

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – May 7, 2020

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

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"

Chair Carl Hoffmann wanted to go on record thanking all professionals and residents in helping keep Hunterdon's positive COVID-19 numbers low.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5, 2020 MEETING:

Motion to approve minutes, Richard Dodds, Andy Borkin seconded, Freeholder Van Doren, abstained, motion carried.

FREEHOLDER UPDATE:

Freeholder Van Doren thanked all of the frontline personnel for the great job they are doing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The numbers for COVID-19 do remain low, although unfortunately there have been several deaths and wanted to offer condolences to those family members affected. The governor did extend the health emergency order for another 30 days which will now be in effect through June 5th. The County will continue to work with limited staff with many staff members working remotely. Some offices are by appointment only. The BOCF introduced the new budget several weeks ago. The budget holds the tax rate steady for the 3rd year in a row. The public hearing on the budget will be held on May 19th. The BOCF has asked County Department heads to begin developing their plans for public and employee safety within their departments when the county goes back to normal operations.

Carol Hoffman commented that the Freeholders have done a wonderful job of updating the public with their newsletter.

STAFF UPDATES:

Farmland Update:

Bob reported that he has 35 active applications. The Spring round had no new applications as of the April 9th deadline. The May 14th CADB meeting has been cancelled, as the Beneduce Vineyards (Special occasion/direct marketing events) RTF hearing requested that they wanted to be heard in front of a live committee. The SADC meeting was held on April 23 as a call in. They are now using digital signatures and closing arrangements now and it seems to be running smoothly. Rutgers Extension Service is looking at extensive cuts to their budget. Rutgers and Burlington have cancelled their fairs or involvement due to the uncertainty of the Corona Virus. The Farmers market website has launched with 30 farmers and 9 running markets that provide local produce and goods. Phil asked about social distancing protocols for these markets. Stockton Farmers Market has implemented a plan that other markets have emulated. There is to be six feet distancing between vendors and only 2 people at the stand at any given time to follow social distancing.

Planning Issues:

Adam reported that he and Ken have a few DRC applications. The Solberg Runway Rehabilitation DRC application has now received a conditional approval. The Land Development Standards timeline has been updated and dates have been extended for interdepartmental staff. The LDS project continues to move forward. Interdepartmental staff have started drafting the proposed LDS Road Classification map.

The US Census PSAP boundary survey has been completed and will be submitted early for the May 15th deadline. Adam said that the US Census Bureau uses a different GIS platform which was a challenge to learn. The NY office reviewed the draft data before it was submitted without issues or revisions needed. Stockton, High Bridge and Readington municipalities had block group issues and mapping difficulties within certain US Census boundary lines.

Open Space:

Bill reported that he is closing a few existing projects. The contracts for the Milford property are moving along. Milford Borough is also in need of updating their Master Plan since this project is nearing the end. There are a few new acquisitions that are

coming up. The procedure manual for Open Space is being updated, it hasn't been done since 2008. The Stewardship program is moving along. Construction on the Communication Tower in the parking lot of the Jugtown Nature preserve is in the works, it does have a Green Acres impact. Green Acres has been heavily involved to ensure that the impact is minimal. A Public hearing notice will be set when the project gets closer so the public can comment on the proposed communication tower construction. Parks have been open, and it seems the public for the most part have been following the rules of masks and social distancing. Richard asked Bill what the height of the proposed tower was. Bill replied that it's a sizeable tower, about 200 feet tall and that it is self-sustained with no guidewires.

Department Head:

Carrie reported that she been attending a lot of meetings concerning the reopening of the parks within 48 hours of notification from the Governor. The Rangers, Prosecutors, OEM and the Sheriff's Office worked together for a multi-division coordinated effort to ensure the parks opened safely for patrons. Reports after reopening day indicated there were not a lot of face coverings worn, but there was social distancing. The parking lots were limited by Executive Order to 50% capacity. Building use, such as the bathrooms, is still not allowed. Staff received a good response from patrons in the parks. Everything has been working well with a lot of coordination across the divisions. She and other departments have been working on Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) and also on the Department reopening plan. Glass barriers, half doors, social distancing in the office environment are being discussed and implemented.

Cultural & Heritage:

Carrie reported that there was little going on at this time, due to the focus on COVID.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol said that the Committee met telephonically on April 17 and decided to postpone the Breakfast talk on recycling issues until the fall. Carol mentioned that Carrie said that the Planning Board would receive priority in the Assembly room for future meetings whenever on-site meetings are renewed.

DRC Committee Report: Carol asked for volunteers for today's meeting. Dana and Gabriella volunteered for today's meeting and the May 21st DRC meeting. Ken said that they are now posting DRC application materials on the Planning Board website. One application being reviewed at today's meeting – a Site Plan for a Dunkin store and Gas Station in the Town of Clinton.

Supervisors Report:

There were no questions or comments regarding the March & April staff activity report. Ken summarized the status of the Highlands Conformance process. The Draft Element Plan from Heyer-Gruel has now been received by staff. The Plan is currently being reviewed by staff and our comments will be integrated into the Plan. The next step would be for the Plan to go to the Highlands Council for their comments and then it would to go to a public hearing and be brought before the Planning Board for adoption as an element to the County Master Plan. The public hearing might be scheduled for September or October of this year.

Transportation:

Adam said that he recently attended the final NJTPA Travel Demand Model Webinar for long range planning within the Northern NJ MPO/MSA region

Tom said that he has 2 projects under construction this month - CR513 is closed in Lebanon Township for construction of the L6 bridge just south of Califon Township and the RT16 bridge construction project which is located near the old Merck complex by Halls Mill Road.

Old Business/New Business:

Richard said that there were no new updates on the pipeline.

Public Comments:

Evita Esser from Annandale NJ asked if before someone can build on preserved farmland does an application for approval have to go before the Planning Board. She thought that once the property was preserved that you could not build upon it anymore. Bob said that each preserved piece of property has different easement rights, it would depend on the property. Each is reviewed on a case by case basis. Ken said that a Site Plan application would be reviewed by the Planning Board if it impacts County facilities. An application for a single-family residence would not be reviewed. County Counsel encouraged her to call Bob and he would look into the matter.

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Richard made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Dana seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:11 AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: June 4, 2020 at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner