

**Borough of Watchung
Planning Board Meeting
April 12, 2011**

Salute to the Flag

Chairman Speeney called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Salute to the flag. The Chair called for a roll call.

Present at the call of the roll were:

Speeney (X) Boyd (X) Havas (X) Haveson (X) Ellis (X) Pennett (X)

Schaefer (X) Mobus (A) Pote (A) Beck-Clemens (X)

Chairman Speeney indicated there was a quorum to conduct business. The Chair stated that this meeting was being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 of the open public meetings law and proper notification of this meeting has been made.

Chairman Speeney stated that the item to be discussed on the agenda was the public hearing on the Reexamination of the Master Plan and amendment to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan.

Chairman Speeney asked Mr. Mark Healey, professional planner to read the draft document to the board. Mr. Healey explained that law required the reexamination every six years. He explained that the process began last fall with a series of drafts and meetings held by the planning board and a sub-committee for the reexamination of the Master Plan. He said that this was the 5th meeting regarding the Master Plan.

He said that this document addresses the issues and status of the 2005 reexamination. It covers the topics of Land Use and development, and addresses current issues that affect traffic development and zoning. That portion discusses past and potential issues regarding population. Mr. Healey said that basically the Borough is built out in terms of both residential and commercial development. Mr. Healey said there is some potential for redevelopment in commercial areas specifically Route 22, but that the biggest area for potential development is the quarry area.

This document also addresses where future sewer services will be available,

which will have a severe impact on where future development could or could not go. That is an ongoing process and recommends that the Planning Board remain informed on that process.

It discusses the extension of sewer into the eastern section of the Borough, which would serve the ZV tract and the Quarry development. The last topic discussed is traffic improvement within and affecting the Borough. It discusses various roadway and pedestrian improvements both in the Borough and near the Borough, which would affect Watchung.

It addresses the affordable housing issue, as well as state planning, which are basically up in the air at this point, and urges the Borough to remain involved and informed. The report ends with specific changes recommended for the Master Plan and development regulation. It discusses the Master Plan goals and objectives.

It defines that the existing goals and objectives remain current. It recommends that the stay as is with the exception of one minor change in objective 8b, which is to specify that the Village Center is intended for existing residences, not for additional residential growth.

As far as land use and development, some of the major recommendations impervious surface units in the RML districts, this report endorses the ZV tract proposal basically expanding the RMLII zone but keeping the overall development to no more than 20 single family lots. This would be the same number of lots, but over a larger area.

It indicates an issue with regard to house size or "McMansions" and identifies a number of approaches that the Borough may consider. It identifies a number of zoning issues that were identified by the Zoning Board of Adjustment Chairman who has attended a number of these meetings and has addressed these issues with this board for your consideration. It recommends that the gas station on Somerset Street next door to Borough Hall be acquired at some point by the Borough and be made part of the park.

With regard to the village historic overlay zone it recommends that the Borough consider restricting it to an area that is more historic, possibly taking the triangle area out of it but at the same time having the historic overlay zone having a stronger design standard to go with that smaller historic zone.

It recommends suggestions from the open space and recreation plan and lastly, with regards to traffic circulation, it identifies a few high priority projects that the Borough specifically endorses. The most significant of which is the issue of the interchange at Route 78 and Diamond Hill Road.

Chairman Speeney thanked Mr. Healey and asked if there were any questions from the Board.

Mr. Haveson asked the question why the Band Studio near the route 22 Bonnie Burn overpass project was protected. Mayor Mobus said that the reason it was protected was because that property is on the Historical Register by the State of New Jersey. Mayor Mobus explained that there used to be a Mill on that site. Chairman Speeney raised the question as to whether or not the Board should make a comment in this document regarding this property and its historic value. Mr. Haveson said he thought it was a good idea for the board to do that. Chairman Speeney said that there was a list of historic properties which were included in the 1994 Master Plan update. He said that was something that the board should go back and look at.

Mr. Boyd had a question about the text on page 20 last paragraph. Mr. Boyd asked if the sentence starting with the word Further, should read New Providence Road, rather than Bonnie Burn Road, describing installing new dry sewer lines to the Quarry. Mayor Mobus said that the reason it is written that way, is that engineers certified the overpass for another 50 years. Weldon paid for the dry sewer lines to be installed for future development after being approached by Mayor and Council. It cost 60-70 thousand. There are two dry mains for a pumping system. This way the work done, won't have to be ripped out in the future and the lines could be extended. Mr. Boyd said that he thought it would help the future development of Bonnie Burn Road, but to the quarry.

Mayor Mobus had a concern with the text on page 21 regarding the sidewalks. He said that Somerset County will not be putting sidewalks on the south side of 22. Chairman Speeney said that he believed that sidewalks should only be put on the north side of Route 22 because that is where the citizens are. Mr. Healey said that he would make the correction from both sides of route 22 to just the north side. Mayor Mobus said that sidewalks would end at North Drive.

Mr. Linnus, board attorney and Mr. Healey agreed that the change should read Somerset County is in the final design stage of major sidewalk improvements

on along Route 22. Mr. Healey and Mr. Linnus agreed that since this was a factual statement and not a recommendation, it was not a substantive change. Mr. Linnus asked for a clarification that there were two deletions. First sentence taking out the words both sides of, and taking out the last sentence. The board agreed.

Mrs. Beck-Clemens said she was happy with the report.

Chairman Speeney opened up to the public for comment.

Mary Ciccalella of 1010 Johnston Drive came to the microphone. She asked how you can prepare for the changes that may occur in the COAH laws in the Master Plan. She said you obviously cannot prepare for what you don't know is going to happen. Mr. Linnus said that you must address it, but as Mr. Healey pointed out it is a moving target. We are doing the best we can with the information that we have at this time, and it is an element of the Master Plan so it must be addressed. Mr. Healey said that because we don't know what will happen, we are not making any recommendations at this time.

