

**BLAIRSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD
January 17, 2011 – 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

The Blairstown Township Planning Board met in regular session on Monday, January 17, 2011, at 7:30 pm at the Blairstown Municipal Building, 106 Route 94, Blairstown, New Jersey. The following members were present: Debra Waldron, Kevin Doell, Jim Sikkes, Rosalie Murray, Mayor Richard Mach, Herman Shoemaker, Paul Avery, and David Keller. Bill Seal and Dirk Herrmann were absent. Also present were Board Attorney, Roger Thomas, Board Engineer, Ted Rodman, and Board Secretary, Marion Spriggs.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG: was recited.

ROLL CALL: was taken.

THE SUNSHINE STATEMENT: was read aloud.

“Adequate notice of this meeting of the Blairstown Planning Board has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231, P. L. 1975)”, read for Reorg Mtg.

REORGANIZATION:

Meeting was called to order by Roger Thomas.

OATHS OF OFFICE:

Roger Thomas administered the Oaths of Office to new Board member, David Keller. Also, Herman Shoemaker, and Rosalie Murray were sworn in.

At this time, Roger Thomas called for nominations for the 2011 Chairperson.

Mr. Shoemaker was nominated by Mrs. Murray and seconded by Mrs. Waldron.

There were no further nominations made for Chairperson.

Action: The nomination for Mr. Shoemaker to serve as Chairman was duly made by Mrs. Murray, seconded by Mrs. Waldron. Roll call vote: Waldron, Sikkes, Doell, Murray, Mayor Mach, Avery and Keller – yes. Shoemaker – abstained.

At this time Mr. Shoemaker, as Chairman, asked for nominations for Vice Chairman:

Mr. Herrmann was nominated by Mr. Shoemaker and seconded by Mrs. Waldron.

There were no further nominations made for Vice Chairman.

Action: The nomination for Mr. Herrmann to serve as Vice Chairman was duly made by Mr. Shoemaker, seconded by Mrs. Waldron. Roll call vote: Waldron, Sikkes, Doell, Murray, Mayor Mach, Shoemaker, Avery and Keller -- yes.

At this time Mr. Shoemaker, as Chairman, asked for the following nominations:

Action: The nomination for Roger Thomas, of Dolan & Dolan, to serve as Planning Board attorney, was duly made by Mrs. Waldron, seconded by Mrs. Murray. Roll call vote: Waldron, Sikkes, Doell, Murray, Mayor Mach, Shoemaker, Avery and Keller -- yes.

Action: The nomination for Ted Rodman, of Rodman Associates, to serve as Board Engineer, was duly made by Mrs. Murray, seconded by Mrs. Waldron. Roll call vote: Waldron, Sikkes, Doell, Murray, Mayor Mach, Shoemaker, Avery and Keller -- yes.

Action: The nomination for Marion Spriggs to serve as Board Secretary, was duly made by Mrs. Murray, seconded by Mrs. Waldron. Roll call vote: Waldron, Sikkes, Doell, Murray, Mayor Mach, Shoemaker, Avery and Keller -- yes.

Action: The nomination for Darlene Jay, of Maser Consulting, to be retained as Professional Planner, was made by Mr. Shoemaker, seconded by Mrs. Waldron. Roll call vote: Waldron, Sikkes, Doell, Murray, Mayor Mach, Shoemaker, Avery and Keller -- yes.

Resolution Complying with the Open Public Meetings Act

Action: A motion was duly made by Mrs. Waldron, seconded by Mr. Doell, and unanimously carried, to adopt the Resolution for the Schedule of Meetings and designation of The New Jersey Herald and Star Ledger, as Official Newspapers, complying with the Open Public Meetings Act.

MINUTES: (As distributed prior to the meeting date.)

Minutes of December 20, 2010 regular meeting were approved, as written.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mr. Sikkes, seconded by Mrs. Waldron, and unanimously carried, to approve the December 20, 2010 regular meeting minutes, as written. Roll call vote: Waldron, Doell, Sikkes, Murray, Mayor Mach, Paul Avery, Shoemaker – yes. Keller – abstained.

RESOLUTIONS:

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Roger Thomas explained that he will provide the Farmland Preservation Plan Resolution to the Board before the next meeting. This matter will be carried until 2/21/11.

COMPLETENESS:

None

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

CORRESPONDENCE:

NJ Planner Dec/Jan

OTHER BUSINESS:

Kenneth Tanis pending communication

Chairman Shoemaker explained that at the 12/20/10 PB meeting, Roger Thomas, Board Attorney, stepped down on this matter due to a conflict. William Hinkes, Esq., of Hollander, Strelzik, Newton, NJ, whom the Township has hired previously, has been contacted.

