

ROBBINSVILLE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
ROBBINSVILLE TOWNSHIP, MERCER COUNTY, NJ
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2010 7:00 P.M. – SENIOR CENTER
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Cettina, Mr. Colarocco, Mr. Guididas, Ms. Breyta, Mr. Kolibas, Mr. Rivers, Mr. Boyne, Mrs. Van Nest

Absent: Ms. Ward, Mr. Lasky, Mr. Diel

Also Present: Mr. McGough, PE, Township Engineer; Mr. Dasti, Esq., Board Attorney; Ms. Post, Board Secretary

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cettina. Roll call for the above members was called.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Chairman Cettina read the following statement: "Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required under Chapter 231 P.L. 1975 specifying the time and place with such notice as being sent to the *Times of Trenton*, *Messenger Press* and the *Trentonian* and posted on the Municipal Building Public Notice Meeting Bulletin Board."

FLAG SALUTE

The Board members present led the public in the salute to the flag.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Cettina noted that in the Board's packet there were letters submitted for informational purposes. There was a notification regarding an NJDEP application for a General Wetlands Permit for Edinburg Village. The second letter was from Remington & Vernick on behalf of the Township, who has applied to NJDEP for a Flood Hazard Area Permit for a Pedestrian Sidewalk Construction and Culvert Extension on Robbinsville-Edinburg Road (CR 526).

Mr. Dasti said there was a letter was from the law firm of DeCotiis, FitzPatrick & Cole, LLP on behalf of the NJ Turnpike in connection with the Authority's 6-9 Widening Program. There is an agreement between the NJ Turnpike and the town for the acquisition of a portion of Block 19, Lot 15 (soccer field). This letter is a notification of a public hearing taking place on July 7, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. to receive public comment regarding the parkland transfer.

Mr. Guididas commented that at one point there had been discussion of using some of the funds the Township would be paid to purchase some additional land on Route 526 north of the high school for additional fields. Where does that overall plan stand?

Mr. McGough answered there is no definitive plan. This is a Green Acres hearing for a strip along the back of the soccer fields and Gordon Road. There are two elements to it. We will have approximately \$619,000 to buy additional open space and there is an allowable \$300,000 to be used to build replacement fields. There was discussion regarding the Thompson land by the high school of building the fields there. In the months that have ensued and what has come about was the idea was to build another Babe Ruth or American Legion type of baseball field. The high school, Babe Ruth and the American Legion have all

agreed they could share the high school field so they won't have to build a new field. Recreation dollars will be used to do the fencing, lighting and score board. Basically, they are waiting for the budget to get adopted. Mr. McGough mentioned there is an idea to build some soccer fields using some of the money on a small portion of the Thompson land adjacent to high school. Again, the \$619,000 must be used to buy additional open space. There is open space that has been targeted. As a matter of fact, the developer of the Washington Woods project, located directly across from the high school and adjacent to Saran Woods, which has been on hold for awhile, is now saying he wants to move forward with the project. A meeting has been scheduled for next Thursday with the developer, Mayor Fried and himself to discuss what they want to do with the property.

Mr. Guididas thanked Mr. McGough for his explanation.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no Board comments made at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cettina asked for a motion to open the meeting for public comment. A motion was made by Mrs. Van Nest and seconded by Mr. Rivers to open the meeting to the public. All in favor. Since no one came forward from the public to address the Board, a motion was made by Mr. Boyne and seconded by Mr. Rivers to close the public portion of the meeting. All in favor.

MINUTES

February 17, 2010 – Chairman Cettina noted who was eligible to vote: Mr. Guididas, Ms. Breyta, Mr. Boyne, Mr. Rivers and himself. A motion was made by Mr. Rivers and Seconded by Mr. Boyne to adopt the minutes as circulated.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Guididas, Ms. Breyta, Mr. Boyne, Mr. Rivers, Chairman Cettina

NAYS: None

ABSTAINED: None

There being five (5) aye votes and no nay votes, the minutes were adopted.

