

**BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD**

Regular Meeting

**August 6, 2024**

-Minutes-

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman Vescio called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT ANNOUNCEMENT**

Chairman Vescio read the OPMA Statement.

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Moench-	Absent	Mr. Banga-	Present
Councilman Kirsh-	Present	Ms. Sikora-	Present
Mr. Pappas-	Present	Mr. Choudhury-	Present
Mr. Magura-	Present	Mr. Atkins-	Present
Chairman Vescio-	Present	Ms. Chartowich-	Absent
Mr. Wang-	Present		

Others present: Board Attorney Mr. Mark Peck, Mr. Adam Wisnewski, Acting Board Engineer, Ms. Katherine Sarmad, Board Planner & Land Use Administrator Nancy Probst.

**MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Chairman Vescio opened the meeting to the public. With there being no members of the public wishing to speak, the Board closed this portion of the meeting.

**MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT (PUBLIC HEARING)**

**Amended Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan**

Ms. Sarmad provided a brief history of the third-round affordable housing requirements and advising of the dates the housing elements previous adoption dates as they relate to specific court orders. She then recommended the Board adopt the fair share housing plan by resolution so that the Township can demonstrate they are in compliance with the "JOR".

Councilman Kirsh advised the governing body takes Township affordable housing responsibility seriously and clarified these are current regulations; however, there will be additional requirements this fall.

On motion by Mr. Pappas, seconded by Ms. Sikora, the Board voted to approve the plan based on the following roll call vote:

Affirmative: Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Magura, Mr. Wang, Ms. Sikora, Mr. Banga,  
& Chairman Vescio

Nay:

Abstain:

Not Eligible:

Absent: Mayor Moench & Ms. Chartowich

## **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT (PUBLIC HEARING)**

### **Municipal Yard Waste Site - Block 349, Lot 2 (136 Foothill Road)**

Mr. Michael Sullivan, Township Redevelopment Planner, presented the investigation of an area in need of redevelopment, specifically the municipal yard waste. He provided a brief overview of how the preliminary investigation begins, with the direction of the Township Council recommending the Planning Board investigate.

Mr. Sullivan opined that this area does meet the criteria to deem the property an area in need of redevelopment. He stated the property is owned by the Township and there are no improvements or permanent structures on the property and there is no tax revenue generated from it. The size of the site is approximately 32 acres and is used as the yard waste site that is operated by a vendor the Township contracts with. This contract is expected to end in 2025.

Mr. Sullivan discussed criterion C under the Local Redevelopment law stating most of the land contains wooded wetlands and has not had any development for over a period of 10 years. He then described the entire site in detail for the Board.

Mr. Sullivan discussed criterion H, also known as the "Smart Growth" criterion, advising this criterion cannot be used on its own. He advised that since the property meets criterion C, criterion H can also apply. He then explained in detail how the property fits into this criterion.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Sullivan stated there may be old driveways but not old roads on the property. He then reiterated the wooded wetlands characteristics of the property.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Sullivan opined that this property could be redeveloped, even with the wetlands on the site. He further opined the entire property should be classified as an area in need of development, but not that the entire property should be redeveloped.

Mr. Peck advised that once the property is formally identified as an AINR, then Mr. Sullivan should begin a redevelopment plan for the site.

Councilman Kirsh clarified the steps in determining an area in need of redevelopment and advised this presentation is only step 2 in the overall process.

Chairman Vescio opened the meeting to the public for questions and comments.

Ms. Dana Caporaso of 65 Twin Oaks Rd. Bridgewater NJ. Ms. Caporaso asked if the municipal waste site will be relocated. Mr. Pappas advised the intent is to maintain a waste site somewhere on the parcel.

With there being no other members of the public wishing to speak, the Board closed this portion.

