason for the deadline. Ms. Green explained the reasons for the deadlines and why it was not beneficial to go beyond this deadline.

Ms. Green then went on and explained the previously circulated report for the Hosing Element and Fair Share Plan. Ms. Green went over the capacity in the Township for affordable housing development.

Councilman Kirsh asked for clarification regarding utilities. Ms. Green stated that it is the ability to access water and sewer. Ms. Green stated Councilman Kirsh's concerns were valid and the Township should have a meeting with their sewer utility.

Ms. Green moved on to a section of the report that explains the income limits for affordable housing units, having both an income floor and an income ceiling. Ms. Green went on to explain the micro requirements which place the affordable housing units into a specific category. Ms. Green also went over the credits that the township received during this round.

Ms. Green went on to discuss the micro requirements which are calculated differently in each round. These would be categories such as rentals, sales, families, and age restricted. Ms. Green noted that these micro requirements help give the Township credit to satisfy the it's obligation. Ms. Green commended Bridgewater Township that because of the credits they have come far beyond their obligation, further than most other municipalities.

Ms. Green went on to discuss in more detail the developments which are proposed to construct affordable housing in Bridgewater Township, mentioning the credits that each development brings to the Township.

Councilman Kirsh expressed concern for the need for housing for veterans, and felt good that Bridgewater is able to provide this for our disabled and veterans.

Ms. Green continued to explain the developments, both 100% affordable and inclusionary, and the credits they generate. Ms. Green went on to explain that there were many developers that approached the township, and with careful thought and consideration, chose those developers that would best serve the needs of the Township of Bridgewater. Ms. Green explained some of the proposals which are included in the report, and the reasons they were beneficial.

Ms. Green went over the summary of the mechanisms and credits for the proposed developments, as well as the implementation schedule. Ms. Green went on to summarize the presentation by stating that this is the most effective and efficient plan to meet state obligations.

Chairman Vescio thanked Ms. Green for the highly informative and thorough presentation.

Councilman Kirsh went on to comment that there will be change. It may not be what we want but it is the least amount of change possible.

Ms. Green received further gratitude from the board members for the thorough presentation and for all her hard work.

Mr. Choudhury asked about the number of units to be built in one of the developments. Ms. Green clarified that it would be part of the third round and fourth round.

Mr. Choudhury asked about the income size limits and asked if a homeowner could convert their home into affordable housing. Ms. Green stated they may, but they would deflate their profit excessively.

Councilman Kirsh asked if they had more than their obligation, then could they scale back the Affordable Housing. Ms. Green stated it depends on how far we are in the process, whether we could make an amendment.

Councilman Kirsh mentioned a potential legislation permitting office buildings deemed insufficiently rented or populated would allow those properties to be converted to residential use. Councilman Kirsh's concern is that Bridgewater Township has a sizable amount of office building which are part of our rateables base. Ms. Green stated it violates both the Master Plan and violates the Township's Zoning Ordinance. That is a threat and encourages the governing body to stay on top of that bill.

Councilman Kirsh also stated that the plan presented is the best plan possible and could prevent something worse from happening. Councilman Kirsh asked if other towns are in extremely bad shape. Ms. Green went on to give some examples of some horrible situations in towns trying to meet the deadline.

Ms. Sikora asked if the developer had come to the board, would it be possible to deny the application. Ms. Green stated there should be an exceptionally good reason. Ms. Sikora gave a scenario, what if they came to the board with something different than proposed. Ms. Green stated they may make small adjustments but should not stray far from the plan.

Questions of the Public

Mary Gallagher – 102 Highland Avenue

Ms. Gallagher thanked Ms. Green for her wonderful explanation as it has enlightened her to Affordable Housing. Ms. Gallagher is concerned about if the developments will be safe and if the DEP will be involved.

Mr. Peck stated that the developments are not exempt from Environmental restrictions, storm water, and such state requirements.

With no further public, Chairman Vescio closed the public portion of the meeting.

Mr. Pappas wanted to thank Darlene Green and Katherine Sarmad for their wonderful job, as well as their predecessors.

The board members gave their comments on the current plan presented and on Affordable Housing in general, and thanked Ms. Green for her hard work and for creating a report that was thorough and easy to read.

On motion by Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Ms. Sikora, the Board voted to adopt the 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan of the Master Plan based on the following roll call vote.

Roll call vote:

Aye:	Councilman Kirsch, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Magura, Mr. Choudhury, Mr. Wang, Ms. Sikora, & Chairman Vescio
Nay:	None
Abstain:	None
Not Eligible:	None
Absent:	Mayor Moench, Mr. Banga, Ms. Chartowich, and Mr. Atkins

On motion by Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Mr. Choudhury, the Board voted to adopt the resolution of the 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share plan of the Master Plan based on the following roll call vote.

Roll call vote:

Aye:	Councilman Kirsch, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Magura, Mr. Choudhury, Mr. Wang, Ms. Sikora, & Chairman Vescio
Nay:	None
Abstain:	None
Not Eligible:	None
Absent:	Mayor Moench, Mr. Banga, Ms. Chartowich, and Mr. Atkins

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURN

On motion by Ms. Sikora, second by Councilman Kirsh, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Maria DeSimone
Land Use Office Specialist