April 21, 2010 – Chairman Cettina stated who was eligible to vote: Mr. Colarocco, Mr. Kolibas, Mr. Boyne, Mrs. Van Nest, Mr. Guididas, and himself. A motion was made by Mr. Boyne and seconded by Mr. Colarocco to adopt the minutes as circulated.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Colarocco, Mr. Kolibas, Mr. Boyne, Mrs. Van Nest, Mr. Guididas, Chairman Cettina

NAYS: None

ABSTAINED: None

There being six (6) aye votes and no nay votes, the minutes were adopted.

BUSINESS TO DISCUSS

Resolution – PB2010-07 – Sharbell Building Company, LLC – Approval of an Amended Preliminary Site Plan, Amended Preliminary Major Subdivision, Variance and Design Waiver

Chairman Cettina stated the Board recently received a revised resolution. He asked if anyone had any questions that needed to be addressed or if everyone is satisfied with the resolution as presented.

Mrs. Van Nest asked if this updated resolution had the changes in it.

Mr. Dasti said the only changes were editorial in nature and reviewed those changes with the Board.

Mrs. Van Nest had a question regarding page 1 of the resolution. The Board did not hear testimony from the applicant's Traffic Engineer regarding the realignment and the traffic light in that right turn. Hopefully, at the next presentation the Board can hear this testimony from the Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Dasti apologized to Mrs. Van Nest. It was mentioned to him prior to the start of this meeting that at least one Board member would of have liked the representation in the resolution. The applicant's proposal is to have a dedicated portion of their property for the realignment of Gordon Road. The thought was there should be representation or condition in the resolution that the applicant is going to realign Gordon Road at their cost and not the Township's cost. Mr. Dasti said if that is alright with the Board, he will add that language in the resolution and e-mail it to Ms. Post tomorrow.

Mrs. Van Nest asked for the record if it was possible to get the applicant's Traffic Engineer to give testimony at final.

Mr. Troy asked if Mrs. Van Nest means for Sharbell to have a Traffic Engineer when they came in for final site plan.

Mrs. Van Nest said she did not know how the other Board members felt, but she felt there would be a lot of work to be done there, and she would have like to have heard from the Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Troy stated that at the earlier of either the final or this matter the Board will be voting on tonight, or when Sharbell comes back within sixty days for the other one, they will have a Traffic Engineer testify.

Mr. Dasti said as a condition of this approval, the applicant has sixty days within the memorialization of this resolution to apply for preliminary site plan approval for the three proposed buildings, including the property in which Project Freedom will be constructed (to be located south of Gordon Road). The applicant will need a traffic expert for that. Mr. Dasti said he will make the changes to the resolution.

With that being said, Chairman Cettina asked for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was made by Mrs. Van Nest and seconded by Ms. Breyta to adopt the resolutions with the changes as stated by Mr. Dasti.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Colarocco, Mr. Kolibas, Mr. Guididas, Ms. Breyta, Mr. Boyne, Mrs. Van Nest,
Chairman Cettina

NAYS: None

ABSTAINED: None

There being seven (7) votes, the resolution was adopted as amended.

Mercer County Master Plan Update – Presentation

The Mercer County Planning Board is proposing adoption of a new County Master Plan Update including newly revised Farmland Preservation, Open Space and Mobility Plan elements. The Historic Preservation element, first adopted on June 12, 2002, is proposed to be readopted without change.

Donna Lewis, Planning Director for Mercer County, introduced herself. She thanked the Planning Board for responding to their offer to allow them to make the (power point) presentation. Four members of her staff were present to answer specific questions since they wrote the document. Lisa Fritzing, Supervising Principal Planner, wrote most of the document and she is their Historic Preservation person and has the dubious honor of working on their historic national plan. Also present are Lesley Floyd,

Assistant Planning Director; Dan Pace, Principal Planner, Mercer County Agricultural Program; and Matthew Lawson, Principal Planner, Transportation.