Chairman Shoemaker explained this initial step is to hire Mr. Hinkes to direct a letter to Mr. Tanis, if the counsel agrees, stating that Mr. Tanis is appearing before the incorrect board, and that he should take his question to another board.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mrs. Waldron, seconded by Mrs. Murray, to engage the services of William Hinkes, Esq., of Hollander, Strelzik, Newton, and NJ, to render an opinion on the matter where this issue should be directed, to both Mr. Kenneth Tanis and this Board. Roll call vote: Waldron, Doell, Sikkes, Murray, Mayor Mach, and Shoemaker – yes.

Hydrogeological Study

Roger Thomas suggested discussing this at the February 21, 2011 PB meeting.

Chairman Shoemaker explained the question is whether or not this should be a part of the Master Plan. He pointed out since it was issued in September, 2003, some modification might be required.

Roger Thomas indicated it could be a component in Terms of the Environmental Statement. He said it can be handled in a number of different ways.

Mayor Mach stated there are 2 issues here. He said that Mrs. Murray has made a recommendation that this becomes an addendum or part of the Master Plan. He queried, “That means the document as it stands, is that correct?”. Mrs. Murray responded, “or PB can change or update it”.

Mayor Mach responded he believes it has to be adopted **AS IS**, dated 2003. The expense will occur in if changes are to be made.

Roger Thomas stated this is a technical document. To suggest that it can be amended by the Board, might be a bit of an issue. He suggested if modifications are sought, it should be reviewed with someone with a technical background. He pointed out that Maser Consulting, the PB Planner, has done hydrogeological studies in the past.

Roger Thomas suggested that everyone should read it and decide whether they even want to do this.

Mrs. Murray informed the Board that color copies of the maps are available for inspection in the office. (The office does not have the ability to color copy the maps.) The maps provided to the Board members are in black and white to show what was done.

Chairman Shoemaker advised the Board to review what they received, take advantage of what is in the office, and be prepared to discuss it next month to decide how to go forward.

COAH

Roger Thomas has attempted to get in touch with the COAH representative regarding a matter he brought up a few months ago. He stated he will continue to report to the Board and Mayor.

He explained COAH was passed by the Assembly, got modified, and was passed by the Senate. He declared the Governor vowed to veto it.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ordinance Review

Chairman Shoemaker indicated this might be a good year to review ordinances, and provide changes. He gave as examples, signage and windmills. Regarding Form Based Codes, he suggested it would be good for Blairstown to have the opportunity to inform future applicants that building would have to fit the character of the Town.

He said the Board should ask the Planner what things could impact Blairstown as a result of the Highlands activity, the lack of opportunity for development in that area, and how that could affect the surrounding communities. He declared Blairstown should be able to protect itself.

It was recommended by Mayor Mach that before the Planner is asked to come in with that discussion, the Board members should read the Ordinance, adopted in 2004, referring to non-residential construction. He revealed a lot of time was spent on it to do exactly what is being suggested, without violating the law.

Land Development Chapter 19 books

Mayor Mach recommended that each Board member receive a printed copy of LAND DEVELOPMENT, Chapter 19, printed by General CODE. (Ordinances are also available for

viewing on line on the General Code website). Marion Spriggs, Board Secretary, will distribute the books at the next meeting. Codifications are done on a yearly basis and will be forwarded to Board members accordingly.

Digital Signage – proposed by NWRHS

Mrs. Murray expressed her concern regarding keeping Blairstown’s signage appropriate to the community. A digital sign is being proposed by North Warren Regional High School. Roger Thomas revealed that he received a phone call from their attorney, and probably within next couple of months, more information will be available. They are striving to make the sign beneficial to the community. Mrs. Murray suggested a cooperative effort between the school and the Board, so that the end result is in keeping with what this community has strived to do.

Roger Thomas explained that school board’s appearances before the Board are usually autonomous and as a courtesy, for informational purposes only. This would not be the case if a variance is being sought. He commented that he does not know all the facts.

Chairman Shoemaker invited the Board members to bring their ideas to future meetings.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Mary Flynn, a Blairstown resident, suggested the Sign Ordinance be one of the first things addressed. She commented if the Sign Ordinance had been changed in 2004, the existing sign for the storage units on Rt. 521, would not be there.

She recommended review of the Lighting Ordinance. She has comments for consideration.

This portion of the meeting was closed to the public.

VOUCHERS:

Action: A motion was duly made by Mrs. Waldron, seconded by Mayor Mach to approve all escrow and general vouchers, as presented. Roll call vote: Waldron, Doell, Sikkes, Murray, Mayor Mach, Shoemaker and Avery – yes. Keller – abstained.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, a motion was duly made by Mrs. Waldron, seconded by Mr. Avery, and unanimously carried, to adjourn at 8:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion C. Spriggs, Secretary