

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP LAND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

APRIL 1, 2015 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Westampton Township Land Development Board was held at the Municipal Building on Rancocas Road on April 1, 2015 at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ron Applegate and the opening statement required by Sunshine Law was read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times on January 6, 2015 and posted in the Municipal Building. All guests were welcomed.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present: Mr. Applegate, Mr. Blair, Mr. Borger (7:08 arrival), Ms. Chang, Mr. Maybury, Mr. Williams, Mr. Attaway, Ms. Haas

Absent: Mr. Carugno, Ms. Coe, Mr. Freeman

Chairman Applegate welcomed the new Board planner Barbara Fegley.

The minutes of the February 4, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

Resolutions:

3-2015 Rancocas Civic Association, Block 106, Lot 16 – variance (sign) – was tabled until the end of the meeting. Motion to table made by Mr. Blair; seconded by Mr. Williams. All voted yes, Mr. Maybury abstained.

4-2015 Award of Contract for Professional Services – appointment of LDB solicitor and engineer – was memorialized.

Old Business:

Project Freedom, Inc., Block 203, Lot 4.02. The application is for a site plan waiver. Tim Dougherty, Executive Director was sworn in before the Board. There are two minor issues that were left out of their site plan application; one was fencing and the other the sign advertising Project Freedom construction. The project is under construction right now. This is kind of a formality for their builders risk insurance. Mr. Dougherty explained that it sends a message for vehicles not to enter and it is a common practice; they want to maintain integrity for egress onto the site. The fence is a temporary construction fence which will be removed upon completion of all site work and buildings, probably around December 2015. Prior to issuance of the first temporary CO the fencing must be removed. Mr. Maybury made a motion to approve the site plan waiver;

Mr. Williams seconded the motion. All Board members voted yes.

New Business:

Public Hearing, Redevelopment Need Study, Block 203, Lot 4.03. Jim Winckowski, Board Engineer, gave a brief overview of the study to the Board. The needs study involves the Project Freedom property. There were two areas of criteria that were met: the property has been vacant for quite a while, and there is a need for redevelopment that exists. Project Freedom is of a benefit to the Township and to society in general. It is also consistent with Smart Growth Planning principles. The engineer recommends that this property is in need of redevelopment. If the Board approves, it would then go to the Township Committee for approval.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. No comment was made.

This site is part of the Townships housing element and master plan and is consistent with both. Mr. Blair made a motion to approve; the motion was seconded by Mr. Williams. All voted yes.

Public Hearing, Redevelopment Plan, Block 203, Lot 4.03. The plan concerns what should be placed on the property. It establishes the zoning that would allow the development of Project Freedom on the site and permits them to construct the additional 24 units originally applied for, for a total of 72 units. This is a recommendation to the governing body to adopt an ordinance. This gives the developer an opportunity to get funding from the State in the form of tax credits. It is consistent with the R-8 zone which is already in place for Project Freedom.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. No comment was made.

Mr. Blair made a motion to approve the Redevelopment Plan; the motion was seconded by Chairman Applegate. All Board members voted yes.

Public Hearing, 2015 Master Plan & Development Regulations Reexamination Report. Harry McVey gave a brief explanation of what we are doing and why we are doing it. In the past the Township has been mostly reactive instead of proactive. This plan is a departure from that; it is a blueprint of where we want to be as a Township as we move forward. This Board has the authority to adopt the Master Plan; the Ordinances that implement the Master Plan rests with the Township Committee. The plan incorporates the three redevelopment areas; two are 100 percent low and moderate; the third is market rate but contains an affordable housing component. The OR zoning is outdated and needs to be looked at.

Western Drive needs to be looked at, both from the County and State and Burlington

Township. The intersection is poorly designed and often fails. Route 541 becomes the focus of the plan; one component is the Virtua property. The zoning is appropriate and is a mixture of office and a small commercial strip along the back. It allows Virtua to do most of what it hopes to achieve. The zoning should be kept in place and an overlay zone prepared. This is critical because this is going to be a multi-year project. The Board needs to be able to maintain input. If they choose the overlay zone, it gives the developer guarantees and gives the Township the ability to plan for infrastructure improvements, etc. The north side of Route 541, particularly the Hancock site is zoned inappropriately. The Vision plan specifically spoke of a town center. If there is to be a town center, it needs to be on this site. No standards have been developed as of yet. We are also looking for a residential component to the town center. One of the major concerns is what is it going to look like and how will it function. The design element should be discussed and looked at by the end of the year.

