

**ORDINANCE 2024-13  
BOROUGH OF SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS  
COUNTY OF MONMOUTH**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE  
BOROUGH OF SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH,  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ESTABLISHING THE BOROUGH'S  
DEVELOPMENT FEE ORDINANCE**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Spring Lake Heights has a constitutional obligation to provide for its fair share of affordable housing pursuant to the *Mt. Laurel* doctrine established by the New Jersey Supreme Court; and

**WHEREAS**, a property owner commenced *Mt. Laurel* builder's remedy litigation against the Borough docketed at MON-L-0031-21, which was subsequently consolidated with a declaratory judgment action commenced by the Borough captioned In the Matter of the Application of the Borough of Spring Lake Heights, Docket No. MON-L-1916-21, in an effort to establish the Borough's Prior Round and Third Round affordable housing obligation and the mechanisms by which the Borough may meet its constitutional obligation (the "Borough's Declaratory Judgment Action"); and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough entered into a Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center on March 4, 2024 (the "Fair Share Settlement Agreement") which established its affordable housing obligation from 1987-2025 which established a Realistic Development Potential of 17 affordable housing units and an unmet need of 221 affordable housing units and the Court entered an Order on July 11, 2024 approving the Fair Share Settlement Agreement and requiring the Borough to implement the zoning mechanism set forth in the Fair Share Settlement Agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fair Share Settlement Agreement requires the Borough to adopt a development fee ordinance, and the Borough Council believes it is in the best interest of the Borough to comply with the Court Order approving the Settlement Agreement in order to further satisfy its constitutional obligation to provide for its fair share of affordable housing and to avoid builder's remedy litigation.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Spring Lake Heights in the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey that the Borough's Land Development Ordinance at Chapter 22, Article VI Zoning Regulations, a new Section 650-8 entitled "Development Fee Ordinance" is hereby created as follows:

**Section 650-8 Development Fees**

**SECTION 1. Purpose:**

a) In Holmdel Builder's Association V. Holmdel Township, 121 N.J. 550 (1990), the New Jersey Supreme Court determined that mandatory development fees are authorized by the Fair Housing Act of 1985 (the Act), N.J.S.A. 52:27d-301 et seq., and the State Constitution, subject to the Council on Affordable Housing's (COAH's) adoption of rules.

b) Pursuant to P.L.2008, c.46 section 8 (C. 52:27D-329.2) and the Statewide Non-Residential Development Fee Act (C. 40:55D-8.1 through 8.7), COAH is authorized to adopt and

promulgate regulations necessary for the establishment, implementation, review, monitoring and enforcement of municipal affordable housing trust funds and corresponding spending plans. Municipalities that are under the jurisdiction of the Council or court of competent jurisdiction and have a COAH or court approved spending plan may retain fees collected from non-residential development.

c) In Re: Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 and 5:97 by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing, 221 N.J. 1 (2015), also known as the Mount Laurel IV decision, the Supreme Court remanded COAH's duties to the Superior Court. As a result, affordable housing development fee collections and expenditures from the municipal affordable housing trust funds to implement municipal Third Round Fair Share Plans through July 1, 2025, are under the Court's jurisdiction and are subject to approval by the Court.

d) This ordinance establishes standards for the collection, maintenance, and expenditure of development fees pursuant to COAH's regulations and in accordance P.L.2008, c.46, Sections 8 and 32-38. Fees collected pursuant to this ordinance shall be used for the sole purpose of providing low- and moderate-income housing. This ordinance shall be interpreted within the framework of COAH's rules on development fees, codified at N.J.A.C. 5:97-8.

## **Section II-Definitions**

- a) The following terms, as used in this ordinance, shall have the following meanings:
- i. **"Affordable housing development"** means a development included in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and includes, but is not limited to, an inclusionary development, a municipal construction project or a 100 percent affordable development.
  - ii. **"COAH"** or the **"Council"** means the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing established under the Fair Housing Act.
  - iii. **"Development fee"** means money paid by a developer for the improvement of property as authorized by Holmdel Builder's Association v. Holmdel Borough, 121 N.J. 550 (1990) and the Fair Housing Act of 1985, N.J.S.A. 52:27d-301, *et seq.*, and the NJ Statewide Non-Residential Development Fee Act, P.L. 2008, c. 46 (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-8.1 *et seq.*), regulated by applicable COAH regulations.
  - iv. **"Developer"** means the legal or beneficial owner or owners of a lot or of any land proposed to be included in a proposed development, including the holder of an option or contract to purchase, or other person having an enforceable proprietary interest in such land.
  - v. **"Equalized assessed value"** means the assessed value of a property divided by the current average ratio of assessed to true value for the municipality in which the property is situated, as determined in accordance with sections 1, 5, and 6 of P.L.1973, c.123 (C.54:1-35a through C.54:1-35c).
  - vi. **"Green building strategies"** means those strategies that minimize the impact of development on the environment, and enhance the health, safety and well-being of residents by producing durable, low-maintenance, resource-efficient housing while making optimum use of existing infrastructure and community services.