On motion by Ms. Sikora, seconded by Mr. Choudhury, the Board voted to designate this site is an area in need of redevelopment based on the following roll call vote:

Affirmative: Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Magura, Mr. Banga, Ms. Sikora,  
Mr. Choudhury, Mr. Atkins & Chairman Vescio  
Nay:  
Abstain:  
Not Eligible:  
Absent: Mayor Moench, Mr. Wang & Ms. Chartowich

#### **LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

**#23-025-PB; Gerardo**

**Block 718, Lots 50&51; Mountaintop Rd.**

Major Subdivision

Mr. Silbert was present to represent the applicant. He provided a brief synopsis of the prior hearings.

On motion by Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Ms. Sikora, the Board unanimously voted to temporarily suspend action on this application.

**#23-04-PB; Has**

**Block 150, Lot 12&13; 147 Chestnut St.**

Minor Subdivision with Bulk Variance(s)

This application was carried to the Tuesday October 15, 2024, Regular Meeting at 7 pm.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**April 16, 2024 Regular Meeting**

On motion by Mr. Magura, seconded by Ms. Sikora, the Board voted to approve the minutes based on the following roll call vote:

Affirmative: Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Magura, Mr. Banga, Ms. Sikora, Mr. Choudhury,  
Mr. Atkins & Chairman Vescio

Nay:

Abstain:

Not Eligible: Mr. Pappas

Absent: Mayor Moench, Mr. Wang & Ms. Chartowich

### **May 7, 2024 Regular Meeting**

On motion by Mr. Pappas, seconded by Mr. Wang, the Board voted to approve the minutes based on the following roll call vote:

✓ Affirmative: Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Magura, Mr. Wang, Mr. Banga,  
Ms. Sikora, Mr. Choudhury, Mr. Atkins & Chairman Vescio

Nay:

Abstain:

Not Eligible:

Absent: Mayor Moench & Ms. Chartowich

### **June 18, 2024 Regular Meeting**

On motion by Ms. Sikora, seconded by Mr. Banga, the Board voted to approve the minutes based on the following roll call vote:

Affirmative: Mr. Magura, Ms. Sikora & Mr. Banga

Nay:

Abstain:

Not Eligible: Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Mr. Choudhury & Mr. Atkins

Absent: Mayor Moench & Ms. Chartowich

### **COURTESY REVIEW**

#### **Bridgewater Raritan Regional School District (Middle School Classroom Addition) Block 565, Lot 19 (128 Merriwood Road)**

Mr. Frank Micinio was present to represent the BOE/School. He was sworn and accepted as a Professional Architect.

Mr. Micinio advised the purpose of the application is to create space for the full-day Kindergarten program. The project design creates a fourth wing to accommodate the additional classroom space needed. He stated the proposed addition stops right before the start of the steep slopes, so no retaining walls are needed.

Mr. Micinio described the addition and plans in detail for the Board using previously submitted renderings.

Councilman Kirsh expressed concerns with the state mandated affordable housing requirements and the impacts on the local schools. Mr. Minicio advised the Department of Education will not consider potential enrollment numbers and demographic studies without projects receiving necessary Township approvals.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Minicio stated in 2005-2006 the school 2174 students were enrolled in grades 6-8. He confirmed the school will have 1750 students for this school year.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Minicio advised the district IT personnel will ensure all technology is available to the classrooms and staff.

On questioning by the Board, the applicant confirmed the stormwater was designed to accommodate the most current State regulations.

Mr. Peck advised this is a courtesy review and no formal action needs to be taken.

#### **LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

**#23-025-PB; Gerardo**

**Block 718, Lots 50&51; Mountaintop Rd.**

Major Subdivision

Mr. Silbert apologized to the Board for the applicant's behavior.

Ms. Samantha Alfonso, Esq. was present to represent her client. She requested an adjournment based on the prejudice caused by the applicant. Mr. Peck advised Ms. Alfonso's request is only for the record and confirmed the applicant can proceed.

Mr. Silbert was present to represent the applicant. He provided a brief synopsis of the prior hearings. He reintroduced the applicant's Professional Planner, Mr. Dougherty to conclude his testimony. He was previously remains under oath.

Mr. Dougherty provided a brief overview of the previous hearings.

