

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – February 6, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Page Stiger, Andy Borkin, Tom Mathews, Dana Desiderio, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Richard Dodds, Freeholder VanDoren

ABSENT: Freeholder Lanza

STAFF PRESENT: Ken Bogen, Bill Millette, Adam Bradford, Carrie Fellows
Aaron Culton - County Counsel

Carol Hoffmann read the Open Public Meetings Act notice and called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided by prominently posting and maintaining so posted throughout the year in the Office of the County Clerk, Hall of Records, Main Street, Flemington, New Jersey, a public place reserved for such announcements, and by mailing on or before December 17th, 2019 to The Hunterdon Democrat, The Express Times, Courier News, The Trenton Times, Star Ledger, and TAPinto, newspapers designated by the Hunterdon County Planning Board to receive such notices. Notice has also been posted on-line in the Hunterdon County News"

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 9th. MEETING:

Motion to approve minutes, Richard Dodds, Page Stiger seconded, motion carried.

FREEHOLDER UPDATE:

Freeholder VanDoren reported that the County has started the budget process. They have had two budget meetings already and are delving into the capital budgeting process. They will be having another budget meeting today and another meeting next week. It's a matter of prioritizing the needs of the County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

Marc said that Hunterdon County keeps getting hotter for developers and brokers, saying that we are easy to deal with, which we never where in the past. We are a desirable territory and people want to work with us. but due to infrastructure limitations, small amount of available land, and other factors, only a small percentage of interested parties can find a site that meets their requirements. Visakol, a pharma company HQ, has landed at the Shelbourne building in Union Township. There is also a new company coming in to the same building from Warren County. Despite the limitation we have, the phone will not stop ringing. Marc asked the attending town reps to keep an ear out for land in their jurisdictions that might be available for sale tom potential incoming projects. The EcoDev office knows the county building inventory very well, but not all the potentially available greenfield locations. The 78/22 Coalition is working with New Jersey Transit to increase service to the 4 train stations across the corridor. We are asking New Jersey Transit for the return of weekend service. We are also asking for the return of 1 inbound and out bound train service as well as a few skip stopping lines and the return of the one seat ride as well. Freeholder VanDoren said that Merck, announced yesterday that they were going to do a spin off a new company that will have over 10,000 employees generating 6 billion dollars in revenue. They intend to place their headquarters in New Jersey. Marc said that we need more flex space, office space with storage is rather popular.

STAFF UPDATES:

Farmland Update:

Bob reported that SADC increased their funding for stewardship to connect people to land. There are 38 current applications, we will be looking for more. We will announce an April 9th deadline to have the applications for the Spring round. We are hoping to vote at the May 14th meeting. We have not closed anything yet this year as there has been staff turnover at the SADC and the paperwork turnover has slowed down a bit. The SADC announced that they did a monitoring report of the farmland easements and NJ has an extraordinarily high rate of people following the easements and there are statistically few violations in NJ. The SADC will give the comments/feedback on Special Occasion Events to the legislature in February on what direction NJ should take on what is allowed on preserved farmland. We have 3 Right to Farm issues that are ongoing. Beneduce Vineyards in Tewksbury (Special occasion/direct marketing events), Melick's Oldwick Farm in Tewksbury (they are looking for setbacks to construct a farm building), and in Kingwood there is a Commercial Farm application

Planning Issues:

Adam reported that he has been working with Economic Development to map open land in the County. What makes it difficult is that there are some municipalities that have correct zoning information but he has been unable to obtain the GIS files from them and there are other municipalities that have not updated their zoning for a while. Also, it's been a slow process to obtain zoning information from municipal planners. Will be working with NJTPA to obtain a more detailed land use analysis.

He is currently working on an application for the Ryland Inn. This is a very large project. They are in the 3rd phase of a 39 single family residence development. He has also been working on 2 farmland projects with Bob.

Adam has been working with NJTPA and Ralph Runge in Engineering on the Congestion Management Plan identifying the congestion issues within the County. Once Engineering approves the congestion areas he will submit the information to the NJTPA. Carol asked about the status for the timeline for the LDS (Land Development Standards) update project. Adam replied that not much had changed with the timeline. He has been working on the update for section 300 to make it more readable. Ken said that if we need to make a revision on the timeline, we will do so and send it out to the LDS Subcommittee.

Open Space:

Bill reported that last week they had their first POSAC meeting of 2020. We had two applications, one for the municipal grant program from the Town of Clinton; they want to use their balance for the redevelopment of a park that is adjacent to the North County Library, making it an all-inclusive playground. The other is the Curtis Farm in Delaware Township, the only remaining farm to be preserved in the Rosemont Valley. For 2020 we have quite a few prospects for County park acquisitions. Working on potential projects in 5 different townships, Clinton, Alexandria, Holland, Readington and Lebanon Township. Almost these properties are adjacent to county park properties.