### **SECTION III. Residential Development Fees:**

- a) Imposed Fees
  - i. Within the residential district(s), residential developers, except for developers of the types of development specifically exempted below, shall pay a fee of one and one-half percent (1.5%) of the equalized assessed value for residential development provided no increased density is permitted.
  - ii. When an increase in residential density pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d(5) (known as a “d” variance) has been permitted, developers shall be required to pay a development fee of six percent (6%) of the equalized assessed value for each additional unit that may be realized. However, if the zoning on a site has changed during the two-year period preceding the filing of such a variance application, the base density for the purposes of calculating the bonus development fee shall be the highest density permitted by right during the two-year period preceding the filing of the variance application.
- b) Eligible exactions, ineligible exactions and exemptions for residential development
  - i. Affordable housing developments, developments where the developer is providing for the construction of affordable units elsewhere in the municipality, and developments where the developer has made a payment in lieu of on-site construction of affordable units shall be exempt from development fees.
  - ii. Developments that have received preliminary or final site plan approval prior to the adoption of a municipal development fee ordinance shall be exempt from development fees, unless the developer seeks a substantial change in the approval. Where a site plan approval does not apply, a zoning and/or building permit shall be synonymous with preliminary or final site plan approval for this purpose. The fee percentage shall be vested on the date that the building permit is issued.
  - iii. Owner-occupied residential structures demolished and replaced as a result of a fire, flood, or natural disaster shall be exempt from paying a development fee.
  - iv. Development fees shall be imposed and collected when an existing structure undergoes a change to a more intense use, is demolished and replaced, or is expanded, if the expansion is not otherwise exempt from the development fee requirement. The development fee shall be calculated on the increase in the equalized assessed value of the improved structure.
  - v. Developers of one or two family owner occupied dwelling units and green buildings shall be subject to a reduced fee of fifty percent (50%).
  - vi. Nonprofit organizations which have received tax exempt status pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, providing current evidence of that status is submitted to the municipal clerk, together with a certification that services of the organization are provided at reduced rates to those who establish an inability to pay existing charges, shall be exempted from paying a development fee.

- vii. Federal, state, county and local governments shall be exempted from paying a development fee.

#### **SECTION IV. Non-Residential Development Fees**

- a) Imposed fees
  - i. Within all zoning districts, non-residential developers, except for developers of the types of development specifically exempted, shall pay a fee equal to two and one-half percent (2.5%) of the equalized assessed value of the land and improvements, for all new non-residential construction on an unimproved lot or lots.
  - ii. Non-residential developers, except for developers of the types of development specifically exempted, shall also pay a fee equal to two and one-half percent (2.5%) of the increase in equalized assessed value resulting from any additions to existing structures to be used for non-residential purposes.
  - iii. Development fees shall be imposed and collected when an existing structure is demolished and replaced. The development fee of two and a half percent (2.5%) shall be calculated on the difference between the equalized assessed value of the pre-existing land and improvement and the equalized assessed value of the newly improved structure, i.e., land and improvement, at the time final certificate of occupancy is issued. If the calculation required under this section results in a negative number, the non-residential development fee shall be zero.
- b) Eligible exactions, ineligible exactions and exemptions for non-residential development
  - i. The non-residential portion of a mixed-use inclusionary or market rate development shall be subject to the two and a half percent (2.5%) development fee, unless otherwise exempted below.
  - ii. The two and one-half percent (2.5%) fee shall not apply to an increase in equalized assessed value resulting from alterations, change in use within existing footprint, reconstruction, renovations and repairs.
  - iii. Non-residential developments shall be exempt from the payment of non-residential development fees in accordance with the exemptions required pursuant to P.L.2008, c.46, as specified in the Form N-RDF "State of New Jersey Non-Residential Development Certification/Exemption" Form. Any exemption claimed by a developer shall be substantiated by that developer.
  - iv. A developer of a non-residential development exempted from the non-residential development fee pursuant to P.L.2008, c.46 shall be subject to it at such time the basis for the exemption no longer applies, and shall make the payment of the non-residential development fee, in that event, within three

years after that event or after the issuance of the final certificate of occupancy of the non-residential development, whichever is later.

- v. If a property which was exempted from the collection of a non-residential development fee thereafter ceases to be exempt from property taxation, the owner of the property shall remit the fees required pursuant to this section within forty-five (45) days of the termination of the property tax exemption. Unpaid non-residential development fees under these circumstances may be enforceable by SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS as a lien against the real property of the owner.

