

**NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP RENT LEVELING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
September 3, 2026**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approving the Minutes of September 3, 2026 Meeting:

Offered by:	<u>Mr. Thomas</u>	Seconded by:	<u>Ms. Conyers</u>
Wendel	Naomi	James	Eileen
			Teresa
Vote:	Thomas <u>YAY</u>	Riley <u>Absent</u>	Manning <u>YAY</u>
			Conyers <u>YAY</u>
			Bell <u>Absent</u>

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX:

In July, the Consumer Price Index stood at 361.189, which was a increase of a point one percent (0.1%) over the month, and an increase of three-point four percent (3.4%) over the year.

VACANCY DECONTROL

Nothing to report

DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

Mr. Lotosky: gave a brief synopsis of his hardship. He is looking to break even so the roof, furnace, etc. could be covered if something came up. The number was below the operating costs.

Ms. Mary Thomas-Ridgway of 145 Main Ave, apt 2: spoke about the estimates of the landlord expenses.

Mr. Lotosky: explained the labor costs and other expenses for replacements of parts in the building pests control, air, electrical, plumbing, \$3,500. Management fees, \$50.00 a month, are very minimal.

Ms. Ridgway's apartment is \$750, very minimal. If the refrigerator breaks, then it would have to be increased. The gas expenses have gone up 15-10%. The town has a land lease \$3,600 a year.

Jennifer Laker 145 Main Ave apt 5: asked Mr. Lotosky about rent control. Did the previous owner have a hardship prior to purchasing the building?

Mr. Lotosky: replied that has the ability to convert to condos.

Ms. Laker: asks why did you send an increase back in May and now this is happening?

Mr. Lotosky: replied that he needed to file an appeal. It was delayed due to paperwork.

Ms. Laker: stated that her lease ended in February 2026. She had been asking for a month before that she needed a lease. Paying month-to-month. Why haven't gotten a lease?

Mr. Lotosky: replied NJ states after one year, don't have to offer a lease. If you don't sign a lease, it becomes month-to-month basis. Given the tenant's flexibility don't have to offer a one-year lease. It's beneficial for the tenant to go month-to-month.

Ms. Laker: state4d that she was told that she would have the lease by February.

Mr. Lotosky: stated it was a rent increase letter at the time.

Ms. Laker: asked why are you making the rent for market rate? Building hasn't been renovated.

Mr. Lotosky: replied that he pulled the rent increase letter back and filed a hardship with the Rent Leveling Board. The cost of what you are getting for the rent, you wouldn't go anywhere else.

Mr. Manning: asked currently there are 9 apartments? Are all occupied right now? Or is there one that's vacant?

Mr. Lotosky: replied that one is in there in market rate

Mr. Manning: asked have are all 9 that are occupied?

Mr. Manning: asked have you signed a lease?

Mr. Manning: asked are all tenants are month-to-month?

Mr. Manning asked do you have to have yearly leases in order to hear the complaints against the landlord for a hardship case. Is it signed by the prior buyer?

Don Dinsmore: replied that if you are there month-to-month, there is a standing. It can be based on the prior lease.

Ms. Riley: asked if you're going based on a previous lease and if the tenants are month-to-month? What has priority, the previous lease or month-to-month? You can't base it on a lease that isn't signed by him.

Mr. Manning: stated you could have increased the rent back in February based on our ordinance like a 3% increase.

Ms. Riley: asked does the lease expire? If the original lease expires, does it go month-to-month?

Mr. Lotosky: mentioned apartments in town go for \$2,450. Tax increase for the town went up \$5,000.

Mr. Manning: stated you didn't phase it in a period of time. The answer is no.

Mr. Lotosky: stated paying minimal with no utilities included.

Mr. Manning: asked would you consider getting a fair return?

Mr. Manning: stated last time we found documentation, they showed 1,4,7 one bedroom. Unit 3, 350 square feet. 5,6,7,8 and 9, 350 square feet studios.

Mr. Lotosky: mentioned I don't know where they got their numbers.

Mr. Dinsmore: stated you are testifying not only in support in your application, but your complaint as well. Exhibit A was entered.

Mr. Manning: stated earlier you mentioned that the real estate taxes are going up. How much?

Mr. Lotosky: replied a little over \$20,000.

Mr. Manning: stated the taxes \$17,443, 2025 \$19,159 taxes this year.

Mr. Dinsmore: asked does everyone else here speak and have a complaint?

Ryan Dolton 145 Main Ave, Apt 1: Filed a tenant complaint. Mr. Dolton stated that there are four separate windows that are leaking and two garbage cans are falling apart.

Mr. Lotosky: asked have you notified anyone about the windows?

Mr. Dolton: replied both myself and the tenant in unit 4 weren't aware of unit 1. Take a look at it.

Mr. Dolton: stated he is opposed to the rent increase. 30% increase is a little steep.

