

SUSSEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

July 7, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Borisuk at 4:04 p.m. The meeting is held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-2 of 1975, as amended.

Present were:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andy Borisuk, Chairman
Dr. John Ford, Vice Chairman
Michael Francis
Wolfgang Gstattenbauer
Dan Flynn, 2nd Alternate
Walter Cramp, County Engineer
Rich Vohden, Freeholder Director
George Graham, Freeholder Member

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Gene Crawford, 1st Alternate

STAFF PRESENT:

Eric Snyder, Planning Director
Alice Brees, Principal Planner
John Risko, Engineering Alternate
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary
Abby Reza, Planning Intern

ALSO PRESENT:

Megan Ward, Esq., Kelly & Ward
William Lothian, Langan Engineering

MINUTES

A motion was made by Wolfgang Gstattenbauer to approve the Minutes of June 2, 2014 as presented. The motion was seconded by John Ford and carried unanimously.

SITE PLAN/SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORTS

A motion was made by John Ford to approve the Development Review Committee Reports for June 2, 2014 and June 16, 2014 as presented. The motion was seconded by Dan Flynn and carried unanimously.

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Activity for May and June 2014 included three Exempt Site Plan Applications.

Eric Snyder introduced Abby Reza, Planning's Summer Intern. Abby will be working on Rail Trail Crossings.

APPEALS AND WAIVER REQUESTS

A. WAIVER FOR MAIN & GLEN ASSOCIATES, LLC, "MILL RACE VILLAGE" SITE PLAN #77(CSS)94, SPARTA TOWNSHIP – CARRIED FROM JUNE MEETING:

Megan Ward said she represents the applicant and current owner of the property, Main & Glen Associates, LLC. Originally, they were the contract purchaser and designed and received approval for the 54-unit town house development which is on County Route 620 (Glen Road) in Sparta. It also has frontage on Main Street and there are wetlands in the Wallkill River. For this reason, the entrance needs to be from the existing Glen Road location. The minor subdivision created a small lot with the existing Victorian home on it and then consolidated the rest of the property for the development.

In 2004 the County Land Development Standards required any development providing 100 or more parking spaces to provide a dedicated left turn lane. Improvements had recently been done to Glen Road and it was agreed that there was not sufficient area to construct a left turn lane. The alternative, at that time, was to have a restriction from turning left from Glen Road to go into the development.

Ms. Ward said when she wrote her letter on May 21, 2014, she attached a Traffic Report by Bill Lothian. Mr. Lothian prepared a report dated June 3, 2004 and, after receiving the nomographs prepared by John Risko, Mr. Lothian did an updated report dated June 4, 2014. Ms. Ward said this has been a long and difficult road for the applicant.

Mr. William Lothian was sworn by Eric Snyder. He said he is a Senior Consultant with Langan Engineering and Environmental Services. He is a Professional Engineer in the State of New Jersey and has been with Langan for 42 years, specializing in Traffic and Transportation.

Mr. Lothian summarized his report, stating that for 54 townhouse units; typically the trip generation is not significant. The left hand turns that are anticipated to come down Glen Road from the east are only about three trips during the peak hour. Less than 10% of the traffic could be generated in that direction; 90% would be generated from the Main Street direction. For three trips an hour, one trip making a left hand turn every 20 minutes, is not a significant impact for left hand turns. If someone was waiting to make a left hand turn, they are only a couple of hundred feet away from the signalized intersection at Main Street where people are making a slower movement around the turns because it is a "T" intersection. By the time they get up to this intersection, they are moving about 30-35 miles per hour (mph.) The nomographs that

were submitted and reviewed in the 2004 report were based on a 50 mph speed and different percentages, typically a minimum 5% of left hand turns being made at the intersection. The posted speed on Glen Road is 40 mph. Traffic that they are projecting to make left hand turns into the site is less than three per hour and is approximately 1% of the traffic as opposed to 5% of the traffic. He said there are no nomographs that show less than 5% at 50 mph. He believes if there was an adjusted nomograph, it would show that the left hand turn lane would not be needed based on the proposed volume of traffic for the development.

