

SUSSEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

December 5, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Francis at 4:00 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:

Michael Francis, Chairman
Gail Phoebus, Vice Chairperson
Michael Cecchini
Joseph Maikisch, 1st Alternate
John Risko, Engineering Alternate
Rich Vohden, Freeholder Member

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Dr. John Ford

STAFF PRESENT:

Eric Snyder, Planning Director
Alice Brees, Principal Planner
Neal Leitner, Senior Planner
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT:

Megan Ward, Esq.
Michael Selvaggi
James Glasson

MINUTES

Minutes were not available.

SITE PLAN/SUBDIVISION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports were not available.

A motion was made by Rich Vohden to amend the Agenda to Beaver Run Solar Farm. The motion was seconded by Gail Phoebus and carried unanimously.

APPEALS AND WAIVER REQUESTS

A. ANDOVER ANIMAL HOSPITAL, SITE PLAN, FILE 53(MSP)10, ROUTES 616 AND 669, ANDOVER TOWNSHIP:

Michael Selvaggi said he represents the Andover Animal Hospital. He said the location is the old Iliff Furniture Shop. Dr. Hummell who owns the Animal Hospital down the street purchased the property at a foreclosure several months ago. He received site plan approval from Andover Township Land Use Board. They are here to request a waiver from sight distance. They are using the existing entrance which does not meet County Standards.

Jim Glasson, the project's engineer was sworn. Mr. Glasson said he works for Civil Engineering in Budd Lake, NJ. He said his office did a profile on the site and he thought they did have the 550' of sight distance. They originally improved the sight line from 380' to 514'. In that area, there is an intersection of Newton Sparta Road (Route 616) and Limecrest Road (Route 669). When approaching that intersection, drivers tend to slow down. He feels it would be a hardship to have to cut the pavement down on the road to flatten it and obtain the full 550' sight distance. By taking down the brush and regrading in the right-of-way, they have improved it a great deal. They are requesting a waiver from 550' to 514' available sight distance to the north on Route 669.

Chairman Francis asked for public comment. No comments were offered.

John Risko said that his Engineering report brings the facts to the Planning Board and Mr. Glasson is making his case on behalf of the applicant. The Planning Board has the discretionary power as to whether it would be onerous to require the applicant to do any more.

A motion was made by Michael Cecchini to grant the waiver from the County Standard of 550' to 514'. The motion was seconded by Joseph Maikisch. A roll call vote was taken. The results are as follows: Michael Francis-Yes; Gail Phoebus-Yes; Michael Cecchini-Yes; Joseph Maikisch-Yes; John Risko-Abstain; Richard Vohden-Yes. Motion carried.

B. BEAVER RUN SOLAR FARM, LLC, SITE PLAN, FILE 31(MSP)11, ROUTE 661, LAFAYETTE TOWNSHIP:

Megan Ward, Esq. said this waiver request is from Beaver Run Solar Farm, LLC which is on County Route 661 at the intersection of Pond School Road in Lafayette Township. It also has frontage on Lewisburg Road. The proposed entrance to the solar farm is at the location of Fox Hill Road, which has been vacated by the Township, but it was an unimproved township road. It would be improved as a gravel driveway. The driveway would be 25' wide and the existing gate would remain. Access to the solar farm would be controlled by the applicant. Ms. Ward said it is impossible

to access the property from either Pond School Road or Lewisburg Road because there is a very large area of wetlands. The only feasible access is the existing Fox Hill Road access on Route 661. In conjunction with that use, the current farm driveway to the south, which is much less desirable, would be abandoned.

They are requesting four waivers: Sight distance, reverse frontage, width of the driveway and the distance between the driveways.

Chairman Francis asked for public comment on this application. No comments were offered.

Michael Cecchini asked how many times per month would someone be accessing the property. Ms. Ward said almost never because the panels are remotely monitored. She added that the failure rate is so insignificant on the solar panels that for maintenance, other than to mow twice a year, very limited access would be necessary. There is no impact for traffic. When asked, she said it would be used for the construction site access.

John Risko said he has not reviewed a waiver request for this project nor has he had the opportunity to write his report from an Engineering viewpoint. He said it is an extremely substandard sight distance.

Eric Snyder suggested that this application be carried to the January meeting so that an Engineering Report would be available.

The Agenda was further amended to Director's Report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Eric Snyder reported that the State came out with its Draft Strategic Plan. The plan is 40 pages long but short on detail. They focused on economic development and did away with the State Plan map, instead substituting criteria for a map. There are various industry clusters they want to focus on and there will be some criteria that they will use to provide input to the State Agencies. The language is Planning Areas One and Two and Centers, including centers that have expired. Mr. Snyder said what is nice about this plan is that they reject the concept that the center can somehow expire.

The Office of Planning Advocacy, which used to be the Office of Smart Growth, is looking at a wider range of the State rules that are internally contradictory. One of the biggest efforts is going to be State Agency coordination. A Steering Committee will be created to include all State Agency heads and some others under the direct jurisdiction of the Lieutenant Governor's office, who will be the tie breaker between the agencies. He will be responsible for making the agencies bring their plans into conformance with this new draft and to balance the two competing objectives of economic development and preservation. It seems at this point it has the support of the Governor's office. There will be individual Public Hearings around the State in an effort to expedite this plan. The goal is to adopt the plan in March. The closest Public Hearing (to Sussex County) will be in Morristown. They have adopted, as part of the

State Planning Act requirements, the old Statement of Agreements and Disagreements and the Impact Study from the old plan.

Mr. Snyder said that he is in the process of reworking the County's Strategic Growth Plan to deal with what's coming out because there is some encouraging language that he's looking to build on. The County Planners Association, NJAPA and others are doing their best to provide professional input. He welcomed the Board's input. Jerry Sharfenburger, the Executive Director of Office of Planning Advocacy, said he would be happy to make a presentation to the Planning Board.

Chairman Francis said he and his Mayor have been to Trenton by invitation. The Governor and Lieutenant are very aggressive on this issue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. DRAFT STATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item was covered in the Director's Report.

Eric Snyder said the Resolution for 2012 Meeting Dates will be covered at the January meeting.

Michael Francis and Michael Cecchini will serve as the Nominating Committee. They will have nominees for Chair and Vice Chair at the January meeting.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

None

ADJOURNMENT

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Gail Phoebus. The motion was seconded by Michael Cecchini and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.