Mr. Manning: asked what in your opinion would be a fair increase?

Mr. Dolton: replied more of a step program over 1-3 years will be much more powerful.

Doug McCredy 145 Main Ave, unit 6: stated that he is opposed to the rent increase. Studio apartment less than 250 Square feet raising it \$550, is outrageous. Some kind of compromise is in order.

Ms. Laker 145 Main Ave Apt 5: stated regarding getting a lease in February going back and forth with Shannon.

Ms. Laker: stated that the landlord retracted the letter of rent increase. No contact. Cut off from communication. Locked herself out of her apartment. Told that the hardship application was already approved. Need to be near where she works. Can't pull \$550 out of the air. It's not 450 square feet, maybe 250 square feet. Not worth \$1,550. No laundry services. One apartment that has been renovated. No repaint. Landlord didn't expect pushback.

Exhibit C through E submitted. Lease information and a letter from Ms. Laker's lawyer.

Mr. Lotosky: stated the landlord originally sent out the lease and retracted the lease rental increase. He had to go and find out how this all worked.

Mr. Dinsmore: asked is there a question?

Mr. Lotosky: replied don't really have a question?

Ms. Bell: You said you locked yourself out of the apartment?

Ms. Laker: replied, yes.

Ms. Bell: asked were you the current landlord?

Mr. Lotosky: replied, yes

Ms. Bell: asked is there an emergency procedure if they locked themselves out?

Mr. Lotosky: replied there is a phone number to call. If it's after hours another person will handle that.

Ms. Conyers: asked you wanted to receive a lease? How much is the increase? How much would the rent be?

The first time, \$334. Now \$550.

Ms. Bell: asked when it comes down to a tenant having to come out of their pocket, have you discussed reimbursement?

Ms. Conyers: asked would you be able to give her the original increase?

Mr. Lotosky: replied, no. When we sent it out, we were trying to figure it out.

Mr. Dinsmore: Introduced Jennifer Lake's Exhibit B, Exhibit C (text exchange), Exhibit D (lawyer letter), Exhibit E (notice to quit possession).

Ms. Thomas Ridway: stated that the first page is the rental increase for September the landlord sent. 228 square feet measured apartment. Opposed to the Rent Increase. Has not been able to get clean figures.

Mr. Manning: stated your rent is \$750 a month. Do you pay a separate fee for anything else? Adding \$350 a month for the air conditioning, do you pay separate ground fee?

Ms. Riley: asked if your unit is a studio?

Mr. Dinsmore: mentioned you created graphs with Exhibit B that was submitted. Just wanted to make sure where the graph came from.

Faith Ann Lawrence, 145 Main Ave Apt 9: stated that her last lease with the former landlord was \$40, \$575 with the new landlord. Haven't seen any improvements. 50% increase.

Mr. Lotosky: stated I know what your past lease was. I really don't have any questions.

Mr. Thomas: asked what size is your apartment?

Ms. Lawrence: replied not sure. Doesn't state anywhere.

Ms. Manning: mentioned the fair net operating income. How is it a fair increase?

Mr. Dinsmore: announced closing statements will be 2 minutes with whoever would like to give a statement.

Mr. Lotosky: stated I understand how difficult it is for the tenants. It is also different for me. The increases are on the low side and they are not unreasonable.

Mr. Dismore: asked if anyone wants to take 2 minutes to come up?

Ms. Thomas-Ridway: stated he's an experienced businessman but did not do his due diligence on the sale. He threatened to convert our apartments into condos. We have rights. I hope you can help us keep our homes.

Ms. Laker: stated thank you to everyone for letting the tenants speak. The paperwork was a three-week difference. This is my home, my life and as an essential worker, I need to be close to home, close to my job, close to train. It's a case of buyer's remorse.

Mr. Dinsmore: announced end of the proceedings

Mr. Thomas: announced at this time, I will request a closed meeting along with the board secretary and the attorney. Made a motion to have executive session.

Mr. Dinsmore: mentioned on the next meeting notice that will be conducting close session.

Mr. Thomas: stated we will go into closed session to deliberate. Make a motion to go into closed session Ms. Bell Seconded.

Mr. Thomas: Yay

Ms. Riley: Yay

Mr. Manning: Nay

Ms. Conyers: Nay

Ms. Bell: Nay

No to closed session.

Mr. Thomas: stated we have to decide whether a hardship application has been met.

Ms. Riley: asked, in light of so much documentation, how do we make a determination?

Mr. Manning: stated we had the testimony. It's up to us to judge that testimony that the landlord presented and for us to come to a determination. The landlord showed the cost to operate the building vs the rent that's being charge, there's a big gap. I feel uncomfortable awarding the landlord of 100% of what he is asking. The CPI has been roughly 3% that's the current rent increase. 30% 40% rent increase isn't good. I propose a 10% increase for a year.

