

## THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK

COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221 SOUTH 5<sup>TH</sup> AVE

HIGHLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY 08904

TEL. (732) 287-5800

FAX (732) 777-6017

**To: Property Owner** 

## **REGISTRATION / RENEWAL FORM FOR**

## **VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES**

	⊔ NEW ⊔ U	UPDATE □	RENEWAL				
has be calend proper registr	rdinance 17-1940, the owner of any vacant preen vacated or use of occupancy has substant dar days after such time or within 30 calendarerty; or within 10 calendar days of receipt of neration form herein with the Construction Official within 30 days of any change in the registra	ially ceased for a days after assum otice by the municial. The owner sh	period of 6 months), shall ving ownership of any vacal cipality, file the required all notify the Code Enforce	within 30 nt			
1: Pro	operty Information:						
Street	t Address	Block	Lot(s)				
0	t Address Foreclosure Type(check all that apply): Foreclosure	Residential _	Non-Residential				
	Vacant						
0	9 ,						
0	Is there a sign (no smaller than 8"x10") affixed to the building indicating the name, address and						
	telephone number of the owner, owner's a	_	· ·	the day-			
	to-day supervision and management of the						
0	7 6	-	_				
	building is again legally occupied, demolish	ed or until repair	or rehabilitation of the bui	lding			
	and/ or is complete? Yes No						
0	7		•				
	building and/ or are clean and well-mainta		·	iirements			
	of the Property Maintenance Ordinance at						
0	Do you agree to ensure that all areas of the	vacant visible by	the public from the public	street or			

sidewalks are maintained and free of litter and debris at all times? \_\_Yes \_\_No \_\_N/A

2. Property Owner: Please complete the Name	Phone
	Email
	th respect to Vacant and Abandoned property:
Must be at least 21 years of age	
Name	Phone
Mailing Address	Email
4. Individual or Representative of Prope	erty Preservation Company (Responsible for maintaining the property)
Must be available 24 hours per day, seven days p	per week; must maintain offices or reside with the State of New Jersey.
Name	Phone
Company Name	Phone
Mailing Address	Email
5. Registration/ Renewal Fee:	
Initial Registration: \$500.00,	
First Renewal: \$1,500.00	
Second Renewal: \$3,000.000;	
Subsequent Renewal: \$5,000.00	
,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	
Amount Due:	
, illiodite 5del	<del></del>
6. Certification	
·	MENTS MADE ARE TRUE. I AM AWARE THAT IF ANY OF THE
	E ARE WILLFULLY FALSE, I AM SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT
	VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES ORDINANCE.
	. With the histories i har entres and invitate.
Owner Signature	Date
(Print Name)	
(	<del></del>
Construction Official	Date
Data Bassiyadı Amayınt Callastad	Municipal Use Only : Payment Method: Registration #
Date Received: Amount Collected	rayment iviethod: kegistration #

## BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK ORDINANCE NO. 17-1940

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE "CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, 2010", CHAPTER 303 BY ADDING THERETO ARTICLE III REQUIRING CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF FORECLOSED PROPERTIES, AND ARTICLE IV AUTHORIZING THE DEMOLITION OF HAZARDOUS STRUCTURES AND REGULATION OF VACANT OR ABANDONED PROPERTIES

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY THAT;

**Section 1.** Chapter 303 of the "Code of the Borough of Highland Park, 2010" is amended as follows:

A new Article III, requiring the care and maintenance of properties being foreclosed shall be added to Chapter 303 and shall read as follows:

ARTICLE III

## CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTIES IN FORECLOSURE

#### §303-9. Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the care, maintenance, security, and upkeep of the exterior of vacant and abandoned residential properties on which a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose has been filed, as permitted by N.J.S.A.40:48-2.12s.

#### §303-10. Responsibilities of Creditors, Violations and Fines.

- A. Pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.12s, the creditor filing the summons and complaint in an action to foreclose shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, security, and upkeep of the exterior of the vacant and abandoned residential property. This obligation applies whether the determination that the property is vacant and abandoned is made by the Code Enforcement Official pursuant to Chapter 303 "Property Maintenance", or N.J.S.A. 2A:50-73, or otherwise.
- B. If the creditor is located out-of-state, the creditor shall be responsible for appointing an in-state representative or agent to act for the foreclosing creditor.
- C. An out-of-state-creditor shall include the full name and contact information of the instate representative or agent in the notice required to be provided to the municipal clerk pursuant to N.J.S.A. 46:10B-51.
- D. An out-of-state creditor found by the municipal court, or by any other court of competent jurisdiction, to be in violation of §303-10(B) shall be subject to a fine of \$2,500.00 for each day of the violation, commencing on the day after the ten (10)

- day period set forth in N.J.S.A. 46:10B-51 for providing notice to the municipal clerk that a summons and complaint in an action to foreclose has been served.
- E. The Construction Official, Zoning Official or Code Enforcement Official appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3 et.seq. shall be authorized to issue a notice to the creditor filing the summons and complaint in an action to foreclose if the public officer or enforcement official determines that the creditor has violated this chapter by failing to provide for the care, maintenance, security and upkeep of the exterior of the property. The notice shall require the person or entity to correct the violation within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice, or within ten (10) days of receipt of the notice if the violation presents an imminent threat to public health and safety. The issuance of this notice shall constitute proof that a property is "vacant and abandoned" for the purposes of N.J.S.A. 2A:50-73.
- F. A creditor found by the municipal court, or by any other court of competent jurisdiction, to be in violation of the requirement to correct a care, maintenance, security, or upkeep violation cited in a notice issues pursuant to §303-10(E) shall be subject to a fine of \$1,500.00 for each day of the violation, commencing thirty one (31) days following receipt of the notice, except if the violation presents an imminent risk to public health and safety, in which case any fines shall commence eleven (11) days following receipt of the notice.
- G. Any property in foreclosure that becomes vacant or abandoned shall be subject to the requirements of Article IV herein below.

**Section 2.** Chapter 303 of the "Code of the Borough of Highland Park, 2010" is amended as follows:

A new Article IV, authorizing the repair, closing and demolition of unsafe buildings shall be added to Chapter 303 and shall read as follows:

#### ARTICLE IV

## MUNICIPAL REPAIR, CLOSING, AND DEMOLITION OF UNSAFE AND/OR VANCANT/ABANDONED PROPERTIES

#### §303-11. <u>Purpose.</u>

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide a process for the repair, maintenance or removal of building or buildings, or part thereof, which are unfit for human habitation or occupancy, or use, due to dilapidation, defects increasing the hazards of fire, accidents or other calamities, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or due to other conditions rendering such building or buildings, or part thereof, unsafe or insanitary, or dangerous or detrimental to the health or safety or otherwise inimical to the welfare of the residents of the Borough and to regulate vacant or abandoned properties.

#### §303-12. <u>Authorization.</u>

The Borough Council, having adopted a resolution finding that building conditions of the character described in N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.3 exist within the Borough, is hereby authorized to adopt this ordinance relating to such buildings within the Borough which are unfit for human habitation or occupancy or use pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:48-2.5.

#### §303-13. <u>Designated Public Officers</u>.

The Borough Council hereby designates the Code Enforcement Official to enforce this Chapter in accordance with the powers described herein with regard to buildings that are deemed dangerous, unsafe or otherwise unfit for human habitation or occupation upon a finding that conditions exist in such building(s) that are dangerous or injurious to the health or safety of the occupants of such building(s), the occupants of neighboring buildings or other residents of the Borough. Such conditions shall be deemed to include, but are not limited to the following: defects therein increasing the hazards of fire, accident, or other calamities; lack of adequate ventilation, light or sanitary facilities; dilapidation; disrepair; structural defects; uncleanliness; failure to comply with the requirements of the building code or the certificate of occupancy; such ordinance that may provide additional standards in determining the fitness of a building for human habitation or occupancy or use or is vacant or abandoned properties as defined herein below.

#### §303-14. Definitions.

Abandoned Property – any property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six months and which meets any one of the following additional criteria may be deemed to be abandoned property (in accordance with N.J.S.A. 55:19-81) upon a determination by the Code Enforcement Official that:

- (a) The property is in need of rehabilitation in the reasonable judgment of the Code Enforcement Official, and no rehabilitation has taken place during that six-month period;
- (b) Construction was initiated on the property and was discontinued prior to completion, leaving the building unsuitable for occupancy and no construction has taken place for at least six months as of the date of a determination by the Code Enforcement Official pursuant to this section:
- (c) At least one installment of property tax remains unpaid and delinquent on that property in accordance with Chapter 4 of Title 54 of the Revised Statutes of the date of the determination by the Code Enforcement Official pursuant to this section; or
- (d) The property has been determined to be a nuisance by the Code Enforcement Official in accordance with section 5 of P.L. 2003, c. 210 (C.55:19-82). A property which contains both residential and non-residential space may be considered abandoned pursuant to P.L. 2003, c. 210 (C.55:19-78 et al.) so long as two-thirds or more of the total net square footage of the building was previously legally occupied as residential or commercial space and none of the residential or commercial space has been legally occupied for at least six months at the time of the determination of abandonment by the public officer and the property meets the criteria of either subsection (a) or subsection (d) of this section.

Owner – shall include the title holder, any agent of the title holder having authority to act with respect to a vacant/abandoned property, any foreclosing entity subject to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 46:10B-51, or any other entity determined by the Borough of Highland Park to have authority to act with respect to the property.

Vacant Property – any building used or to be used as a residence, commercial or industrial structure which is not legally occupied or at which substantially all lawful

construction operations or occupancy has ceased, and which is in such condition that it cannot legally be reoccupied without repair or rehabilitation including but not limited to any property meeting the definition of abandoned property in N.J.S.A. 55:19-54, 55:19-78, 19-79, 19-80 or 19-81; provided, however, that any property where all building systems are in working order, where the building and grounds are maintained in good order, or where the building is in habitable condition, and where the building is being actively marketed by its owner for sale or rental, shall not be deemed a vacant property for purposes of this ordinance.

#### §303-15. Registration Requirements, Access to Vacant Properties.

- (a) Effective August 1, 2017, the owner of any vacant or abandoned property as defined herein shall register with the Borough of Highland Park pursuant to §303-12 of this ordinance.
- (b) The owner of any vacant property registered under this Article shall provide access to said property in accordance with §303-13 of this ordinance. Owners of vacant property are required to designate a responsible owner or agent pursuant to §303-14 of this Ordinance.

## §303-16. Registration Fees.

The initial registration fee for each building or portion thereof shall be five-hundred dollars (\$500.00). The fee for the first renewal is one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00), and the fee for the second renewal is three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00). The fee for any subsequent renewal beyond the second renewal is five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00).

Vacant or Abandoned Building	Registration Fee Schedu	<u>le</u>
Initial Annual Registration	\$ 500.00	
First Annual Renewal	\$1,500.00	
Second Annual Renewal	\$3,000.00	
Subsequent Annual Renewal	\$5,000.00	

## §303-17. Requirement of Owners of Vacant/Abandoned Property.

The owner of any property that has become vacant and any person maintaining or operating or collecting rent for any such building that has become vacant shall, within thirty (30) days thereof:

- (1) Enclose and secure the property against unauthorized entry as provided in the applicable provisions of the Borough Code;
- (2) Post a sign affixed to the property indicating the name, address and telephone number of the owner, the owner's authorized agent for the purpose of service of process (if designated pursuant to this Article), and the person responsible for the day-to-day supervisions and management of the building, if such person is different from the owner holding title or authorized agent. The sign shall be of a size and placed in such a location as to be legible from the nearest public street or sidewalk, whichever is nearer, but shall be no smaller than eight (8) by ten(10) inches; and
- (3) Secure the property from unauthorized entry and maintain the sign until the property is legally occupied or demolished or until repair or rehabilitation of the property is complete; and