Ms. Lewis stated that county planning does not have the same requirements as the MLUL has. There are no requirements for the county to update its Master Plan or to have reexaminations as municipalities. There are no mandated elements. Historically, their plan had a parent document and has elements to support it. This plan updates and expands the "Highways Plan", which is supposed to be a transportation plan that deals with roads. More recently, they have added the elements of Open Space, Historic Preservation and those pieces of sub-elements have been amended and readopted over the years. The parent document is over twenty years old. They have tried a few times to get it updated and processed, but something always got in the way. They have very small staff. They are really excited that they are finally here. They started this process about two years ago by convening a series of public meetings and trying to get people interested in the County Master Plan, and mostly trying to have people understand what the County can or can not do because they have no jurisdiction over land use or things like that. They can use their plan to influence, but not to direct. One of the things they thought was very important, especially in the context of the regulatory environmental when they started working on this, was that in order for a sustainable plan and sustainable county not just environmental sustainable, but the place where people want to live, they have to balance the economy, environment and transportation. If it is not balanced, it will falter, which is the point of this diagram up here.

Ms. Lewis stated as part of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) planning process, they had three stakeholder meetings from November 2006 through January 2007 with a good turnout from interested environmental commissions, developers, citizens, municipal planning board members and non-profit individuals. The County worked with them in terms of what they thought was important in the county and what they valued. Everything from having all these colleges to having all those open spaces, do they really have a good transportation system and sort of everything all in between. They gave them a lot of data to look at where things really are, and what make sense to establish and connect. A lot of this plan is about balance and connection. There are places like Town Center where it makes sense because there is already dense housing development. It made more sense to put more housing there than some green field someplace else. So they engaged the public and started them looking into the really big picture while trying to erase the municipal lines because they did not want people to focus on what is in their back yard, but to focus on bigger things and think about what would be good for the entire county because that is what their charge is. They emphasized the importance and need for regional planning.

Ms. Lewis showed a slide of an Existing Conditions Map. The really interesting thing in developing this plan is that they have the 1935 County Master Plan. This is very similar to it and the plan that it is replacing. They have Routes 1, 31 and 130, which are the main spines of development through the county. These routes have always been there and have spread out more. Those routes are clear transportation routes.

The next slide is the Draft Concept Plan. The synthesis meeting #2 was the transit centers - Trenton Station, Hamilton Station, Princeton Junction Station, West Trenton Station and potentially a station at Kennytown on Route 31. Another part of synthesis meeting #2 was the green space and green space connector. This map shows 20% of the county being preserved in way or another, but not all is owned by the county or municipalities. Some of it is owned by non-profit and private, but it is 20% preserved. They are trying to link the goals even thought at the time they were writing this the State Plan was out there. They don't know what is happening with that. They are trying to link the goals of the adopted State Plan with our goals in economy, transportation and environment. They also want to have some kind of quantitative valuation process so they can go back in a few years especially in light of when all the census information is in, which won't be for another two years, and see how they are doing. They don't have the ability to be able to go out and generate their own data. They have a goal to improve the balance of jobs

and housing, which is something that is easily measurable by using the GIS. As to housing affordability, there are people doing some of these things. Transit scores is something that NJ Transit comes up with that measures the likelihood of success of transit in a particular area. Impervious surface is also something that can easily be measured by using the GIS system.

Ms. Lewis stated their schedule is that they have a couple of public hearings. The County Planning Board had a public hearing last Wednesday, June 9th. They made the offer to go to the municipalities to do a presentation. The public hearing record will be open for comment. The soonest they can adopt this is September, 2010 so they will keep the public hearing record open until August 15th. It is not a public hearing as far as they are concerned so if the Board has specific questions, they will be happy to answer. Things that you want in the public hearing record, you need to send to us.

Ms. Lewis said the way this is structured is that there is a parent document that sets up the rough parameters, which is what she just went through. Now, there are sub-elements. They no longer have a Transportation Element or Highway Element. They have a Mobility Element, which is a multimodal to the greatest extent possible and have a complete street policy, which will be challenging. They will begin to implement an access management plan, which is something the County has been trying to do for a long time, but they have had severe challenges. They are also working on some sub-elements on this Mobility Plan, which will be added later. They are not taking comments right now because they are not ready, but there will be bicycle facilities, long range transit concept plan and freight plan. Not that those are things that they can exactly control, but they are all part of mobility and transportation so they want to have something in their plan that addresses it. Studies are being conducted for crash analysis and capacity analysis, which will be used as time goes on to amend the plan because it is more data than they have right now. These updates will be added later.