Ms. Ward asked about the sight distance for cars approaching if a car was waiting to turn left into the development. Mr. Lothian said it is a very long sight distance from the rear. If a car was waiting to make a left hand turn, available sight distance is hundreds of feet in a straight line. About 500-600' away there is a curve that goes around on Glen Road. There is a straight shot going about 40 mph going into 30 mph as you approach the intersection with 600' of sight distance. It is very easy to see a car waiting to make a left hand turn into that location, if he is meeting opposing traffic coming from the Main Street area. In his opinion, a left hand turn lane is not warranted. For traffic that wants to enter this site, if they saw a sign that says left turns are prohibited, they would drive up to Main Street and find some way to turn around on Main Street and come back up on Glen Road. Rather than do that, it is much safer to allow the left hand turns in to the site.

John Ford asked for a clarification on the map as to where the left turn would take place. Megan Ward said it would be closer to Lot 16. Mr. Lothian said it would be as close as you can get to the intersection with Main Street as the lot would allow, which increases the sight distance.

Andy Borisuk said cars coming off of Main Street would be starting out slowly. Mr. Lothian said they would be going uphill and there is excellent visibility to see a car waiting to make a left at that location.

Walter Cramp said Route 620 is a major commuter route. He believes there are over 10,000, possibly 12,000 cars a day. He asked what the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on that road is. Mr. Lothian said he does not have the current ADT. Mr. Cramp said the County is gearing up to work on Bridge Q-6. People not willing to take Route 15 will take Main Street and use Route 620 to get to Route 23, going through Jefferson. In rush hour there will be a lot of people coming down Route 620 and there is a queue for the traffic light and if the Board allows it, there will be a left turns in an area of a queue lane. John Risko said there could possibly be a queue. He would add that 85th percentile speed is 50 mph. It is a very busy commuter route and there is the potential of a queue from the light but this was offered by the previous applicant the first time. It was not required by the Planning Board. Mr. Lothian said the restriction of the left hand turn in was required at that time. Ms. Ward said the "no left turn" restriction on the plan was based on a review meeting where it was determined that it wasn't possible to construct a left turn lane and the County was going to require the restrictions. That was the alternative that was left.

Freeholder Vohden asked if Lots 18-27 on the same side of the road as the site and Lots 13-17 on the other side have individual driveways. Ms. Ward said for the lots on the same side of the road, there are existing residences and they have individual driveways. The separate lot with the Victorian house would not have a separate driveway. It would be off of the entrance to the townhouse driveway. Freeholder Vohden said in that case, there conceivably could be cars making left hand turns into those lots as well.

Dan Flynn asked if there are plans to remove the triangular curb island on the plans for driveway to the site. Ms. Ward said that was correct.

Freeholder Graham asked if there was a significant shoulder on the side of the road with the queue. Mr. Lothian said there is a striped shoulder on both sides. It is not a wide shoulder but there is physically enough room for someone to pass on the right. When asked, he said there is no guide rail at that location. It is a curbed section of roadway.

Walter Cramp said that road is fairly narrow. He is not aware of a shoulder there where a car could bypass a car waiting to make a left. Mr. Risko said it is probably a 12' lane. Mr. Lothian said it is a 30' wide roadway and with a 6' wide car on the stripe, there is physically enough room to pass on the right if there was a car stopped there for any length of time. He does anticipate that to happen because of the volume and the changing of the light at Main Street. There will be significant gaps in traffic to allow the left turns. Board members said it is technically illegal to pass on the right.

Walter Cramp said Bridge Q-6 is slated for replacement in four years. There may be a need for right-of-way for that bridge replacement. Currently there is a sidewalk on the south side by the Tires site. The sidewalk is discontinuous on the upstream side towards the site. There will be property needed there. He said this will need to be addressed in the future.

John Risko asked about Conservation Easements on the property. Ms. Ward said there are wetlands associated with the Wallkill River. A Conservation Easement was recorded. She pointed out the Conservation area on one of the attachments.