- (4) Ensure that the exterior grounds of the property, including yards, fences, sidewalks, walkways, right-of-ways, alleys, retaining walls, attached or unattached accessory structures and driveways, are well-maintained and free from trash, debris, loose litter, and grass and weed growth; and
- (5) Continue to maintain the property in a secure and closed condition, keep the grounds in a clean and well-maintained condition, and ensure that the sign is visible and intact until the property is again occupied, demolished, or until repair and/or rehabilitation of the building is complete; and
- (6) Continue to maintain the property consistent with the requirements of the Borough Code, including but not limited to Chapter 303, entitled "Property Maintenance".

## §303-18. Violations; Hearing.

Whenever a petition is filed with the Code Enforcement Official by at least five residents of the municipality charging that any building is unfit for human habitation or occupancy or use or whenever it appears to the Code Enforcement Official (on his or her own motion) that any building is unfit for human habitation or occupancy or use, the Code Enforcement Official shall, if his or her preliminary investigation discloses a basis for such charges, issue and cause to be served upon the owner of and parties in interest in such building a complaint stating the charges in that respect and containing a notice that a hearing will be held before the Code Enforcement Official (or his or her designated agent) at a place therein fixed not less than seven (7) days nor more than thirty (30) days after the serving of said complaint; that the owner and parties in interest shall be given the right to file an answer to the complaint and to appear in person, or otherwise, and give testimony at the place and time fixed in the complaint; and that the rules of evidence prevailing in the courts shall not be controlling in hearings before the Code Enforcement Official.

## §303-19. Written Findings; Order.

If, after such notice and hearing as required in Section 303-14, the Code Enforcement Official determines that the building under consideration is unfit for human habitation or occupancy or use, or that a public health nuisance as defined in the Borough Board of Health Ordinance 3-4, exists on the property under consideration, he or she shall state in writing his or her findings of fact in support of such determination and shall issue and cause to be served upon the owner thereof and parties in interest an order:

- a. Requiring the repair, alteration or improvement of said building to be made by the owner, or the nuisance to be abated, within a reasonable time, which time shall be set forth in the order or at the option of the owner to vacate or have said building vacated and closed within the time set forth in the order;
- b. If the building or nuisance is in such condition as to make it dangerous to the health and safety of persons on or near the premises, and the owner fails to repair, alter or improve said building, or abate the nuisance, within the time specified in the order, then the owner shall be required to remove or demolish said building within a reasonable time as specified in the order of removal;
- c. If the owner fails to comply with the order to repair, alter, improve or abate or, at the option of the owner, to vacate and close the building, the public officer may cause such building to be repaired, altered or improved, or to be vacated and closed, or such nuisance to be abated; that the Code Enforcement Official may cause to be

- posted on the main entrance of any building so closed, a placard with the following words: "This building is unfit for human habitation or occupancy or use; the use or occupation of this building is prohibited and unlawful."
- d. If the owner fails to comply with the order to remove or demolish the building, the public officer may cause such building to be removed or demolished, or such nuisance to be abated, or may contract for the removal or demolition or abatement thereof after advertisement for, and receipt of, bids therefor.

