

**WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD – REGULAR MEETING
November 21, 2023 Minutes – 7:00 PM**

The West Amwell Township Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 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. This meeting was noticed as a regularly scheduled meeting transmitted to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Times of Trenton on January 26, 2023. 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 Planning 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 Chairman may permit a reasonable extension of those time limits.

Attendance – Roll Call

Present: Jim Cally
John Haug
Carl Ippolito
Joe Petrucci
Rob Tomenchok
John Flemming – Alt. #1
Attorney Tara St. Angelo

Excused: Bob Balaam
John Dale
Nella Hamtil
Christopher Morgan
Connor Montferrat – Alt. #2

New Business – Other

Discussion: Request from Township Committee to Review the Standards for Ag Buildings on Preserved and Farmland Assessed Properties

Board Secretary Andrews explained there is a pending application before the Zoning Board for a height variance to construct a barn on a farm assessed property. It was noted that the Township code only allows for barns to be 15 feet high which was likely never the intent for an agricultural community. Secretary Andrews stated the Committee asked the Board to review the current standards for ag buildings on preserved and farm assessed properties for possible amendments and updating.

Attorney St. Angelo commented that she and Planner Slagle will review this matter along with the definition for a Bed and Breakfast in 2024.

Consistency Review: Ordinance 12, 2023 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST AMWELL IN THE COUNTY OF HUNTERDON TO AMEND CHAPTER 109, “LAND DEVELOPMENT,” PART 10 “CANNABIS,” ARTICLE XLIII “CANNABIS RELATED BUSINESSES,” TO AMEND

CHAPTER 130, “LICENSING” AND TO AMEND CHAPTER 140, “TAXATION,” ARTICLE I “CANNABIS TRANSFER TAX,” AND TO ADD CHAPTER 111, ARTICLE 11 CANNABIS BUSINESS LICENSING

Attorney St. Angelo explained the Township had adopted a few amendments to the Cannabis ordinance but some were faulty and contained inconsistencies so this current version addresses all of that. She also clarified that the ordinance allows local licensing of cannabis facilities which is currently allowed by State Law. Attorney St. Angelo remarked it is like a “check-in” for the facilities, noting their license expires each year if it is not renewed by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC).

A motion was made by Carl Ippolito and seconded by John Haug finding Ordinance 12, 2023 not inconsistent with the Master Plan or zoning code. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Continued Review of the Master Plan: Community Facilities Plan Element

Chairman Tomenchok noted he had received all of the updated data from all departments except for what was requested from the High School. He explained the Plan is really documentation of existing facilities.

The following details were highlighted:

1. The ladies auxiliary at the fire company has officially disbanded
2. There will likely be changes to the Amwell Valley Rescue Squad, but nothing official yet
3. Mike Spille will be contributing to updating the school data for this plan element

Chairman Tomenchok noted the next Master Plan Element for review will be the Circulation Plan. He commented that there are some inconsistencies within the definitions and resident Dave Beaumont had provided comments and suggestions for the Board to review.

Mr. Cally commented that he would like to establish no parking along Rocktown-Lambertville Road. He expressed safety and traffic concerns now that the new school is being built. He also remarked that GPS is routing large trucks throughout the Township to eliminate the toll roads and he believes signage on certain roads needs to be installed to address this.

Attorney St. Angelo commented that the Township can make a recommendation to work with the State and County Departments of Transportation to obtain a signage “package,” so everything remains consistent on the roadways within the community. She also suggested the Township Engineer review the weight limits on the roads being utilized by the trucks.

Discussion: Planning Board By-Laws

Mr. Haug commented that he and Ms. Hamtil reviewed the Board’s By-Laws and updated them where needed. Chairman Tomenchok asked Secretary Andrews to add this matter to the Board’s December agenda for final approval.

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.

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Activity Report

Attorney St. Angelo noted that under the new regulations for Tier A municipalities, NJDEP requires all Board Members to watch a 45 minute video on stormwater management prior to the summer of 2024. She suggested the Board could watch the video during an actual Planning Board meeting or everyone could view it on their own time and sign off on a certification that they did so.

It was noted for the record that the Board preferred to watch the videos on their own.

Minutes

A motion was made by Carl Ippolito and seconded by John Haug to approve the Board's 9/19/23 meeting minutes with no revisions noted. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

A motion was made by John Haug and seconded by Jim Cally to approve the Board's 10/17/23 meeting minutes with no revisions noted. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Adjournment

A motion by Jim Cally, seconded by John Flemming to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Maria Andrews, Planning Board Secretary