

The regular meeting of the Waterford Township Planning Board was called to order by Chairman Giangiulio followed by the salute to the flag.

Chairman Giangiulio read the notice to the public.

Roll call was taken and the following members were present: Mayor William Richardson, Al Campbell, Mike Achey, Ralph Condo, Lynn Ferguson, Rich Jacoby, Tom Giangiulio, and Jon Becker. Also present were Ed Toussaint Zoning Official, and Rich Wells, Board Solicitor. Those absent were Rich Beswick, Roe lles, and Brian Kraus.

Motions for adjournments of cases or other motions:

None

New Business:

None

Old Business:

DAS application, Rich Wells spoke with the attorney for the applicant requesting the County approval. The applicant's attorney stated he will send it, the applicant will file the subdivision, consistent with the approvals, and not make any improvements other than the single existing lot, to avoid posting a bond for the entire subdivision. There is a challenge on how to separate the bond. Mr. Wells feels it is best to have the applicant come back to the board, and put testimony on the record. Mr. Toussaint agrees, he has questions on the bond. The septic goes to the County for approval, that may require a 3.2 acre lot, and we would need County Board of Health approval. Chairman Giangiulio asked about Pinelands approval for the 3.2 acre lot. The subdivision is approved, it is not finalized. The bond is the issue, which deals with the improvements. Mr. Toussaint stated he felt the bond would not be able to be released until the project is complete.

Communications / Discussions:

Discussion of the update to the redevelopment plan for Haines Boulevard.

Mr. Toussaint addressed the reasoning behind the special meeting. We have an old plan from 2001 that doesn't really show any visions. Over the years we have met with others, and asked what the vision or plan is. We didn't have one. We reached out to Township Committee to get a Planner, who appointed a Planner. We need ideas as to what we in-vision for Haines Boulevard. We have to include some type of residential housing for Haines Boulevard. Township Administrator Susan Dansen reinforced what Mr. Toussaint stated, and by utilizing this new planner is that it is a fresh set of eyes, and will do well for us.

Mr. Toussaint introduced Susan Gruel and Fred Hyer, from the firm of Hyer Gruel Associates, Township Committee appointed this firm. Fred commented that they are community planners, not planners. They are professors at Rutgers teaching Planning Classes in Master Planning. Their specialty is Redevelopment Planning. They like to create understandable plans for the public. 2001 to now is a long time to wait for something to happen. Redevelopment is a pro-active process. This is a challenging piece of property but can be valuable to the Town. Information was sent, non-residential, and light industrial was the plan, however the idea of the train station is big for commuting, using mass transit. The station is an undersized utilization, 49 minutes from downtown Philadelphia and about the same distance to Atlantic City. This is an area with great potential. Higher density residential housing, some commercial, however some towns are concerns with rental housing, higher density housing. The new housing market seems to be smaller units, reasonable rents, and fewer school kids. There is great access, via highway and the road network is geared toward industrial, commercial. Susan and Fred asked for the Board members visions and ideas. Fred asked if there were certain concerns that he should be made aware of. Mr. Toussaint commented that there was contamination on one lot, studies were done on all the other lots, and there is plenty of sewer and water capacity available. Mr. Toussaint asked how to deal with 100 % Pinelands, and density issues. Also, dealing with the fair share housing requirement is questionable. Mr. Toussaint asked if there are any issues with getting the density credits. Mr. Toussaint stated the density increase is the biggest issue. Chairman Giangiulio added that there was a developer interested in the property, and was looking for 8 to 12 per acre, Pinelands has the control on density, and Mr. Toussaint called the Pinelands and they would not commit to anything. The rules on affordable housing are different than that of the Pinelands. Mr. Achey added that this is town that has State Forest as most of the town. The argument would be that there has to be an increase in density due to more than half the town is a pristine forest. Mr. Toussaint added that in 2012 all the clustering rules changed, and other property may have to be frozen. Susan stated that there was an approval for phase 1 of over 700,000 sq. ft. Mr. Condo mentioned that he thought the purpose is what the board envisions, and what the community will accept, what are the goals and priorities. What was previously envisioned by the community, Committee members, and previous Planning Boards, was commercial, in reality has all changed. The original study that was done, showed if 70% of Haines Blvd. was developed and if 50% of that 70% was commercial, that made up 4 times our tax base. There should be mixed use now, from COAH requirements, to single family homes, to apartments, assisted living facilities, but at the same time a commercial element to offset the costs associated with residential coming to the Community. Mr. Condo added that the commercial component not knowing the size, is important to create balance. At this point Pinelands cannot commit to the density change, however they can be sensitive to meeting the obligations. Mr. Condo feels that the mindset now is different than 3 years ago.

Mayor Richardson agrees with Mr. Condo. Many years ago it was of the mindset to be commercial. We are now looking more at mixed uses, high end apartments or condo's on top of Commercial, maybe senior housing more towards the center of Town. Mayor Richardson added that the Movie Theatre site is where we should concentrate on Commercial development. The other half residential, and mixed uses. Mr. Condo stated years ago, the Township did not want to take control of this as a true redevelopment area. Mayor Richardson stated the New Jersey American high pressure line goes through and if any new development goes through there, has to tie into the water system. We have enough sewer capacity. Mr. Condo mentioned the Movie Theatre site that can handle 70% of the storm

water. We won't need big basins. Chairman Giangiulio added that the Movie Theatre site is at the higher end of the tract. Prior to the theatre closing, the underground detention was rebuilt with the overflow going into the state system on Route 30. That parking lot with underground chambers still exists, it is just at the high end of the site. There is potential as a package, senior citizens, partnering with the health community like an urgent care facility. We don't need another study that is not doable. Mayor Richardson referred to it as a blank canvas, get ideas then be the artist, and put together a plan.

Chairman Giangiulio referenced the Main Street plan in Voorhees, and commented where the Radnor Corporation bought the entire site. Voorhees has a distinct difference, as we are more agricultural than Voorhees. We have an idea but it is a rough idea. We need assistance putting it all together. To leave the Movie theater property like it is, is a waste. There is great access to the Train station, and the White Horse Pike area being restaurants, and businesses. Now the White Horse Pike is all "Mom and Pop" stores, and we need big businesses. We could have another road go through that Movie Theatre parcel and subdivisions occur to accommodate the development. There is development that has occurred on the White Horse Pike. We are an agricultural based community, and 65% is State Forest, and the other 35% we are at a standstill. We need help in the form of density. Mr. Condo stated Pinelands will not be an obstacle. They may be more sensitive and cooperative and will assist us more, due to legislature that Waterford Township was supposed to be a "pilot program". Mr. Condo asked what tools or approach will be used to evaluate, present a plan and get input from key stakeholders such as developers. Fred stated to enact a form based code, a picture book that says it's visionary with glimpses of what the areas could be, then break it up into smaller blocks, under a comprehensive plan. We have advised Towns against appointing someone as a master redeveloper and giving them control. Have public meetings, RFP the developers, as an open process, and with multiple developers interested you can potentially end up in a good position, and be able to possibly offer tax abatements. It becomes a way of testing the developer's promises. Susan stated meeting with developers, we like to speak to them, ones that have already been spoken to, new ones, ones that we trust. The larger scale developers have gone to the smaller towns, and pocket the approval for another time. That's where towns get burnt, and leaves vacant properties. Mr. Condo added we seem to have a laid back community. Mr. Achey mentioned we have a limited specific area, and we want to maximize it. We need more people in town, we need rooftops. Mr. Achey mentioned a railroad siding, those people stay. Mr. Condo mentioned a meeting and one of the outcomes is that if we move the front yard to the 73 corridor. NJDOT stated considerations at that time, but nothing came of it. Chairman Giangiulio stated that one of the larger property owners is a COAH housing developer. He owns all of the Route 73 frontage next to the Movie Theatre, its 23 acres. He does not have sewer on that property. We had a meeting and invited land owners, this property owner did not speak at all, he simply stated he was prepared to build 400 units. Chairman Giangiulio stated Waterford may not be prepared to put residential there. Mr. Jacoby stated Waterford tried eminent domain on a lot of these properties and it did not work out. There are about 10 homes that Chairman Giangiulio mentioned run commercial businesses out of most of them. Mr. Condo stated in the big picture the board and committee if some developer was going to come in and increase our tax base, provide a better community, the town would be willing to listen, and accept. Fred mentioned rarely in his experience have they had to turn to eminent domain. The designation allowed for eminent domain. Mr. Condo stated ultimately we have to do what's best for the community. Susan commented that property owners sometimes feel their property is worth more than what it really is.

