

**BLAIRSTOWN TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD
November 15, 2010 – 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

The Blairstown Township Planning Board met in regular session on Monday, November 15, 2010, at 7:30 pm at the Blairstown Municipal Building, 106 Route 94, Blairstown, New Jersey. The following members were present: Kevin Doell, Jim Sikkes, Jane Santini, Rosalie Murray, Bill Seal, Mayor Richard Mach, Dirk Herrmann, Herman Shoemaker and Paul Avery. Debra Waldron was 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.

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

Minutes of October 18, 2010 regular meeting were approved, as written.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mr. Seal, seconded by Mr. Sikkes, and unanimously carried, to approve the October 18, 2010 regular meeting minutes, as written.

Paul Avery arrived at 7:31 pm.

RESOLUTIONS:

Master Plan Re-examination Report prepared by Roger Thomas, Esq.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mr. Sikkes, seconded by Mr. Herrmann, to approve the **Master Plan Re-examination Report** prepared by Roger Thomas, Esq. Roll call vote: Doell, Sikkes, Santini, Murray, Seal, Mayor Mach, Herrmann, Avery, and Shoemaker – yes.

Roger Thomas explained that the PB Resolution and Re-examination Report will be sent to the Warren Cty. Planning Dept. He will advise Marion who else will receive it.

Mrs. Murray does not see that the Hydro geological Study was put into the Master Plan as an Addendum. Mayor Mach commented this can be done at any upcoming meeting.

Roger Thomas suggested that it be made available to the Board, and if they desire, it can be added as an Element to the Master Plan.

PB #11-04 Giacobbe/Ascenza, Block 1511, Lot 1, Rt. 94 – Prelim & Final Major Site Plan

Action: A motion was duly made by Mr. Seal, seconded by Mrs. Murray, to approve an extension for **PB #11-04 Giacobbe/Ascenza, Block 1511, Lot 1, Rt. 94 – Prelim & Final Major Site Plan.** Roll call vote: Doell, Santini, Murray, Seal, Mayor Mach, and Shoemaker – yes. Sikkes and Herrmann – abstain.

PB #02-10 Blair Academy, Block 906, Lots 7 & 4.03 Minor Subdivision– Lot Line Adjustm.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mr. Seal, seconded by Mr. Sikkes - with the condition that all bills be paid before the deeds are issued. Mr. Seal, the Mover, agreed with this condition, to approve **PB #02-10 Blair Academy, Block 906, Lots 7 & 4.03 Minor Subdivision– Lot Line Adjustment.**

Ted Rodman interjected that the Blair Academy deeds should not be signed until he submits a memo that all the conditions have been met.

COMPLETENESS:

None

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

OTHER BUSINESS:

PLANNER

Roger Thomas pointed out the Planning Board’s action recommending the appointment of a Planner was reported to the Township Committee about 2 or 3 months ago. Township Committee has referred it back to the Planning Board and Zoning Board so that each body can indicate that there will be a Planner assigned. It is his understanding that the recommendation that Planning Board has adopted, is that Darlene Jay from Maser Consulting will be the Principal Consultant. Mr. Madden will be available on the same fee basis as Darlene Jay.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mayor Mach, seconded by Mr. Herrmann, to approve the action, and memorialization of the resolution appointing Maser Consulting as **Planner.** Roll call vote: Doell, Sikkes, Santini, Murray, Seal, Mayor Mach, Herrmann, Shoemaker and Avery – yes.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Joel Mc Green explained that the Farmland Preservation Plan has to be approved by the Planning Board for incorporation into the Master Plan in order to qualify for a Planning Incentive Grant run by the State and the County. The Plan informs how agriculture is in Blairstown, what part of the Township is in an agricultural development area, what part of it is assessed, and what lands qualify to be part of this program. He believes there are 35 lots that qualify. 23 of them are over 20 acres. Identification of the qualifying properties will be in the final draft of the Plan.

He is requesting a Public Hearing at the 12/20/10 Planning Board meeting to discuss this Plan. Public comments can be made at that meeting.

Roger Thomas pointed out that Public Notice must be published and the Plan must be available for public inspection 10 days prior to that meeting.

Ted Rodman questioned if the Plan included development rights. Joel Mc Green responded it will be addressed in the revised Plan.

Roger Thomas explained that if the Board approves of this, they would adopt it as an Element of the Master Plan. He said there is an incentive to do this because of the money.

Joel Mc Green explained the County retains the development rights from farmland in perpetuity via this Plan. The State inspects yearly to assure no building is occurring. Payment is in a single check. He explained this program started in 1998. It ran for 10 years, died, and now they are trying to do it for another 10 years.

Dirk Herrmann, Board Vice-Chairman, did not find how well this Plan works over time. The response was when a farm is sold, it is sold without development rights. Giving up the rights, runs with the land.

Dirk Herrmann questioned if the goal is to triple the farmland preservation figure in 10 years. Joel McGreen responded Blairstown wants 91%, 3,400 farmland-assessed acres in this program. Dirk Herrmann noted this plan has only been tested for 11 years. He stated farmland covers 17% of the Township's land.

Jane Santini, a Board member, commented what the Township is saying with this plan, is that they want to give the farmers the opportunity to keep farming at an affordable price.

Joel McGreen revealed the biggest issue is finding land owners that want to preserve their farm.

This portion of the meeting was opened to the public.

Mary Flynn, a Blairstown resident, pointed out an article in the September issue of Fortune Magazine regarding developers. It indicated that Toll Brothers is buying up land and paying each employee a \$5,000. incentive for leads, whether they result in a purchase, or not.

Rosalie Murray, a Board member, referred to the NJ Planner pg. 3, article regarding Approach and Advocating the Time of Submission. She stated this has to do with Blirstown Twp.'s zoning. She suggested the Township should think seriously about increasing zoning. Roger Thomas interjected that the aforementioned means zoning can't be changed except for safety or health reasons, once the application is filed.

Chairman Shoemaker recommended this be looked at next year as the Board plans for the Township.

This portion of the meeting was closed to the public.

Action: A motion was duly made by Mrs. Murray, seconded Mrs. Santini, and unanimously carried to have a Public Hearing on the **Farmland Preservation Plan**.

COAH

Roger Thomas spoke with Sean Thompson, Acting Executive Director of COAH. He revealed there can be an opportunity for municipalities to request a "stay". This would protect the COAH funds from being taken away by the State. It also eliminates spending money on things not needed. He explained the general tenor is that COAH will go away, but not the obligation.

Roger Thomas recommended the request for a "stay" should come from the Township Committee. Mayor Mach agrees with investigating that opportunity and commented it could be brought back to the Planning Board, if needed.

Mayor Mach reiterated that Blirstown Twp. is moving ahead. He has instructed Theresa Tamburro, MHL, to move ahead with the more conservative portions of the Plan.

For the record, the Planning Board has no objection to Roger Thomas proceeding with his investigation of a "stay" for this township.

MASTER PLAN

(See aforementioned Re-exam Report)

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC PORTION:

There were no public comments or questions from the public.

VOUCHERS:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, a motion was duly made by Mr. Seal, seconded by Mr. Herrmann, to adjourn at 8:30 pm. Motion was unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion C. Spriggs, Secretary