## §303-20. Cost; Lien Authorized.

A municipal lien shall be placed against the real property upon which the cost was incurred in the amount of:

- a. The cost of the filing of legal papers, expert witness fees, search fees and advertising charges incurred in the course of any proceeding taken under this Article determined in favor of the municipality; and
- b. The cost of repairs, alterations or improvements, or vacating and closing or removal or demolition, if any, or the amount of the balance thereof remaining after deduction of the sum, if any, realized from the sale of materials derived from such building or from any contract for removal or demolition thereof.
- c. If the building is removed or demolished by the Code Enforcement Official, he or she shall sell the materials of such building. There shall be credited against the cost of the removal or demolition, including the clearance and, if necessary, leveling of the site, the proceeds of any sale of such materials or any sum derived from any contract for the removal or demolition of the building. If there are no such credits or if the sum total of such costs exceeds the total of such credits, a detailed statement of the costs and the amount due shall be filed with the tax collector or other custodian of records of tax liens and a copy shall be forthwith forwarded to the owner by registered mail. If the total of the credits exceeds the costs, the balance shall be deposited in the Superior Court by the Code Enforcement Official, shall be secured in such manner as may be directed by the court, and shall be disbursed according to the order of the court to the persons entitled thereto. Any owner or party in interest may, within thirty (30) days from the date of the filing of the lien certificate, proceed in a summary manner in the Superior Court to contest the reasonableness of the amount or the accuracy of the costs set forth in the municipal lien certificate.

## §303-21. Other Authorized Actions.

- a. If an actual and immediate danger to life is posed by the threatened collapse of any fire-damaged or other structurally unsafe building, the Code Enforcement Official may, after taking such measures as may be necessary to make such building temporarily safe, seek a judgment in summary proceedings for the demolition thereof
- b. Nothing in this Article shall be construed to impair or limit in any way the power of the municipality to define and declare nuisances and to cause their removal or abatement, by summary proceedings or otherwise, nor is anything in this Article intended to limit the authority of the enforcing agency or Code Enforcement Official un the "State Uniform Construction Code Act," P.L.1975, c. 217 (C. 52:27D-119 et seq.) or any rules or regulations adopted thereunder.

## §303-22. <u>Service of Complaints and Orders.</u>

Complaints or orders issued by the Code Enforcement Official shall be served upon persons either personally or by registered mail, but if the whereabouts of such persons is

unknown and cannot be ascertained by the Code Enforcement Official in the exercise of reasonable diligence, the Code Enforcement Official shall make an affidavit to that effect, then the serving of such complaint or order upon such persons may be made by publishing the same once in a newspaper printed and published in the municipality, or, in the absence of such newspaper, in one printed and published in the county and circulating in the municipality in which the building(s) are located. A copy of any complaint or order shall be posted in a conspicuous place on premises affected by the complaint or order. A copy of such complaint or order shall be duly recorded or lodged for record with the county recording officer of the county in which the building is located.

#### §303-23. Additional Powers of the Code Enforcement Official.

The Code Enforcement Official shall exercise such powers as may be necessary or convenient to carry out and effectuate the purposes and provisions of this Article, including the following powers in addition to others granted herein:

- a. To investigate the building conditions in the municipality in order to determine which buildings therein are unfit for human habitation or occupancy or use.
- b. To administer oaths, affirmations, examine witnesses and receive evidence.
- c. To enter upon premises for the purpose of making examinations, provided that such entries shall be made in such manner as to cause the least possible inconvenience to the persons in possession/
- d. To appoint and fix the duties of such officers, agents and employees as he or she deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this Article; and
- e. To delegate any functions and powers under this Article to such officers and agents as the Code Enforcement official may designate.

#### §303-24. Supplemental Nature of Article

Nothing in this Article shall be construed to abrogate or impair the powers of the courts or of any department of the Borough to enforce any provisions of its ordinances or regulations, nor to prevent or punish violations thereof; and the powers conferred by this Article shall be in addition and supplemental to the powers conferred upon the Borough by any other law or ordinance.

**Section 3.** Repealer. All ordinances and resolutions or parts thereof inconsistent with this ordinance are repealed.

<u>Section 4.</u> <u>Severability.</u> If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged by the courts to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause or provision so adjudged and the remainder of this ordinance shall be valid and enforceable.

