

**WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
February 18, 2014**

The West Amwell Township Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Chairman Tomenchok followed by the salute to the flag.

The following statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act as listed on the meeting agenda was read into the record by Chairman Tomenchok: This meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice has been posted on the bulletin board at Town Hall on February 13, 2014 and has remained continuously posted as to required notices under the Statute. A copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the Office of the Planning Board and Township Clerk.

The following general policy statement of the Board was read into the record by Chairman Tomenchok: The Board's general policy is to end the presentation of testimony on applications by 10:30 PM and to conclude all Board business by 11:00 PM. When necessary, the Chair may permit a reasonable extension of those time limits.

The meeting was recorded via digital recording system and a copy of the CD is on file in the Office of the Planning Board.

Attendance – Roll Call

Present: Steve Bergenfeld
George Fisher
Nella Hamtil
John Haug
Art Neufeld
Zach Rich
Hal Shute
Rob Tomenchok
Chester Urbanski
Jim Cally – Alt. #2
Attorney Shurts
Engineer Burr
Planner McManus

Excused: Bob Balaam – Alt. #1

It was noted for the record that the Planning Board observed a moment of silence in remembrance of Jason Fuhr for his countless contributions to the West Amwell Township community.

Approval of Bill List

A motion by Urbanski, seconded by Hamtil to approve the vouchers for payment as listed on the 2/18/14 bill list was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Applications

It was noted for the record that there were no applications listed on the agenda.

Unfinished Business

Discussion – Woodlands Ordinance – Status Update

Mr. Shute commented that the subcommittee had made some changes to the ordinance and forwarded it to Planner McManus for further review and comment.

Planner McManus commented on the following items in the revised draft ordinance:

1. Applicability to residents and/or developers – Mr. Urbanski commented that he believes the ordinance should only be applicable to developers. The Board Members agreed.
2. Priority Woodlands – It was noted that all woodlands in the Township will be considered priority woodlands and the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) will be sent to the Environmental Commission for amendment.
3. Waiver or Variance – The current Woodlands Ordinance requires applicants to seek waivers because it is not contained in the land use section of the code. It was the consensus of the Board to request the Township Committee move the Woodlands Ordinance to the land use section so that applicants will be required to seek variance approval. Attorney Shurts noted this will allow for surrounding property owners of a subject site to receive public notice if woodlands will be affected.
4. Definition of Major Site Plan – it was noted that a definition for a major site plan will be added to the definitions in the land use section of the code.
5. Specimen Trees – it was noted that the definition of a specimen tree will be retained in the Woodlands Ordinance and applicants will be required to keep all existing specimen trees on the subject site or explain why they cannot.
6. “Undue Impact” Language – it was noted that all references to “undue impact” will be removed from the Woodland Ordinance because the language is subjective and hard to quantify.
7. The Chart – it was noted that the chart contained within the Woodlands Ordinance will be revised to reflect the amount of trees that can be removed on both residential and non-residential lots.

Ms. Hamtil asked for clarification on the “drip line” definition. Planner McManus remarked that she will review it.

It was noted that Planner McManus will provide the Board with a revised draft of the Woodlands Ordinance based on this evenings comments prior to next month’s meeting for review and further discussion.

Discussion – Route 31 & Permitted Uses – Status Update

Planner McManus noted that she is reviewing the permitted uses along Route 31 and will have something drafted for the Board to review prior to next month’s meeting.

Discussion – SHREC Project – Status Update

Mr. Fisher commented that work on aggregation for the municipal building and for the community at large is moving forward. He added that the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is considering a rate cut for Jersey Central Power and Light (JCP&L) for distribution.

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With regard to the solar installations at the municipal building and at the High School, Mr. Fisher remarked that those projects are really not moving forward at the moment.

New Business - Other

Engineer Burr commented that he spoke with John Anderson from JCP&L earlier this afternoon and he indicated they want to move forward with their application to upgrade the substation on Rocktown-Lambertville Road but wanted to get some input and guidance from the Board's Professionals prior to submitting anything. It was the consensus of the Board to have Secretary Andrews reach out to Mr. Anderson and request an initial escrow be established so he can consult with the Board's Professionals on submitting an application.

Open to the Public

It was noted for the record that there were no members of the public present at the meeting at this time.

It was noted for the record that Attorney Shurts, Engineer Burr and Planner McManus were excused from the meeting at this time, 8:51 PM.

Approval of Minutes – 11/19/13

A motion by Urbanski, seconded by Neufeld to approve the Board's minutes from 11/19/13 as revised, was approved by voice vote with Ms. Hamtil abstaining.

Approval of Minutes – 1/29/14

A motion by Urbanski, seconded by Hamtil to approve the Board's minutes from 1/29/14 as revised, was unanimously approved by voice vote.

It was noted for the record that the Board's 12/17/13 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather so there will not be any minutes to be approved for that month.

Adjournment

A motion by Urbanski, seconded by Haug to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Maria Andrews, Planning Board Secretary