Ms. Lewis said the next slide shows the Mobility Plan Map, which is available on our web site. They will be working with Municipal Engineers to go over the specifics of the Mobility Plan. What this does is accept the desire of the perfection of the County roads. It does not mean they are planning on building anything at the moment. It does not mean that there are missing links. What it means is when a developer comes to us and wants to build something, which is on a County road where the County does have jurisdiction, they can say that the desire for perfection for this road is four lanes. This only has two lanes and the developer is building enough development that it needs to be four lanes. Therefore, the developer needs to build it for us. That is the idea. There are places in Hamilton in particular where there are a couple of roads that have gaps in them, severely constrained by wetlands. They don't think those roads can ever be built, but just in case that ROW needs to be preserved so that fifty years from now they don't say why did they allow that house to be built there when they need this road to go there. It is really a matter of preserving options for the future. The other thing this does for us is that when it is adopted in our Land Development Standards, which is a county ordinance, is that if our desire for a road is one lane in each direction and the developer wants to build something that would require two lanes in each direction, turning lanes and a traffic light, they do have the ability under the state access code to say no. They can not put that amount of development on that road. Either they can share access, have an alternative access or build something smaller, but they can not put that amount of traffic on that road because that road is not suppose to be that big. That is the only way the County has any reins to control ever. The next slide entitled Cross Section Elements and ROW Requirements shows what they are going to be working with the Municipal Engineers. This shows the width of things and some of this stuff is very wide and makes for a very large ROW, which does sort of increase speed, but they are balancing safety. They need to work on that with their engineers and Municipal Engineers. They have different grades of roads and not all are County roads. They do have a category 1A. When the State did their access code initially, Nassau Street in Princeton was supposed to be two lanes in each direction with no parking, which made absolutely no sense. So there is a category of 1A which means "as existing" and they are not proposing to change it. It does not conform to any of the other standards, but it is what it is.

Ms. Lewis commented on the next slide Open Space Element (shows open space map). This element has been the most amended over the years. The green color indicates the County open space and the brown color is preserved farmland. The Assunpink Wildlife Management is shown as preserved farmland, which she does not understand. There are so many shades of brown that it is hard to see what is left. For the County open space, we have dedicated taxes of 3%. They use this tax to buy land that is of regional significance. It is usually land that the County owns, operates and maintains. They have a portion of their trust fund that they give to municipalities and non-profit for things that are local priorities and not necessarily county priorities, and that is a match that helps leverage other sources of lending and those things that the County issues is not even on the deed, it is just a municipal assistance grant. They help people to buy land that is important to them. They have increasingly been getting involved in things called cooperative projects. For an example, with Princeton Nurseries, which is located in three counties, they are working with the State Agricultural Development Committee, Green Acres, Monmouth County, Burlington County and our county, Hamilton Township and other Townships and some non-profits to try to put this whole deal together and that is usually a vehicle for bringing a lot of different sources of money into a big project. They usually do not have any significant operation responsibility for those kinds of project.

The next slide has the Mercer County Preserved Open Space in 1989, which shows about 9% of preservation. The next slide shows Mercer County Preserved Open Space in 2009, which shows 23% preservation. The dark color is what the County owns, which is 8%; the 4% that is striped is what they helped other people buy; the brown 4% is the preserved farms; and the 7% is other municipalities or non-profits that did not have county money for the acquisition. They are trying to implement a new program, but they have not figured out how to do this yet where they can get more recreational land near where people live. For people who live in the city of Trenton they have preserved lots of large pieces of land in the far out suburbs because that is where the land was so it kind of makes sense. It is harder in the fully developed places to find land to preserve because it is often the land that town wants to develop. They are trying to work on something where they can have a program to get some more money for smaller things. The problem is that they don't have people to operate or maintain the property. Our trust fund does not allow us to use money for maintenance or operations. That is the way it was approved by the voters and they can't change it. They do have a small amount of money. Fifteen percent of what they take in can be used for development of recreational facilities and for historic preservation. That money is so tight that they don't share that with anyone. They have more than enough contracts of their own to spend every penny of that. That 15% is limited by the referendum that approved the trust fund.

