

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP LAND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

SEPTEMBER 2, 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 September 2, 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. Borger, Mr. Carugno, Ms. Chang, Ms. Coe, Mr. Freeman (arrives at 7:36), Mr. Maybury, Mr. Williams, Mr. Attaway, Ms. Haas, Chairman Applegate, Planners Barbara Fegley and Fran Reiner, Solicitors Lou Cappelli & Teresa Lentini, Engineer Greg Valesi, Secretary Marion Karp

**Absent:** Mr. Blair

The minutes of the June 3, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

**Resolutions:**

11-2015 Project Freedom, Block 203, Lot 4.03 – amended site plan approval for Phase I – was memorialized at the last meeting, but the Board reviewed it for compliance with the changes suggested at the meeting.

**New Business:**

**Grace Alliance Chapel, Block 906.07, Lot 6.** The application has been continued until the Board's next meeting to be held on September 16, 2015. Motion made and seconded, all voted yes.

**Egester Smith, Block 1801, Lot 7.**

The applicant was present with an application to construct an addition on the rear of his home. The property is an attached twin home in the Tarnsfield subdivision on Greenwich Drive. The dimensions of the proposed addition are 26 feet long by 22 feet in width, which exceeds the setbacks allowed in the R-3 zone. The addition will be one story. The setback is 15 feet and the addition can be no wider than the existing

structure. The color of the addition will match the existing color of the house. Mr. Smith explained that he needed more space; the addition would function as a great room. The square footage of his home is only 1320 and he needs more space. He has lived there for 24 years. There is not a proposed bathroom with this addition. The property is narrow and thus he needs the variance.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment; no comment was made.

The Board asked Mr. Smith if he wished to ask for an at risk permit; he does want one granted. The Board is in favor and grants his request.

Motion to approve the variance made by Mr. Carugno; the motion was seconded by Ms. Coe. All Board members voted yes.

### **Public Hearing: Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation, Block 401, Lots 2, 7 & 8 (Amended).**

Board Engineer Greg Valesi gave background on the amended investigation. The reason for the amendment is that the Board asked the applicant to try to acquire Lot 7 which they were able to acquire. They are recommending that the Board find this area in need of redevelopment. The additional lot will permit better access to the proposed development (Ingberman). It meets the necessary statutory criteria according to the Engineer.

This was opened to the public for comment; no comment was made. This would be remanded back to the Township Committee for further action.

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Borger; the motion was seconded by Ms. Coe. All Board members voted yes; Ms. Chang and Mr. Maybury abstained.

### **Virtua General Development Plan, Block 804, Lots 1, 7 & 7Q.**

Board Solicitor Lou Capelli explained what a General Development Plan (GDP) is to the Board and to the public. A GDP is authorized under state statute; it allows developers of projects over 100 acres in size to submit a GDP. They are not obligated to do this but on large scale projects that take a period of time it isn't unusual for developers to submit such a plan. This is a much more general type of a document than a site plan is. The purpose is to provide increased flexibility as to the basic scheme moving forward. This doesn't at all relinquish the applicant from coming back in the future. Tonight is really about a conceptual plan; the Board has 95 days to grant or deny such an application such as this. This plan can be modified or amended in the future but must be done so by the Board. The hope is to have a mutual agreement as to how to move forward with the plan.

William Hyland, Virtua's solicitor was present on behalf of the application. There is still a framework within which they have to act according to Mr. Hyland. The GDP approval will establish a mutual relationship between the applicant and the Board and assures the applicant that they can move forward with a substantial financial process. It is still a period of some years off before site plans are to be submitted.

James Rivard, of Virtua Health, Senior Vice President; Robert Stovckle, of AEGIS, a project management firm; Bob Melvin, Planner; Daniel Miles, economic consultant; and Chris Cirrotti, engineer were sworn in before the Board. The Board accepted all as expert witnesses. They have received the Board engineer's and the planner's review letters.

Jim Rivard gave a broad overview of the project. He gave a brief history of Virtua Hospital in Mount Holly. The Voorhees campus was opened in 2011. He explained that it would be too expensive to renovate the existing hospital in Mt. Holly and they began looking for a new site. They expect to meet the standards that exist at their Voorhees facility; all private rooms and larger rooms to accommodate family members. The project meets all conditional standards of the MCD ordinance which was adopted in June 2015. The project will be constructed in 2 phases.

The nonprofit structures (nontaxable) will include the hospital, the long term care center, and the hospice unit. For profit structures will include the medical office buildings, the assisted living building and any parking structures that are built. Phase 1, which includes the hospital, long term care, hospice and assisted living structures will take about 7 years to construct and occupy.

The other Phase 1 facilities will come in at different times than the hospital but in 7 to 10 years. There will be an internal roadway within the campus.

Phase 2 will include additional medical office buildings, expansion of the hospital, parking structures to support the hospital expansion and another long term care facility. The timing is predicated on a number of factors including the economy and health sciences progress.

The proposed helipad is actually a helistop and cannot accept patients into the hospital. It will be used to take patients out of the hospital that need more specialized care and must be moved to another facility. It is nothing more than an asphalt pad and is regulated by the FAA. There is no repair or refueling and the helicopter cannot be stored at the site. Flight paths will be examined so that it will not have to come in over residential areas. They are sensitive to the residents. Through July of this year they have only had 9 flights at the Voorhees facility. Last year there were a total of 28 flights.

They are scheduling meetings with the EMS Chief and the Chief of Police in order to discuss how the hospital will impact the Township. They have their own Virtua security force that will manage the entire campus.

Rhonda Coe asked if there is a plan to meet with residents that will be most affected by the project; Mr. Rivard answered that there is. They did this with the development of the Voorhees site and addressed the resident's concerns. They certainly want the input of the community.

They will have meeting rooms in the facility; they are the only hospital in the area that has women's and children's services; they also run programs for chronic illnesses and support groups. They are active with the Red Cross and other organizations. There is the potential for a lot of off campus growth; the Voorhees site has attracted many businesses and is known as their Medical Mile.

Mr. Williams asked what businesses were attracted; there are additional physician's offices that were built, a pharmacy, an assisted living facility/rehab center, a new hotel, and a restaurant.

Mr. Carugno stated that this has more buildings than the Voorhees facility does; Mr. Rivard answered that there are less wetlands on the Westampton site than in Voorhees and they are able to put more buildings on the campus.

Robert Stovckel gave a brief overview of the site with an aerial photograph. An important element to Virtua is the connection of Route 541 and Woodlane Road. There are wetlands near Route 541; and thus they have proposed a boulevard system with one way roads. They felt it was necessary to have a separate service and emergency road on the eastern portion of the site. This in itself starts to create different zones on the site. The large zone in the center is where the hospital will be located, and is 29 acres. There is a medical building zone, an assisted living zone, a 9 acre zone for long term care and a 5 acre zone for hospice care. He explained how the different roads within the site would function.

The intent of the plan is to keep the truck traffic off of the boulevard. The Township Master Plan proposes that Burrs Road be extended through the property, thus the connection. Burlington County will naturally be involved and there will be a lot of analyses performed. Mayor Chang explained that the Burrs Road extension was suggested by the County Engineer's office and not Westampton Township. The assisted living complex will have an access only off of Route 541; the surgical center will be able to be accessed both off 541 and from the boulevard. Hospice access will be directly off Woodlane Road without a connection from the boulevard.

Phase 2 really presents potential opportunities to expand the facilities. If surface parking can't accommodate the expansion, a parking garage or deck will be constructed. Phase 2 includes 2 more medical office buildings, approximately 40,000 square feet each. There is room for another long term care building as well. This is projected to begin after the completion of the hospital and is really based on need as far as timing.

Rhonda Coe asked if the site takes into consideration Phase 2 not being constructed.

All areas contemplated for expansion for Phase 2 will be planted with grass; thus if not developed, they won't be disturbed. Core services already exist on the campus therefore it wouldn't be a detriment if not constructed. The medical buildings could be built earlier; it all depends on what the demand is at the time.

There is a pedestrian and bicycle plan. There will be a network of walking paths throughout the campus but they can't be shown on the plans at this point in time.

Chris Cerrotti, applicant's engineer showed a vehicular circulation plan; the service roadway will be unsignalized. The boulevard will use the existing signal at Burrs Road; the jug handle there would need to be redesigned. The Woodlane Road intersection will propose a new signal. The shape of the boulevard is dictated by the wetlands, they are trying to minimize wetlands crossings. They will use traffic calming techniques.

Mr. Borger asked if they anticipate people using the boulevard as a shortcut; he thinks for sure that some will use it but there are two signals and it kind of meanders throughout the site. They are trying to strike a balance between utility and safety. Route 541 gives the development good capacity for access. Mr. Freeman asked if they were considering that Route 541 would have to expand even more; the existing ROW on the northerly side is 25-30 feet off of the paved edge; on the hospital side it is about 75 feet so there is a lot of un used ROW width that could support additional lanes being added. They would be looking hard at the Woodlane Road/541 intersection. It will be a scope of study undertaken with the County. They also looked at existing and proposed bus routes. They will be working with NJ Transit and would like them to come into the campus.

Mr. Cerotti reviewed a landscape plan; existing tree lines are delineated on the plan. The plan doesn't get into the internal landscaping; however they will have shade trees in parking areas and along the boulevard. The landscaping plan will be submitted as part of the site plan. Existing wetland areas can be beefed up but they are limited in what they can do with these areas. Edge treatments and internal landscaping will be presented in much greater detail. Freshwater wetland areas are also shown on the plan; there is a valid LOI that identifies transition areas as well. They are trying to minimize disturbance to the wetlands areas and intend to stay under the allowable thresholds. Riparian zones exist on the site since there is a tributary/stream on the site and are fairly new in the state; any stream corridor requires this to protect this resource. They are regulated to the extent of tree removal and impervious surfaces and are regulated by the DEP and permitted by the DEP. There is a strong possibility that the DEP will be changing requirements for Riparian Zones this year; they have to see where the state goes with it. The buffers may shrink from 150 feet to 50 feet. There are many DEP hurdles they need to cross with permitting.

Mr. Cerotti also presented a utility plan; storm water management areas are identified; there are 10 of these depicted on the preliminary plan. Dispersing the storm water into many areas makes better sense; they can get a higher level of treatment this way instead of using one huge area. It is a series of basins and will be in accordance with

all local and state regulations. There will be a combination of dry basins, grass filter strips and wet ponds. Water service will be looped with multiple points of connection for the hospital building. A lot of the water and sewer infrastructure will be built early on in order to support the hospital. Sewer will be connected to the Burrs Road pump station. There may be upgrades required to this pump station as part of this project.

Their Planner spoke regarding consistency of the project with the Township Master Plan, MCD ordinance and Vision statement. There are specific goals within the Vision Plan; within that he thinks Virtua is consistent with the gateway idea; the architecture is consistent with the plan. It will remain green with the 100 foot setback; parking will be hidden behind the buildings. They have worked bike and multipurpose paths into the plan. There will be large amounts of green open space, lakes and enhanced landscaping. Virtua will create a strong regional identity for the community according to the Planner. No variances are necessary; they fully comply with the MCD ordinance. He said that the campus could be categorized as park like, when asked by Ron Applegate.

They have submitted a fiscal impact analysis; but won't go through it tonight. The project will contain both a mix of taxable and nontaxable buildings. Building permit and project development fees are estimated about \$1 million dollars, in addition to plumbing, electric and fire fees. Overall each phase of the project will generate a surplus for the Township. The Phase 1 impact is smaller than that of Phase 2. Construction of the hospital will drive the development of the buildings and structures that will generate income for the Township. Impact on the schools should be minimal. Virtua will take care of all the interior roads and their own trash removal. Greg Valesi asked them to explain what they think the greatest cost would be to the Township so in order they could prepare for additional services. Major considerations will be police, fire, utilities and administration. All onsite infrastructure is maintained by Virtua. There is on site security 24/7. It isn't anticipated that additional fire equipment will be necessary. They assume the project will add an additional 700 employees in addition to those that work in the Mount Holly facility.

Board Planner Barbara Fegley stated that the presentation was very thorough. There were a few minor details that weren't provided on the GDP; the applicants agree to provide them.

### **Comments from Board Members**

Mr. Williams – what kind of considerations are they making in case environmental laws change? Greg Valesi stated that they have to comply with what is in place at the time; which typically is for 5 years with DEP. However, regulations do change and they will have to comply with what the regulations are then.

### **Comments from Public**

John Pew Jr. – the acoustics are bad in the room, it would be much easier to hear if members of the public could have a hand held microphone.

Mr. James Boakes, 74 Oakcrest Lane – thought it was an impressive presentation; we are off to a good start. He asked if the GDP would be put on the website. He asked if a PILOT will be executed. At this point, there has been no application for a PILOT according to Lou Capelli. The applicant must make the application.

Abraham Lopez, 59 Amara Lane – wants to commend Virtua on their presentation. Was there an impact study done in Voorhees after construction? Did they measure economic gains? If not, would they consider doing so? Have there been post construction traffic studies conducted in Voorhees? What is the impact in Voorhees as far as administration, police and fire? He is sure that is measureable. Mr. Hyland said that one of the next steps in the process is to begin discussions with the County and they must come to an agreement as to what exactly they have to look at. Mr. Lopez says that as residents they would like to see the positive impacts that Virtua has made in Voorhees. Lou Capelli stated that they are not required to undertake any kind of study such as this. Mr. Lopez thinks it would be sign of good will and is a good gauge to measure what the impact will be in Westampton. Mr. Hyland stated that he could speak to the Tax Assessor and get some information regarding ratables.

Barbara Rich, 37 East Central Avenue, Moorestown – asked what activity is taking place on the property. It is being farmed at the present time and there is a residence currently there. What other permits are anticipated besides the LOI? They need wetlands general permits, several types. They need a flood hazard area permit; treatment works approval permits; water allocation permit; soil conservation permit; county planning board approvals; DCA health care review permit, local building permits, road opening permits. The township site plan will most likely be the next thing to be obtained; most of these other approvals will come afterwards. Transition areas would be averaged. Studies were completed for threatened and endangered species; there were found to be none on site.

There being no further comments from the public, the meeting was closed.

Mr. Carugno made a motion to approve the General Development Plan; the motion was seconded by Mr. Williams. All Board members voted yes.

Mr. Borger – this is an exciting time for the Township, there will be increased ratables over time and the creation of a town center, he is looking forward to it.

Mr. Carugno – likes hearing Virtua of Westampton

Mr. Applegate – thanked the residents for coming out. Keep Gene Blair in our thoughts and prayers.

Mayor Chang – thinks Virtua will be wonderful neighbors and looks forward to working

with them.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Secretary  
Westampton Township Land Development Board