Chairman Vescio opened the meeting to the public for questions.

Ms. Alfonso asked if any plans were revised, and Mr. Dougherty confirmed the plans were not revised.

Ms. Alfonso asked if it was Mr. Dougherty's testimony that three lots provided a better zoning opportunity than two lots and Mr. Dougherty confirmed the same. He opined that the lots would be in continuity of the neighborhood.

On questioning by Ms. Alfonso, Mr. Dougherty opined the proposed lots are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Dougherty confirmed the lot area was examined since the overall size dictates the appropriateness of this application.

Ms. Susan Willet of 1871 Mountain Top Rd. Bridgewater NJ. Ms. Willet referenced the applicant's behavior at the beginning of the meeting and expressed concerns with his willingness to follow requirements. Ms. Sarmad confirmed there are multiple layers of protection between approvals and construction. She then explained the compliance and construction phases and the inspections that occur throughout the process.

Mr. Barry Walker of 1699 Mountain Top Rd. Bridgewater NJ. Mr. Walker expressed concerns with the flooding and asked if there is a plan to alleviate roadway flooding. Mr. Dougherty reviewed his storm water management measures proposed for the sites. Mr. Peck advised his questions are for the applicant's Professional Engineer and he has already testified and was made available for questions at that time. Mr. Dougherty opined the applicants Professional Engineer would take the storm water seriously.

With there being no further questions from the public, the Board closed this portion of the meeting.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Dougherty confirmed the Planning Board would review the application with or without the variances requested.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Dougherty confirmed Lot 49 has a width of 225 ft and Lot 52.01 has a frontage of 106 ft.

On questioning by the Board, a discussion ensued regarding potential house sizes and placements.

Chairman Vescio opened the meeting to the public for comments.

Ms. Dana Caporaso of 65 Twin Oaks Rd., Bridgewater NJ. She asked to confirm the conservation easement is still proposed and the Board advise that it is.

Ms. Sema Tekinay of 1916 Mountain Top Rd., Bridgewater NJ. Mr. Silbert objected to her commentary due to having counsel present, however Mr. Peck advised she is permitted to make a comment. She identified the previous subdivisions and opined that is where the storm water was coming from. She then discussed the existing lot frontages for both existing and proposed.

Ms. Tekinay advised she contacted Mr. Gerardo previously and requested trees not be removed unnecessarily, to differentiate the homes architecturally to prevent a “development look,” and to not to encroach any more than 40 ft. to her property (his proposals are currently 60 ft. away).

Ms. Wilcott expressed her gratitude to the Board for the questions they asked of the applicant. She expressed her desires to preserve the natural environment and wildlife.

Ms. Alfonso reiterated Ms. Tekinay’s previous requests. She advised no response was received from Mr. Gerardo were received. She then requested the residents be conditioned to have three different style homes for the lots. Mr. Sarmad confirmed the Board can only impose conditions for the variances requested, however Mr. Silbert confirmed the applicant will agree on the record to the homes designed architecturally different from one another.

On questioning by the Board, Mr. Silbert further advised the houses should be built as depicted on the revised plans. He then expressed concerns with the Board imposing harsher setbacks than what is required by ordinance.

Mr. Peck reviewed conditions of approval should the application be approved and the Board deliberated.

On motion by Ms. Sikora, seconded by Mr. Choudhury, the Board voted to approve the application with conditions based on the following roll call vote:

Affirmative: Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Magura, Mr. Wang, Mr. Banga,  
Ms. Sikora, Mr. Choudhury, Mr. Atkins & Chairman Vescio  
Nay: Mr. Pappas  
Abstain:  
Not Eligible:  
Absent: Mayor Moench & Ms. Chartowich

#### **MEMORIALIZATION OF RESOLUTIONS**

There were no resolutions for adoption.

#### **ADJOURN**

On motion by Ms. Sikora, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:14 pm.

Respectfully Submitted



Jo-Ann M. Ricks  
Board Secretary Certified