#### **SECTION V.: Collection Procedures**

a) Upon the granting of a preliminary, final or other applicable approval, for a development, the applicable approving authority shall direct its staff to notify the construction official or Zoning Officer whomever is responsible for the issuance of a building permit.

b) For non-residential developments only, the developer shall also be provided with a copy of Form N-RDF "State of New Jersey Non-Residential Development Certification/Exemption" to be completed as per the instructions provided. The developer of a non-residential development shall complete Form N-RDF as per the instructions provided. The construction official shall verify the information submitted by the non-residential developer as per the instructions provided in the Form N-RDF. The Tax assessor shall verify exemptions and prepare estimated and final assessments as per the instructions provided in Form N-RDF.

c) The construction official responsible for the issuance of a building permit shall notify the local tax assessor of the issuance of the first building permit for a development which is subject to a development fee.

d) Within ninety (90) days of receipt of that notice, the municipal tax assessor, based on the plans filed, shall provide an estimate of the equalized assessed value of the development.

e) The construction official responsible for the issuance of a final certificate of occupancy notifies the local assessor of any and all requests for the scheduling of a final inspection of property which is subject to a development fee.

f) Within ten (10) business days of a request for the scheduling of a final inspection, the municipal assessor shall confirm or modify the previously estimated equalized assessed value of the improvements of the development; calculate the development fee; and thereafter notify the developer of the amount of the fee.

g) Should SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS fail to determine or notify the developer of the amount of the development fee within ten (10) business days of the request for final inspection, the developer may estimate the amount due and pay that estimated amount consistent with the dispute process set forth in subsection b. of section 37 of P.L.2008, c.46 (C.40:55D-8.6).

h) Fifty percent (50%) of the development fee shall be collected at the time of issuance of the building permit. The remaining portion shall be collected at the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The developer shall be responsible for paying the difference between the fee calculated at building permit and that determined at issuance of certificate of occupancy.

- i) Appeal of development fees
  - 1) A developer may challenge residential development fees imposed by filing a challenge with the County Board of Taxation. Pending a review and determination by the Board, collected fees shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account by SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS. Appeals from a determination of the Board may be made to the tax court in accordance with the provisions of the State Tax Uniform Procedure Law, R.S.54:48-1 et seq., within ninety (90) days after the date of such determination. Interest earned on amounts escrowed shall be credited to the prevailing party.
  - 2) A developer may challenge non-residential development fees imposed by filing a challenge with the Director of the Division of Taxation. Pending a review and determination by the Director, which shall be made within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the challenge, collected fees shall be placed in an interest-bearing escrow account by SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS. Appeals from a determination of the Director may be made to the tax court in accordance with the provisions of the State Tax Uniform Procedure Law, R.S.54:48-1 et seq., within ninety (90) days after the date of such determination. Interest earned on amounts escrowed shall be credited to the prevailing party.

#### **SECTION VI. Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

a) There is hereby created a separate, interest-bearing housing trust fund to be maintained by the chief financial officer for the purpose of depositing development fees collected from residential and non-residential developers and proceeds from the sale of units with extinguished controls.

b) The following additional funds shall be deposited in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and shall at all times be identifiable by source and amount:

1. payments in lieu of on-site construction of affordable units;
2. developer contributed funds to make ten percent (10%) of the adaptable entrances in a townhouse or other multistory attached development accessible;
3. rental income from municipally operated units;
4. repayments from affordable housing program loans;
5. recapture funds;
6. proceeds from the sale of affordable units;
7. development fees; and
8. any other funds collected in connection with SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS's affordable housing program.

c) In the event of a failure by the Borough to comply with trust fund monitoring and reporting requirements or to submit accurate monitoring reports; or a failure to comply with the conditions of the judgment of compliance or a revocation of the judgment of compliance; or a failure to implement the approved Spending Plan and to expend funds within the applicable required time period as set forth in In re Tp. of Monroe, 442 N.J. Super. 565 (Law Div. 2015)

(aff'd 442 N.J. Super. 563); or the expenditure of funds on activities not approved by the Court; or for other good cause demonstrating the unapproved use(s) of funds, the Court may authorize the State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services (LGS), to direct the manner in which the funds in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund shall be expended, provided that all such funds shall, to the extent practicable, be utilized for affordable housing programs within SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS, or, if not practicable, then within the County or the Housing Region.

d) Any party may bring a motion before the Superior Court presenting evidence of such condition(s), and the Court may, after considering the evidence and providing the municipality a reasonable opportunity to respond and/or to remedy the non-compliant condition(s), and upon a finding of continuing and deliberate non-compliance, determine to authorize LGS to direct the expenditure of funds in the Trust Fund. The Court may also impose such other remedies as may be reasonable and appropriate to the circumstances.

e) All interest accrued in the housing trust fund shall only be used on eligible affordable housing activities approved by COAH or court of competent jurisdiction.