Department Head:

Carrie reported that January is a huge month, they have completed their expense budgets, and salary and wage budgets are coming due for all departments next week.

Cultural & Heritage:

The two State grant final reports are done. We just received the County History Partnership Program (CHPP) contract, we will start working on that. We anticipate that the 2020 CHPP awards and the Local Arts Program awards will be announced later this month. This Saturday Feb. 8, Susan Wallner will be doing a presentation and screening of her documentary of "You'll Take The Sky" about Anne Morrow Lindberg and her life at the Historic Courthouse at 2:30pm.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee:

Carol said that the Committee will be meeting today to discuss topics for the spring breakfast talk event. Ken said that we were going to have shared services as the topic for the event but are now looking at alternative topics. The event will take place on May 12th. Ken will report back to the Planning Board at the next meeting with the topic that the Committee decided to move forward with.

DRC Committee Report: Carol said that there is an application on today's agenda that two Board members, Andy and Dana, had previously reviewed. Andy and Dana volunteered for today's meeting and Dana and Gabrielle volunteered for the February 20 meeting. Ken said that the one application being reviewed today was for a major subdivision in Lambertville for 9 new lots and 5 residential structures.

Supervisors Report: There were no questions or comments regarding the January staff activity report. Ken summarized the February 4th County Highlands Plan Conformance public meeting. Freeholder Holt and Carrie gave introductions and welcomed the audience to the meeting. Ken thanked the Board members who attended the meeting. John Barree, the Heyer-Gruel consultant for the project gave a presentation concerning the status of the conformance process. He has put together a draft self-assessment for the County which is comprised of a review of County planning plans and reports. There were 16 attendees at the meeting. Ken mentioned that Freeholder Holt was very involved during the Q&A session Phil said that the meeting was interesting and informative. He thought the session was spot on concerning the County road issues that Tom Mathews discussed. The next step in the conformance process is for the consultant to complete the self-assessment report and then draft an implementation agenda. There will be another public meeting before we go through the final County resolution process for plan conformance. Carrie expressed her appreciation for Freeholder Holt's active role in engaging the audience at the meeting. Page said that he was glad that the consultant recognized that the TDR process in the Highlands was not a viable option at this time. Marc mentioned that the current Highlands Council leadership is committed to partnering with the County. Richard discussed the TDR project that Kingwood has been working on over the past several years.

Transportation:

Tom said that letters have gone out to the municipalities about the County chip seal and line stripping programs. The municipalities are asked every year if they would like the County to obtain a price for them and that's all that they are obligated for. It's a great shared services program and he is surprised that more municipalities are not involved with the chip seal program. Letters have gone out to our schools for Arbor Day. The Shade Tree Commissions offers to donate one tree to every school if they want to plant it.

The County has awarded a pre-construction and pre-design contract for the RT16 (Merck/Unicom bridge) which is a 3-year project. They will not be closing the road during the project. The County Roads 513 & 628 project from Everittstown to Pittstown is now out to bid. The L6 culvert at Hickory Run Road on CR513 in Lebanon Township will close on May 4th for repair for a 5

month closure. Detours will be posted. All Federal projects work at a very slow pace including the Route 78 Exit 15 project in Clinton. The final design was submitted to the NJDOT for final review and they have requested the County to address the intersection in front of the Cracker Barrel which will cause a totally new redesign. The ROW acquisition is the next stage after the redesign is approved by NJDOT.

Old Business/New Business:

Richard said that PENNEAST is now proposing a two-phase pipeline process, first phase in Pennsylvania and second phase in New Jersey. They already own most of the ROW in Pennsylvania. To qualify as a FERC project you must be interstate. The Supreme Court is still considering whether to take their case which is fighting New Jersey right to sovereign immunity. There is only a 30% subscription in Pennsylvania for the new pipeline. FERC prefers to see a need close to 100%. There are alternative pipelines that they could use but they don't want to pay the rent. They still need FERC approval. They need to show there is a need to take people's property. This will be a very long process.

Public Comments:

Barbara Sachau showed an article that our animals are under siege and that stewardships need to be monitored. The stewards are logging our lands and killing our birds and other wildlife. The Fair Share Housing Council seems to want to take our open space, which she stated she believes is a developer in disguise.

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Richard made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Page seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:14 AM

NEXT MEETING DATE: March 5, 2020 at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner