

Sussex County Planning Board

Minutes

December 6, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cecchini at approximately 4:02 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 Cecchini, Chairman
Michael Francis, Vice Chairman
Richard Vohden
Gail Phoebus
Walter Cramp
Joseph Maikisch, 2nd Alternate

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Kirk Perry

STAFF PRESENT:

Eric Snyder, Planning Director
John Risko, Assistant County Engineer
Bill Koppenaar, Chief Engineer
Alice Brees, Principal Planner
Neal Leitner, Senior Planner

ALSO PRESENT:

Bruce Stevens, Applicant
Allen Campbell, P.E.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Francis to approve the minutes of July 12, 2010. It was seconded by Ms. Phoebus. All were in favor.

SITE PLAN/SUBDIVISION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORTS

A motion was made by Mr. Vohden to accept the reports of 7/12/2010, 7/26/2010, 8/9/2010, 8/23/2010, 9/13/2010, 10/4/2010, 10/18/2010, 11/1/2010 and 11/15/2010. It was seconded by Mr. Francis. All were in favor.

APPEALS AND WAIVER REQUESTS

A. B. Stevens Site Plan, File 43(PSP)10, Route 669, Sparta

In the absence of Mr. Hogan, Mr. Snyder swore in Mr. Campbell, P.E. for B. Stevens, applicant. He presented testimony regarding the property on Houses Corner Road in Sparta, Lot 1 Block 35. Mr. Campbell said this property has a site plan for a truck terminal for approximately 50 trucks. This property also had frontage formerly on Old Houses Corner Road prior to the road realignment project for Route 669 intersection with Route 15. Since the project, Old Houses Corner Road was vacated by the County and became a common driveway serving three lots, including the subject property.

Mr. Campbell said the applicant's primary waiver request is to provide for a new access on its property frontage on existing Route 669. This access point would be about 200' to the west of the common driveway and would provide further separation from the mix of the traffic at the intersection of Route 15. Mr. Campbell said he doesn't feel that truck traffic from a terminal in combination with an office complex and a residential dwelling is appropriate, which would occur using the common driveway. He also said by evaluation of various sight distances, the proposed location provides a safer access to this property.

Mr. Campbell said the proposed driveway meets all sight distances for car travel, which is based on the 85th percentile speed, with a design speed of 55 MPH. He emphasized that the posted speed limit for this section of road is 40 MPH. Mr. Campbell said sight distances for trucks are evaluated differently, and Mr. Risko's report summarizes the varied aspects of the car versus the truck. The required sight distance for a truck is 930' and 606' for a car. For the existing common driveway there is 1000' to the southwest but only 444' to the northeast.

The truck sight distance from the proposed access (southwest) is 820'; which is shy of the 930', but adequate for the 85th percentile speed. The sight distance to the northeast (towards the Route 15 intersection) is 696'. Realistically, a car coming from the intersection might be doing 25/30 MPH, and for the proposed driveway the 690' does meet the design criteria for 30 MPH. Therefore the sight distance deficiency to the northeast is to a point where it's safe for the probable speed of travel.

Mr. Campbell said another waiver request is for the separation distance from the existing commercial driveway (on the opposite side of the road) to the proposed driveway. The separation distance between driveway centerlines would be 150' and the requirement is 200'. Mr. Campbell said he has been at the site and has evaluated the traffic volume on several occasions. For the commercial facility, it has peak traffic in the morning and afternoon and does not appear to have a continual flow. He feels that the waiver of 150' is justified also because the proposed driveway creates further separation from the Route 15 intersection.

Before Mr. Stevens spoke, Mr. Snyder swore him in. Mr. Stevens said the truck terminal is going to be a transfer depot from tractor trailers to smaller trucks to disperse commodities throughout the metropolitan area; it does not deal with hazardous waste.

At this time Chairman opened the floor to the public. Seeing none, he closed it to the public.

Vice Chairman Francis made a motion to approve these waivers. Mr. Vohden seconded it. A roll call vote was taken. Results are as follows: R. Vohden - yes; G. Phoebus - yes; W. Cramp - yes; J. Maikisch - yes; M. Francis - yes; M. Cecchini - yes.

Mr. Koppenaar stated that it's important to note that the proposed driveway is out of the functional area of the Route 15 intersection. He said the importance of trying to clear a functional area of an intersection has been an issue for other applications as well. Mr. Koppenaar said the benefit of clearing that functional area made the proposed driveway a more optimal location than the common driveway that currently exists.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Snyder spoke about the County Circulation Plan. He said comments have been received from Mr. Risko and Mr. Koppenaar and there will be a meeting regarding those comments within the next couple of weeks. He said if any one of the Planning Board members has comments, let him know shortly. He's also talking to the Strategic Growth Advisory Committee and at some point he would like to bring the two groups together. Mr. Snyder said this plan is a little less like the traditional one because we're going to include issues like housing into it and many engineering concerns that were not addressed in the classic planning circulation studies.

Mr. Snyder informed the Board that Don Hogan has resigned as Planning Board Attorney. He said that he and Mr. McConnell have talked about this, and where there are issues requiring legal advice Mr. McConnell will be here. Also, Mr. Snyder will be handling resolutions, and will run them by Mr. McConnell to make sure he's happy with it. If anyone has any concerns, please let me know.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

UNFINISHED BUSINESS**NEW BUSINESS**

A. County Circulation Plan – previously discussed under Director’s Report

Under this topic, Chairman Cecchini reminded the committee that reorganization will be discussed at next month’s meeting. He and Mr. Francis are the nominating committee and will present a name at next month’s meeting.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

None were present.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to be discussed at this time, and a motion was made by Mr. Francis to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Mr. Vohden and carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.