The Burrs Road extension is the third issue. Burrs Road needs to be extended to Woodlane Road, not sure at this time exactly where or how this road will interact. This will have the benefit of reducing some of the congestion that exists. This needs to be dealt with this year.

The entire Route 541 area needs to be looked at; do we need changes or new zones. Specifically we need to look at pedestrian and bicycle linkages. The Virtua and Hancock sites are the priorities.

The area on Springside Road has been a problem for a while. The intent of the OR zone was for it to function as a transition from the I zone to the residential zones; however the ordinances aren't tight enough to do that. The Western side has remained open and the standards need to be tightened up. This should be a priority.

R-5 is an inappropriate zone; it is basically an institutional zone. It needs to be looked at since it is not a residential zone; there are only a handful of homes in this zone. We don't want more homes. The rest of the residential zones also need to be looked at; some can be combined. Some sort of cluster development standards should be developed. Clustering allows the same number of homes on various size lots with the ability to preserve large amounts of open space. It would give design and the Township more flexibility. In the R1 zone in the northeast quadrant, the minimum lot size should be looked at since it was taken out of the sewer service area. The lots need to be large enough to permit septic systems.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment.

Faith Borradaile had comments regarding the Master Plan. She is the daughter of the Hancock's and partial owner of the farm. They like the Vision Plan; but are concerned about residential aspects coming in and creating additional burdens to the town. They don't want to be limited to small retail development. They would like to be able to maximize the development potential of their property.

The Master Plan doesn't get into specifics as to how the town center will be developed according to Harry McVey. There needs to be some work sessions taking place. There is no ordinance nor a draft at this point in time. It is important to get moving and he would like to take the Hancock's property into consideration.

There being no further comment from the public, the meeting was closed. Mr. Maybury made a motion to approve the 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report; the motion was seconded by Mayor Chang. All Board members voted yes.

Correspondence:

Rancocas Civic Association, Historic Rancocas Village Sign. A letter was received from the Historic Commission addressed to the LDB regarding the February 4th meeting. It was the opinion of the Board that the sign needed to have a slat added to it with the words "Westampton Township". No communications with the exception of the letter have been received by the Township since the February 4th meeting.

Norm Miller was sworn in before the Board. The first sign was placed there about 20 years ago. The sign was replaced ten years ago and moved. A third sign was recently installed due to age and wearing. They tried to keep the sign the same; however it was slightly larger. If they added an additional slat it would look like an add on. They can't put it on the face of the sign. They prefer not to add a slat onto the sign at all. The only thing the sign does is to announce that Rancocas is a historic site; it is not a commercial sign.

Mr. Williams stated that Mr. Freeman, who wasn't here tonight, was in favor of the sign and that Rancocas is part of the Township and should be identified as such. He thinks it should be there and he doesn't think they have said anything to change his mind. He thinks the full Board should be here to discuss this. Solicitor Lou Capelli thinks the resolution should be adopted this evening; the only question is does the resolution reflect the decision of the Board that evening.

Gene Blair said the time frame on the resolution is 90 days. If the slat isn't installed within 90 days, the sign must be removed. Gene said that he and Norm have sat on the Board together for many years; every sign that has come before this Board has always strived to identify Westampton Township, this sign is no different. He disagrees with his opinion that it can't be done tastefully. Norm agrees that he has pushed hard to see the Westampton name on signs in the Township. Norm stated that they would take it back to the Civic Association and see what else they could come up with besides a hanging slat.

The resolution was memorialized. All voted yes, Mr. Maybury and Ms. Chang abstained.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. No comment was made and the

meeting was closed.

Comments from Board Members

Mr. Williams – thanked Harry for his report on the Master Plan; it was very helpful and gives the Board additional direction both for the short and long term.

Chairman Applegate – thanked Harry and welcomed the new planner.

Ms. Chang – welcomed the new planner; hoped we will work well together.

Harry McVey – thinks Barbara will do a good job for the Township; she is more in tune of how Harry presents things.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Secretary
Westampton Township Land Development Board