She asked if the ZV tract is the RMLII zone. Chairman Speeney said yes. She asked if the Richard's tract is part of that. Chairman Speeney said that it would be added to the RMLII zone.

Mrs. Cicallela asked about the zoning of the quarry. Chairman Speeney said that currently Weldon is zoned only for quarry. He explained that the overlay zone could cover business or a hotel. She asked if that includes some sort of water retention plan and Chairman Speeney said that any development is responsible for its own retention. Chairman Speeney said that the most that site could sustain is a 1,000,000 square feet of development.

She asked about potential acquisition of vacant land at Mount Saint Mary's. Mr. Healey said that it was in a recommendation of the Open Space Plan. Chairman Speeney said that there was a portion of land between Liccardi Ford and Mount Saint Mary's that was recommended as a potential site for COAH housing. Mrs. Cicallela thanked the Board for its time.

Chairman Speeney asked if there was anyone else from the public that wished to speak. Hearing no one, he asked the Board for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting. Mr. Boyd made that motion, seconded by Mr. Haveson and by voice vote; the public portion of the meeting was closed.

Chairman Speeney asked for final comments. Mr. Healey said that he would go

through the changes that were made quickly.

Mr. Healey said on item 22 under status that begins water lines in the village center, the word *on* should be inserted so it should read *are not on* New Jersey American's priority list for placement.

Page 16, Item 23 third sentence the word *though* should be changed to the word *through*.

Page 21, fifth bullet should be changed to read Somerset county is in the final design stages of major sidewalk improvements along Route 22. This would provide for a continuous sidewalk from Somerset Street up to Blue Star Drive. The third sentence would be omitted.

On page 25 under Master Plan goals and objectives the second word *overall* should be omitted.

On page 30 third bullet under Non-Conforming streets the word *it* needs to be omitted after the work indicated in the first sentence.

Chairman Speeney asked Mr. Linnus if these changes could be made after the Board took action. Mr. Linnus said that yes, they were typographical changes, not substantive.

The Chair asked if there was any more discussion from the Board. Hearing none, he asked Mr. Havas to read PB11-R6 into the record.

Havas Read: PB11-R6 Master Plan Reexamination and Development Regulations
and amendment to the Boroughs Land Use Element of
the Master Plan

Chairman Speeney accepted the reading of this resolution as a motion to approve and sought a second. Mrs. Schaefer seconded that motion. The Chair asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, the Chair asked for a roll call vote. The vote was as follows:

Speeney (yes) Boyd (yes) Havas (yes) Haveson (yes) Pennett (yes)
Schaefer (yes) Mobus (yes) Beck-Clemens (yes)
The motion was approved.

Mayor Mobus said that on behalf of the Borough, knowing how much work and

time and effort goes into the reexamination of the Master Plan, he wanted to thank everyone for all their effort. Chairman Speeney also thanked Mrs. Schaefer for all the hard work she put in, chairing the sub-committee on the reexamination.

The Chair sought a motion to waive the reading and approve the minutes of March 1st as published. Mr. Haveson made that motion, seconded by Mr. Havas and by voice vote; the minutes of March 1st were approved. Mr. Havas and Mrs. Pennett did not vote.

The Chair asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to speak on a non-agenda item. Hearing no one, The Chair closed the public portion of the meeting.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the vouchers. Mr. Haveson made that motion, seconded by Mr. Havas. The Chair asked for a roll call vote. The vote was as follows:

Speeney (yes) Boyd (yes) Havas (yes) Haveson (yes) Pennett (yes)
Schaefer (yes) Mobus (yes) Beck-Clemens (yes)
The motion was approved.

Mr. Havas said that he went to a meeting of the North Central Reliability project held at LaFairre in Mountainside, NJ by the PSE & G regarding monopoles and restringing towers said that they would be two and a half times the size they are now. He said that the lowest wires will be 27 feet from the ground. Mr. Haveson said that there is very little that any community can do about it. He said that basically a community could only monitor what is happening in their community. Mr. Linnus said that if there is any new structures or substations that they must have municipal approval. They are still subject to some regulations.

Chairman Speeney said that there are two types of towers and one of those will be replaced. These towers are on the east end of Watchung. Mr. Boyd said that he thinks that the monopoles will be much more attractive than the current towers. Mr. Haveson said that they are willing to come before the Planning Board and make a presentation about the project.

Chairman Speeney brought up the Berkeley Aquatic application before Warren. Mrs. Beck-Clemens said that she is very concerned about the traffic impact and

she lives close on High Tor Drive. Mr. Havas asked if the proposed swim center was on the north or south side of Emerson Road. Mrs. Beck-Clemens said it was on the north side.

The Chair said that he asked some people in Warren about it, and there are homes being built on the site across the street, which was approved years ago by the court. He said that the Berkeley Aquatic proposed swim center has an issue regarding venue. He said that it ended up in front of the Planning Board due to input from the planner. The request is to merge several lots to make one lot for the construction of the swimming facility and a parking lot.

The Chair relayed to the board the topics raised at the recent Somerset County Planning Board Forum meeting.

He thanked the board for their time and once again thanked Mrs. Schaefer and the Sub-committee for the reexamination, and said that he felt Mr. Healey did a fine job on this document. He said that for members of this community reviewing this document, it shows a history of our community.

Mr. Linnus said that he had a copy of the MLUL and it states far as that it is evident under current law that the structures, the local utilities must apply to the zoning board of adjustment if a variance is required. He said if the board gives a negative agreement then they can file a grievance with the Board of Public Utilities.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Haveson and approved on voice vote. The meeting was adjourned until the next meeting of May 17th, 2011.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Taylor
Planning Board Clerk