

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY

Joint Meeting with Land Use Board
and Environmental Commission
May 29, 2013

A joint meeting of the Township Committee, Land Use Board and Environmental Commission was held on this date at the Washington Township Municipal Building, 211 Route 31 North, Washington, N.J. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Robert Klingel.

SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE – The Mayor noted that this meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law of 1975 in as much as a notice had been published in the Star-Gazette and transmitted to the Express-Times, posted at the Municipal Building and a copy is on file in the Clerk's office. This agenda is subject to change by order of the Washington Township Committee before and/or during the scheduled meeting.

ROLL CALL

Finke, present; Horensky, present; Klingel, present; Willan, present
Kovacs arrived at 8:00 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT

Ann Kilduff, Deputy Township Clerk; Peter deBoer, Township Administrator/Certified Public Works Manager; Attorney Michael Lavery; Kevin McCarthy, CFO; Joseph Rossi, Construction Official/Zoning Officer; Dennis Allen, Building Official; and Sean Brown, Administrative Assistant; Lydia Schmidt, Tax Assessor; Evan Howell, Tax Collector

HIGHLANDS COUNCIL PRESENT

Margaret Nordstrom, Highlands Deputy Executive Director; Christine Danis, Highlands Director of Planning & Science; Keri Benscoter, Highlands Resource Management Specialist

The Land Use Board and Environmental Commission opened their meetings with all members in attendance.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Klingel thanked everyone for attending and introduced the Highlands Council representatives. Per the Mayor's request, S. Brown gave a brief history of the Highlands' process. He stated the Petition Phase of this process was approved by the Highlands Council on December 1, 2011. The Township is currently in the Implementation Phase, where the Township will finalize and adopt documents prepared during the Petition Phase. The Township needs to identify any immediate plan conformance needs. The Township Committee, Land Use Board and Environmental Commission need to coordinate activities to complete the requirements.

Mr. Horensky asked for clarification as to the order of events. S. Brown explained the order and details of the tasks as 1) The Planning Area Petition Ordinance, 2) Environmental Resource Inventory, 3) Master Plan Re-Examination Report, and 4) Checklist Ordinance. S. Brown explained the Committee is responsible for the Planning Area Petition Ordinance. The Land Use Board is responsible for the Master Plan Re-Examination Report. The Committee and Land Use Board will work together on the Checklist Ordinance. The Environmental Resource Inventory needs input and approval from the Environmental Commission. Mayor Klingel asked the timeframe for the Master Plan Re-Examination. K. Benscoter stated sixty days is allocated.

Cheryl Burket, Environmental Commission, asked what the Planning Area entails. S. Brown explained these are the areas with potential for development. The Township has the option of opting in. Joel Schnetzer, Land Use Board, and the Mayor discussed. M. Nordstrom stated the State will not make the Township opt in. C. Danis explained. Mr. Finke asked for further details regarding control of both the Planning Area and Preservation Area. C. Danis explained, stating the Township can always be stricter than the DEP rules and the Regional Master Plan.

Al Ivany, Environmental Commission Chairman, asked if the information the Commission provided would be incorporated into the Environmental Resource Inventory or be an addendum to the report? K. Benscoter suggested any information be sent to her. She will put together a document for the Township to approve after discussing.

Marilyn Sendell, Land Use Board/Environmental Commission, questioned the source of the funds. C. Danis explained they come from the Implementation Plan and Schedule which was approved as part of the Township's petition. \$102,000 was provided to the Township by the Highlands in 2011.

Mr. Finke asked the amount spent to date. K. McCarthy explained the Township has incurred expenses in need of Highlands approval in the amount of \$47,000. Mr. deBoer stated these funds cannot be approved until the four items mentioned earlier have been completed. Ron Greenwald, Environmental Commission, asked if salaries are taken out of these funds. Mr. deBoer stated \$10,000 was allocated for S. Brown's salary. C. Danis explained the areas each of the four previously mentioned reports applies to.

S. Brown stated the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Grant was passed by Resolution earlier this year. The Highlands has recently revised their scope of work for the TDR feasibility study; however, this is on hold until the four previously items are completed. Input will be necessary from both the Committee and Land Use Board.

Mr. Finke asked how the TDR will work regarding sending and receiving areas. M. Nordstrom explained and discussion followed. TDR receiving areas do not require planning area conformance.

J. Schnetzer feels the Township needs to establish a Farmland Comprehensive Plan first, explained his reasons, and discussed with M. Nordstrom. A fiscal analysis would determine if the TDR Program would benefit the municipality. S. Brown noted the TDR Study and the Farmland Comprehensive Plan could be identified by the Land Use Board through the Master Plan Re-Examination. The last Master Plan Re-Examination was completed in late 2007. The last Comprehensive Master Plan Update was done in 1994.

S. Brown explained the handouts he provided and noted they will be added to the website. Mayor Klingel requested S. Brown be the liaison between the Committee, Land Use Board and Environmental Commission.

Mr. Finke requested a map of the Township with the Protection and Conservation Zones as well as septic densities. K. Benscoter explained the available maps and will provide minimum acreage numbers to the Township.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

A motion was made by Finke, seconded by Horensky, to open the meeting to the public. Hearing no one, a motion was made by Klingel, seconded by Horensky, to close the public portion of the meeting.

Mayor Klingel asked S. Brown to provide a list of next steps to the Boards.

Erich Sodtalbers, Land Use Board Chairman, asked who is responsible for the Master Plan Re-Examination as he is concerned about the cost and time needed to complete this. S. Brown stated the Master Plan is included in Natural Systems Utilities' budget. Mr. deBoer explained. J. Schnetzer stated his displeasure that a representative from Natural Systems Utilities was not present at this meeting. He feels all three Boards should be in agreement as to who should do the Master Plan Re-Examination. Attorney Lavery stated the work was publically bid out and Natural Systems Utilities works for the Land Use Board. Discussion followed.

Members of the Land Use Board discussed next steps with C. Danis. E. Sodtalbers asked if the Highlands Council is re-evaluating the acreage size in the Preservation Area. C. Danis explained that is ruled by the DEP, not Highlands. E. Sodtalbers asked if it is being requested that land be taken out of the Preservation area along the corridors of both major county roads. M. Nordstrom stated she is working with the County to develop an analysis and any changes would involve the legislature.

A. Ivany asked how the Township would be affected is the overall funding is exhausted. M. Norstrom stated they need to locate TDR receiving areas which would create funds. Failure is not an option.

Mayor Klingel feels all Boards now know their responsibilities and requested S. Brown be available for any assistance. The Mayor asked E. Sodtalbers to contact Natural Systems Utilities and set up a meeting with them, himself, and the Mayor to discuss their progress.

ADJORNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Horensky, seconded by Willan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. All were in favor. The Land Use Board and Environmental Commission adjourned their meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Kilduff
Deputy Township Clerk