Section 5. and as otherw	<b>Effective Date.</b> This C ise provided by law.	ordinance shal	l take effect upon final adoption, publication,
Introduced on	First Reading by title:		
May 2, 2017			
AMENDED:	July 11, 2017		
ADOPTED:	July 11, 2017		APPROVED: July 11, 2017
Attest: Joan F	Iullings, Borough Clerk		Gayle Brill Mittler, Mayor

# **Vacant Property Checklist**

Address	;

The following checklist has been provided to help you better protect your vacant property from potential losses.

Administration	yes	no	Action	Action required		By Whom	By When	Date Completed
				yes	no	=		
Is there a plan controlling the shut down?			If <b>no</b> – put a plan in place to cover the following points.					
Have the building's insurers been notified?			If <b>no</b> – ensure that the insurers are aware of the building's status.					
Are routine inspections planned?			If <b>no</b> – prepare a regular inspection plan.					
Has a redirection of mail been set up?			If <b>no</b> – put arrangements in place.					
Have local police been given key holder details?			If no – ensure police are notified. (732-572-3800)					
Has the local fire service been informed?			If <b>no</b> – contact the Fire Service HQ. <b>(732 572-</b> <b>4323)</b>					
Has the local code enforcement been consulted?			If no – contact local authority read their policy on vacant property. (732-287- 5800)					
Has a plan been prepared to indicate how the site is to be managed whilst it is vacant and who is to be responsible?			If <b>no</b> – prepare a plan and implement.					
Housekeeping and Health and Safety?								
Has the health and safety of possible trespassers and children been assessed?			If <b>no</b> – make an assessment and implement recommendations.					

Has all refuse been removed	If <b>no</b> – ensure <b>all</b> refuse
from the external site areas?	is removed.
Has the site been checked for	If <b>no</b> – check the site.
dangerous or potentially	I III Griedik eine dieer
dangerous objects?	
Are there any unnecessary	If <b>yes</b> – remove all
furnishings and furniture	unnecessary items.
present?	
Have final meter readings	If <b>no</b> – make sure they
been taken?	are recorded (732-247- 9379)
Have all non- essential	If <b>no</b> – ensure
services been disconnected?	disconnections are done
	not to be easily
Are any assential water	reconnected.
Are any essential water services to remain?	If <b>yes</b> – ensure that frost protection is in place.
Is all the water and heating to be shut off?	If <b>yes</b> – drain all systems completely.
Are there any flammable	If <b>yes</b> – remove or dispose of safely.
liquids?	
Are there any flammable	If yes – remove or
goods and/ or hazardous substances present?	dispose of safety or make safe on site.
Are there any fuel tanks?	If <b>yes</b> – ensure tanks are
	empty and purged.
Is there any evidence of spills?	If <b>yes</b> – can they
	identified and are there
	records relating to the
And the second	remedial action taken.
Are there any:  a. Underground tanks	If <b>yes</b> – are they empty, removed or made
b. Above ground storage	secure/safe.
tanks	
c. Sumps or soakaways	
d. Asbestos containing	
materials	
e. Transformers?	
Are there any records relating	If <b>yes</b> – review and
to permits or discharge consents for the site?	action as appropriate.
Have any environmental	If <b>yes</b> – review contents
assessments been made of the	and action as
site?	appropriate.

Security	
Are there vulnerable access points?	If <b>yes</b> – consider upgrading physical security.
Are all perimeter barriers in good repair?	If <b>no</b> – repair fences etc.
Are existing doors and door hardware adequate?	If <b>no</b> – upgrade or consider security screens or doors.
Are existing windows in good repair?	If <b>no</b> – repair as a matter of urgency.
Are accessible windows adequately protected?	If <b>no</b> – fit protection.
Is there an intruder alarm installed?	If yes – consider retaining and upgrading. If no- consider installation.
Is there a manned security presence?	If <b>yes</b> – consider retaining.
Is there perimeter lighting?	If <b>yes</b> – consider retaining.
Is interior lighting in place?	If <b>yes</b> – consider retaining on a timed circuit.