Mr. Thomas: mentioned the size of the apartments really concerns me. That these mention was made of comparable rents. How many other apartment complexes are under 350 square feet even for a studio? One of the other complaints that was made is that the investor came into knowing the numbers and based upon the appraisal of the expenses the mortgage was given based on the property. I find the increases are way out of line. My view on are we on the hardship application are we doing a yes to the hardship application or going in between?

Mr. Dinsmore: In section 430.4G in the ordinance 340.4 H. – Talks about granting the application. Succeeds or fails. It asks for a determination on the actual application you brought forward.

Ms. Bell: asked did we confirm that the operating cost was under the 40%

Mr. Thomas: replied, yes.

Mr. Manning: stated yes, I think there's a hardship, but I don't agree with the property increase. I see a need to increase their rent based on how under market they are.

Ms. Bell: stated we don't want a homeless population because of the high increase. We don't know what the tenants income may or may not be. We are not trying to unhouse anyone. We can't increase to the point to where we are putting them out of a house.

Ms. Riley: stated that how do we know he's not going to go the other option. Either rent increase or turn it into condos. Ither way, there's going to be a hardship on them.

Mr. Dinsmore: read from the Rent Leveling Board's ordinance section 40.4F.

Ms. Riley: asked how does it prorate?

Mr. Manning: I make a motion that we say yes that there is a hardship by the landlord, and we propose that a 10% increase except for unit #4.

Mr. Thomas: I will strike the part about how much it will increase. Let's just vote yes or no regarding the hardship.

Mr. Manning: I make a motion, yes that meets the burden of a hardship.

Ms. Bell: Seconded

Mr. Thomas: Yay

Ms. Riley: Abstain

Mr. Manning: Yay

Ms. Bell: Yay

Mr. Dinsmore: stated this was a vote for a hardship complaint and the conflicting complaints entered by the tenants.

Mr. Manning: I like to make a motion based on application had before us and the testimony received from the landlord and the tenants, that we award a 10% rent increase to 8 apartments and unit #4 will not get one.

Mr. Thomas: The increase will be from the current rent as per Exhibit A and you're proposing 10%.

Ms. Bell: 10%

Ms. Riley: Abstain

Mr. Thomas: propose 15%

Mr. Manning: I have a motion on the floor for the 10%.

Mr. Thomas: stated let's vote

Mr. Manning: made a motion for the 10% based on Exhibit A.

Mr. Thomas: Seconded

Mr. Thomas: Nay

Ms. Riley: Abstain

Mr. Manning: Yay

Ms. Conyers: Yay

Ms. Bell: Yay

10% Percent increase has been voted on.

Mr. Dinsmore: stated that procedurally there has to be a notice to go to the Landlord and tenants.

Mr. Lotosky: stated that because that number is still under zero and not between zero and 40%, it will still be a hardship case. It still meets the criteria of a hardship.

Mr. Thomas: stated that all deliberations have ended, and we are going to publish the decision there has been a decision about the rent increase.

Mr. Manning: asked do we memorialize the decision at the next meeting?

Mr. Dinsmore: stated, yes.

NEW BUSINESS

Neptune Day – Saturday, September 12, 2026, 12pm – 5pm

Ms. Riley: 12pm arrival

Mr. Thomas: 1pm – 2pm

Mr. Manning - Stop by and fill in.

Ms. Conyers: 1pm arrival

Ms. Bell – All Day

Ms. Perpignan – Set up and break down

Ms. Bell: mentioned if any of the tenants are currently experiencing any arrears with their rent at this time, the Affordable Housing Alliance are accepting applications for rental arrears right now up until the 8th. If assistance is needed, it is available.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Mary Thomas Ridway: mentioned she would like clarification. Do you know when the 10% increase will take effect.

Mr. Thomas: stated that it will be for a year. Next meeting will rectify the resolution

Mr. Manning: stated it might be November 1st Our attorney will prepare the resolution. Potentially it will be November 1st.

Mr. Thomas: asked if there are any more comments from the public

Mr. Lotosky: stated that he would have to refile his hardship because of the increase of 10% is way under in the hardship numbers. Based on the fact I have to reapply. I was told if I meet that requirement, that I would at least be in that bracket. I'm still really in a hardship based on these numbers.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thomas: asked who wants to make a motion to close the meeting

Ms. Bell made a motion to close the meeting.

Mr. Manning seconded it.

All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:44pm

Offered by:	<u>Ms. Bell</u>	Seconded by:	<u>Mr. Manning</u>								
Wendel	Naomi	James	Eileen	Teresa							
<i>Vote:</i> Thomas	<u>YAY</u>	Riley	<u>YAY</u>	Manning	<u>YAY</u>	Eileen	<u>YAY</u>	Conyers	<u>YAY</u>	Bell	<u>YAY</u>

Time Meeting Adjourned: 9:44 p.m.

April Perpignan
Secretary