Andy Borisuk asked how much of Lot 29 is buildable. Ms. Ward said Lot 29 and the front part of Lot 17 with the existing house is less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre. All of the rest of the property gets consolidated into one lot. She believes almost none of Lot 29 is buildable. That is where the Conservation Easement is. She said this is why they did not use that as the entrance. Mr. Lothian said he does not believe the County right-of-way will be an issue with the applicant.

The meeting was opened to the public. There was no public present. The meeting was closed to the public.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Michael Francis to grant the request for a waiver to allow left hand turns into the site. The motion was seconded by John Ford. A roll-call vote was taken. Results were as follows: Andy Borisuk-Yes; John Ford-Yes; Michael Francis-Yes; Wolfgang Gstattenbauer-Yes; Dan Flynn-Yes; Walter Cramp-No; Rich Vohden-Yes; and George Graham-Yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Snyder said he will have a Resolution for this waiver at the September meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. PROJECT UPDATE AND OTHER:

Mr. Snyder said he has been away for two weeks so he does not have too much to report. He, John Risko and Alice Brees have been discussing a number of projects where they are seeing the need for sidewalks in centers. There has already been discussion about the Shell Station in Sparta where there is a retail attractor being built opposite an existing residential neighborhood. There is the likelihood that people will want to cross the street. There is another site on Mill Street in Newton where there is talk about sidewalks and crosswalks. Also, there are two projects on River Styx Road in Hopatcong. They plan to come up with an approach that the County can take which will treat everyone the same way and give clear standards as to what the County wants and why. There has always been discussion with regard to sidewalks for the first applicant in. Some issues for sidewalks: if a sidewalk was built and it ended at a hazardous location; does it end in a reasonable fashion; and does it meet the ADA requirements. Mr. Snyder said they are starting to have those discussions and he hopes to have more to discuss at the September meeting.

Dan Flynn asked if there will be a recommendation to the towns to place sidewalks in those areas. Mr. Snyder said yes and that the County Dev. Standards already say, where there is a safety issue, the County can say there is an issue and it needs to be addressed. The County has already taken that approach for the Shell Station in Sparta. Sparta approved the new Stop 'N Shop which is a half a mile down the road from Knoll Heights Senior Citizen development. The Shell Station has a proposal for a "7-11 Convenience Store". The seniors will cross Route 517. Sparta Township has been cooperative. Mr. Snyder said the County needs to have a well laid out and comprehensive strategy to deal with centers. There are already different standards for centers and it is just a matter of adding some of that language.

Freeholder Graham said he received a letter from Tom Russo, Newton Town Manager, regarding Mill Street in Newton. He said we will get one shot at the apple because there is going to be some significant work done in 2016. Walter Cramp said the County has a right-of-way but it is wise to work with municipalities to allow them to provide sidewalks as part of a Circulation Plan. It makes sense if there is a missing strip of sidewalk along Route 206 where people are walking along the road. DOT has adopted "Complete Streets" policies which mean they are actively doing this. DOT is repaving Route 206 and they are trying to stay in the footprint of the existing

pavement so it doesn't add impervious cover, which would trigger a DEP permit and delay the project for a year or two. Therefore they will not consider sidewalks along Route 206 in this resurfacing project. Debbie Hurt, the DOT spokesperson at the time said that they have a separate program for Complete Streets initiatives to do sidewalks such as this one. Hopefully, Route 206 will have sidewalks put in under that program.

Dan Flynn asked if they can give money in the Complete Streets Program to pick up sidewalks where the town or county left off. Walter Cramp said there is federal money available for this, it's called, "Safe Routes to School" but federal programs are unbelievably onerous. Most counties will not touch a federal funding program unless it goes over a half million dollar amount. The County barely complied with this local aid questionnaire for the federal aid it received. It is very difficult for a town to get federal money for sidewalks even if it is available.

Eric Snyder said these are the things that are being discussed. They are the areas that have been pointed out in the Complete Streets Study. Because there are projects that are coming before the Planning Board for approvals, it is perfect timing. We have them in three legitimate centers and staff is working towards coming up with something that will be applicable across the board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

OPEN TO PUBLIC

None

ADJOURNMENT

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by John Ford. The motion was seconded by Wolfgang Gstattenbauer and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.