The next slide is the Farmland Preservation Element, which preserves natural resources and sets priorities. This element was required by the State Agricultural Development Committee that has a Farmland Preservation Plan, which has infinitely more detail than the appropriated County Master Plan. This is taken from that and is completely consistent with it. Twenty-two percent of the County's land is farmland assessed and only six of the County's thirteen municipalities have 97% of that farmland. They are losing farmland at an alarming rate even at the current economy. The next slide shows the land that is in farmland assessment.

Ms. Lewis concluded the presentation and added that they would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Guididas asked if the plan addressed things combining the future of a couple of the elements such as the one for a County wide trail system with the transportation in particular. Where he is going with this is the ROW for the abandoned rail tracks, which run through a couple of municipalities. He asked if this intended plan will pull all this together.

Ms. Lewis said it does not specifically address this in the map, but it is in the text of the open space plan where it talks about rails to trails and the park networks. They don't target land for acquisition because

when they do it adds another "0" to the price. They just put in planning words instead of putting on the map. They have been involved in negotiations for more years than she cares to think about. There is a solution to that problem that will make everybody happy. As part of the bicycle element, they are looking at connections. In one of the appendices there is a connection map, which shows a lot of that stuff in concept, but it is very much in words in the open space element.

Mr. Rivers thanked Ms. Lewis for the presentation and appreciated their effort. It is nice to see an update. He is a bike rider. He had a question regarding the Mobility Element. He recognized there is an affirmative statement supporting the Robbinsville Township efforts to establish the bypass on Route 33 in Town Center. He would like to understand if there is an affirmative statement in here recognizing Routes 33 and 526 could become more pedestrian friendly when that happens.

Mr. Lawson said that the ROW elements have specific accommodations for bicycles. They would be happy to add that.

Mr. Rivers stated he was involved in the planning of Town Center. He recognized that as they plan they can't always get what they think is the right idea or the right idea right now. The profile for Route 33 is that it goes up Main Street as it goes through Town Center. The profile of Route 526 was negotiated. From his perspective, getting back to Nassau Street example, they would not want what exists today to be the final configuration for those roads in Town Center.

Ms. Lewis said she was part of those original negotiations as well and attended the DOT meetings. It was a huge fight with DOT to get them to understand. She thinks it is important even if they have to add a section in this.

Mr. Rivers' other question pertains to Mercer County in general. He does want to support the idea of transportation nodes and centers. They are rightfully proud of their center. Ms. Lewis identified on an earlier slide, Trenton and Hamilton transit centers and he hopes that this plan will see development of clusters in those areas where it makes the most sustainable sense.

Ms. Lewis response was to the extent that they have that opportunity.

Mrs. Van Nest recollected a plan from a number of years to do a bicycle trail from Washington Crossing Park to Monmouth Park. She asked if it still exists.

Ms. Lewis answered it does, but it has some challenges. Right now they are trying to get a connection from the Vo-Tech School on Old Trenton Road in West Windsor between the community college and the special services school to Mercer County Park. The County owns the land, but there are safety concerns just from crossing the road and kids driving to college like crazy. You can't invite strangers on the campuses because of the school district. That is one little piece that the County has control, which they are working on. There are large pieces that are built. It is on our open space plan as a project.

Chairman Cettina said that the County staff did a fantastic job. It is a challenge when you try to influence people with limited resources and limited arm twisting capabilities. He thinks working magic with words is the best tool. They did a great job. The Board appreciates their update and presentation.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Van Nest commented that the Board does not have that heavy of an agenda these days. She suggested using one of their meetings for a workshop to discuss issues they would like to review.

Chairman Cettina said that sounds like a good plan. In general the Board has been having one meeting as opposed to two because it has been slow. So if anyone has any specific topic they want to work on, e-mail him and they will put it together and schedule it into one of their open slots.

Mr. McGough reminded the Board members that some of their terms expire on June 30, 2010. He suggested that if they are still interested in continuing to serve on the board, they should e-mail Joy Tozzi because those are mayor appointments.

Chairman Cettina reminded the Board that the reorganization date is July 14, 2010 @ 7:00 p.m. Next week's meeting is canceled.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Guididas and seconded by Mr. Boyne to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elide M. Post
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Planning Board Secretary

ADOPTED: JUNE 15, 2011