

**WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
November 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 November 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: Nella Hamtil
John Haug
Art Neufeld
Zach Rich
Hal Shute
Rob Tomenchok – *Chairman*
Chester Urbanski
Jim Cally – *Alt. #2*
Planner McManus
Attorney Shurts

Excused: Steve Bergenfeld
George Fisher
Bob Balaam – *Alt. #1*

It was noted for the record that Chairman Tomenchok re-ordered the agenda to address the two members of the public who were present. Dr. Michael Ehrenreich and Rebecca Gelman came forward and explained that they were seeking informal input and direction from the Planning Board on how best to proceed with a project they are contemplating.

Dr. Ehrenreich stated they are in the process of buying the property located at 1872 River Road in West Amwell Township which is adjacent to the existing Flea Market on Route 29. He explained they would like to create a 10 room inn called, "The General's Retreat." Dr. Ehrenreich noted that they plan to remodel the existing home on the site and add an addition to construct the inn. The barn on the property will become a gift shop. He explained that they can proceed with an application for a hotel with accessory uses or for a bed and breakfast with a restaurant and gift shop and wanted input from the Board on the best way to proceed.

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It was noted that both Attorney Shurts and Planner McManus indicated the proposed application would be a matter for the Zoning Board of Adjustment, not the Planning Board. Dr. Ehrenreich stated he had spoken with the Zoning Officer about the proposed project and was directed to approach the Planning Board. Attorney Shurts indicated that he believes the project will need use variance approval which can only be granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Seeing no other members of the public come forward, a motion by Mr. Rich, seconded by Mr. Urbanski to close to the public was unanimously approved.

Approval of Bill List

A motion by Ms. Hamtil, seconded by Mr. Haug to approve the vouchers for payment as listed on the 11/18/14 bill list was approved by roll call vote with Mr. Urbanski abstaining.

Resolutions

It was noted for the record that there were no resolutions of approval listed on the agenda.

Applications

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

Unfinished Business

Discussion – Permitted Uses – Status Update

Mr. Urbanski explained that Planner McManus had cleaned up the amended drafts he had presented to the Board last month and commented that the Board now needs to decide whether or not they wish to list prohibited uses in the Light Industrial Zone. Attorney Shurts commented that any use not specifically permitted is prohibited. Chairman Tomenchok suggested that language be added to the beginning of the document indicating that anything not expressly permitted is prohibited. Planner McManus commented that once the uses are defined, it will clarify everything.

A poll of the Board revealed that Section H – Prohibited Uses will be removed from the document:

Mr. Haug – remove

Mr. Urbanski – abstain

Ms. Hamtil – remove

Chairman Tomenchok – remove

Mr. Rich – remove

Mr. Neufeld – remove

Mr. Cally – remove

Mr. Shute – remove

There was some additional brief discussion and language clarification on the sections including major solar development, small wind energy development, municipal parks and common neighborhoods.

It was the consensus of the Board to ask Planner McManus to define the uses, clean up the language that was discussed and consolidate the table of permitted uses for review at next month's meeting.

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New Business

Chairman Tomenchok suggested the Planning Board consider starting their meetings at 7:00 PM next year. It was the consensus of the Board to change the meeting start time in 2015 from 7:30 PM to 7:00 PM.

Mr. Shute mentioned that the Land Use Ordinance allows for accessory residences in all residential zones and some commercial zones for either domestic or farm workers with the only requirement being that there is 10 acres of land. He commented that the Toll Brothers parcel is 200 acres and stated that they could technically put up 20 houses and rent them out. He thought the Board may wish to review this at some point.

Mr. Shute also indicated he is working on a preservation project in which the land owner would like to have two residences on the farm after it is preserved without subdividing. Chairman Tomenchok noted this has been done in the Township before. Mr. Urbanski asked if the second residence would be used for farm workers. Mr. Shute clarified that the use of the second dwelling must be associated with either domestic or farm help. The question was raised what happens with the two homes 30 years from now when the owner may want to retire and sell the property. Mr. Shute suggested perhaps a subcommittee sit down and discuss considering a limitation on the size of the second home or the required acreage needed for accessory housing. Planner McManus suggested she put a definition in the permitted use table to tighten up the language on accessory dwellings. She also suggested a deed restriction on the property be established or the acreage be the controlling factor. It was the consensus of the Board to allow accessory dwellings on 50 acre parcels as a conditional use.

Mr. Urbanski noted that correspondence received from the County Planning Board has a former Board Engineer listed in the list of people who were copied on the letter and asked that Secretary Andrews advise the County Planning Board who the current Planning Board Engineer is.

It was noted for the record that Planner McManus and Attorney Shurts were both excused from the meeting at this time, 8:48 PM.

Executive Session

A motion by Mr. Haug, seconded by Mr. Urbanski approving Resolution PB#2014-10 authorizing the Board to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing the professional's contracts was unanimously approved by voice vote.

A motion by Mr. Rich, seconded by Mr. Urbanski to return to open session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The Board was in executive session from 8:48 PM – 9:12 PM.

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Ms. Hamtil, seconded by Mr. Urbanski to approve the Board's 10/21/14 minutes as revised was unanimously approved by voice vote.

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Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Maria Andrews, Planning Board Secretary