

The work session of February 17, 2004 of the Washington Township Planning Board was called to order by Vice Chairman McGroarty at 7:38 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

CLASS IV: Charles DiSalvo, Kathleen McGroarty, Howard Popper, Geoffrey Price, Kevin Walsh
ALTERNATES: Mark Bauerlein, William Leavens
CLASS I:
CLASS II: Walter Cullen
CLASS III: Kim Ball Kaiser,
OTHERS ABSENT: Jones, Trevena
OTHERS PRESENT: Engineer Hall, Clerk Kesper, Planner Banisch

Adequate notice of this meeting was sent to the Observer-Tribune and the Morristown Daily Record on January 16, 2004 and posted on the Bulletin Board on the same date. Five notices were mailed, as there were five requests.

****NO NEW CASES OR WITNESSES SHALL BE HEARD SUBSEQUENT TO 10:30 PM****

Pledge of Allegiance

MINUTES

1. Minutes from the February 9, 2004 Regular Meeting

Mr. Price made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Kaiser. A voice vote was taken; Mr. Bauerlein abstained, all others were in favor and the motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS

None

The meeting was opened to the public for items not on the agenda. There were no comments from the public and the meeting was closed to the public for items not on the agenda.

DECISIONS ON COMPLETENESS

None

APPLICATIONS

None

DISCUSSION / CORRESPONDENCE

1. Preliminary Checklist Change – Driveway Opening Permits

Mr. Hall reviewed his letter and request for driveway opening permits on major subdivisions where the lots abut an existing public street. It was his opinion that there are many major applications coming in that have their lots on an existing public roads. He explained that without permits the Board could possibly approve lots that could not be designed to meet township ordinances and could not get permits. He stated that currently a driveway permit would not be required until the applicant applied for a building permit.

The Board discussed this requirement at length.

It was decided to change the information required for preliminary plats under 175-27.

2. Final Check List Change – Bonding, Etc.

The letter from Ms. Cofoni on this change was reviewed and the board agreed that items 14 and 15 of the current final checklist should be deleted.

3. State Planning Map

Mr. Banisch referred to the state planning map and stated Washington Township remained entirely within the environmentally sensitive and rural environmental classifications. He pointed out that Hackettstown is shown as a center and he

explained that this center has been removed from Washington Township Master Plan. The center goes up to Heath Village and out to Route 46, which would accommodate the by-pass that Washington Township does not support. He stated that this was an item that the Board would want to make a comment to the State about. He also stated that the farmland off of Esna Drive is in a sewer area. Approximately one third of Washington Township is part of the regional center. He stated that the 95 Master Plan did identify this area as a regional center. He noted that this was part of the State Plan to have Hackettstown designated as a regional center. He explained that this area does meet the criteria for a center, especially when you include the US Homes proposal for senior housing.

The state is looking for comments prior to February 28, 2004.

He stated that on the data layers the DEP is asking for input to correct the data information on a lot by lot basis. He stated that it was his opinion that this would not be necessary because they have the Township in the correct classification. He noted that the errors are too numerous to enumerate but the underlying planning designation is correct.

Mr. Banisch answered Mr. Popper about zoning by referring to the zoning map and the development along the Hackettstown/Mansfield border, which is office research, industrial and high density residential. He explained how the overlay senior citizen zone works with the zoning in this area, which is in lieu of non-residential development. He stated that the regional center line pretty much follows this zoning.

Mr. Banisch will prepare a letter to be reviewed at the Feb. 25th meeting.

4. Discussion on Density Determination and 5. Discussion on Potential Rezoning based on the 2003 Master Plan Land Use Element

Mr. Banisch reviewed his memo of February 17th on density and the Manalapan decision. He explained that one of the keys to the latest decisions is that all items such as steep slopes are treated equally.

Mr. Banisch explained the current master plan recommendation for 20 acre zoning which allows for ten acre zoning if lot averaging, cluster, or open space methods are utilized. He stated that if we change the definition of density which reduces the lot size, this zoning recommendation would have to be looked at again.

Mr. Banisch reviewed the purposes of the municipal land use law and density calculation and carrying capacity. He reviewed the density calculation in the plan. He explained that cluster would then be based on the number of lots determined under the density calculation. He explained that large lot zoning grew out of the Manalapan decision because before that decision towns deducted the wetlands and critical areas from density. He recommended moving cautiously in the direction of density calculation as we must be able to prove that it is reasonable.

Ms. Kaiser stated that it was her opinion that changing density definitions may take the pressure off down zoning the township. She did not see where this change would require a change to the Master Plan because the Master Plan calls for protecting critical areas.

Mr. Banisch that he spoke to Mr. Buzak about a two tier approach that the large lot areas would go to 10 acres and the smaller lot areas to 7 acres. It was his opinion that this would pass the rational test.

Ms. Kaiser asked what kind of pressure would be put on good land if the density criteria were used.

Mr. Banisch stated that he thought the pressure was already here.

It was discussed that a build out analysis based on this density criteria vs. zoning may be necessary to come to a decision on this issue.

Mr. Banisch was asked to give a cost estimate on a build out analysis on vacant land starting with large gross basis and giving us different approaches and cost break downs. Undeveloped less steep slopes, wetlands, how many acres are developable.

Mr. Banisch was asked to have cost estimates for the next work session on March 24th.

Mr. DiSalvo made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Popper. A voice vote was taken, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Virginia R. Kesper