## **SECTION VII. Use of Funds**

a) The expenditure of all funds shall conform to a spending plan approved by COAH or court of competent jurisdiction. Funds deposited in the housing trust fund may be used for any activity approved by COAH or court of competent jurisdiction. to address SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS's fair share obligation and may be set up as a grant or revolving loan program. Such activities include, but are not limited to: preservation or purchase of housing for the purpose of maintaining or implementing affordability controls, rehabilitation, new construction of affordable housing units and related costs, accessory apartment, market to affordable, or regional housing partnership programs, conversion of existing non-residential buildings to create new affordable units, green building strategies designed to be cost saving and in accordance with accepted national or state standards, purchase of land for affordable housing, improvement of land to be used for affordable housing, extensions or improvements of roads and infrastructure to affordable housing sites, financial assistance designed to increase affordability, administration necessary for implementation of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, or any other activity as permitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:97-8.7 through 8.9 and specified in the approved spending plan.

b) Funds shall not be expended to reimburse SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS for past housing activities.

c) At least thirty (30) percent of all development fees collected, and interest earned shall be used to provide affordability assistance to low- and moderate-income households in affordable units included in the municipal Fair Share Plan. One-third of the affordability assistance portion of development fees collected shall be used to provide affordability assistance to those households earning 30 percent or less of median income by region.

i. Affordability assistance programs may include down payment assistance, security deposit assistance, low interest loans, rental assistance, assistance with

home-owners association or condominium fees and special assessments, and assistance with emergency repairs.

- ii. Affordability assistance to households earning 30 percent or less of median income may include buying down the cost of low- or moderate-income units in the municipal Fair Share Plan to make them affordable to households earning 30 percent or less of median income.
- iii. Payments in lieu of constructing affordable units on site and funds from the sale of units with extinguished controls shall be exempt from the affordability assistance requirement.

d) The Borough may contract with a private or public entity to administer any part of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, including the requirement for affordability assistance, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:96-18.

e) No more than twenty percent (20%) of all revenues collected from development fees, may be expended on administration, including, but not limited to, salaries and benefits for municipal employees or consultant fees necessary to develop or implement a new construction program, a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and/or an affirmative marketing program. In the case of a rehabilitation program, no more than twenty percent (20%) of the revenues collected from development fees shall be expended for such administrative expenses. Administrative funds may be used for income qualification of households, monitoring the turnover of sale and rental units, and compliance with COAH or court of competent jurisdiction's monitoring requirements. Legal or other fees related to litigation opposing affordable housing sites or objecting to COAH's regulations and/or action are not eligible uses of the affordable housing trust fund.

## **SECTION VIII. Monitoring**

a) On December 31, 2024, and on every anniversary of that date thereafter through 2025, Spring Lake Heights shall provide annual reporting of the status of all affordable housing activity within the municipality through posting on the municipal website with a copy of such posting provided FSHC, using forms previously developed for this purpose by the Council on Affordable Housing or any other forms endorsed by the Special Master and FSHC. By December 31, 2024, Spring Lake Heights shall post on its municipal website, with a copy provided to FSHC, a status as to its satisfaction of its very-low-income requirements, including requirements contained herein.

## **SECTION IX. Ongoing collection of fees**

a. The ability for the Borough to impose, collect and expend development fees shall expire with its Judgment of Compliance and Repose. If the Borough fails to renew its ability to impose and collect development fees prior to the expiration of its Judgment of Compliance and Repose it may be subject to forfeiture of any or all funds remaining within its municipal trust fund. Any funds so forfeited shall be deposited into the "New Jersey Affordable Housing Trust Fund" established pursuant to section 20 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-320). The Borough shall



not impose a residential development fee on a development that receives preliminary or final site plan approval after the expiration of its Judgment of Compliance and Repose, nor shall the Borough retroactively impose a development fee on such a development. The Borough shall not expend development fees after the expiration of its Judgment of Compliance and Repose.


**SECTION X.**

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption and publication as may be required by law.

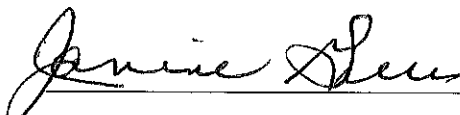
**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that

- A. All other Ordinances or provisions of the Code of the Borough of Spring Lake Heights or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with any provisions in this Ordinance, are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency.
- B. If any provision or portion of this Chapter is held to be unconstitutional, preempted by Federal or State Law or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this chapter shall not be invalidated.
- C. This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication as required by law.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that this ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication in accordance with applicable law.

  
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William Graetz, Acting Mayor

9/17/2024  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Janine Gillis, Borough Clerk

9-17-2024  
Date