Chairman Giangiulio mentioned the 12 acre parcel at the end of Haines Blvd. There was a flea market there for many years. The owner negotiated with WaWa for \$1.6 million dollars, and ultimately the bank took ownership. There is now a for sale sign for \$599,000. WaWa at this point stated they are not willing to proceed with that location since the demographics have not changed. There are not enough roof tops. Mayor Richardson stated the Tom, Rick and others have put some ideas on the record, Lynn Ferguson added that she likes a lot of what Ralph, Bill and Tom had to say. Lynn works in Voorhees, and Main Street is all medical offices, and Voorhees Towne Center is empty. No one shops there. The Promenade seems to have worked, commercial below with residential above is a likeable idea. She does not think the public is as on board with residential as others may seem. Mrs. Ferguson is also concerned with the COAH situation. Chairman Giangiulio added that comments have been made from the public to put more housing on Haines Blvd. To support the commercial, you need residential. Mrs. Ferguson mentioned gearing towards age targeted, young professionals with no children. Mr. Condo stated that we have come so far since 10 years prior, and the understanding of housing is needed to support the commercial, and having a fresh set of eyes is helpful. Mr. Condo also brought up social media, and how a lot of information is presented through social media and circulated that way. If the information is given showing data, and results pros and cons shown, it will help get the point across to the public. Mrs. Ferguson suggested doing the commercial first, or limiting the housing. She would like to see more retail commercial approach along Haines Blvd, and housing behind that. Mr. Jacoby mentioned if you are combining the parcel, why not reconfigure the roads as well. We are redesigning a concept, and redesigning the whole parcel, roads included. Chairman Giangiulio stated we are open to almost anything at this point. Mrs. Ferguson stated if we considered the low to moderate housing that would be in addition to fair market value, and commercial. Mr. Campbell stated we certainly need both housing and commercial. He mentioned the underpass/tunnel, near the train station that leads to Jackson Road, we could open that area up. Chairman Giangiulio mentioned discussions with NJ Transit going from Cooper road to RR tracks, to install walking paths with lighting, and benches, and could potentially open that up to people from Evesham Township using that facility for public transportation. Mr. Condo suggested if part of the housing components were Senior, we could be eligible for CDBG funds. Mr. Toussaint stated when we met with NJ Transit, the funds that they had available revolve around a walking community. Those funds will not be available unless you do that type of plan. They were open to walking bridges and paths. It has to be that type of mixed use. Federal funding could be lost if that money is not spent. They don't want to see parking lots, they want a walking community. They would want to use the train station parking lot, to incorporate a walking path.

At this time Chairman Giangiulio opened this portion of the meeting up to the public. Before the board appeared Karen Strauss of 2307 Cooper Road. Mr. Strauss when older residents sell their homes, there is no place for them to go. If a Senior development was considered, such as apartments where there is no maintenance for the seniors would keep the residents in town. Mr. Condo stated that's a plus for the community, and it adds or counts towards COAH, and allows us to utilize federal funding. Mr. Toussaint stated it does help us with our COAH obligations. Mr. Condo stated there is a separate definition of subsidized housing and COAH. Mrs. Strauss added that would be acceptable for Haines Blvd. With no further comments from the public, Chairman Giangiulio closed the public portion.

Mr. Chiddenton mentioned a COSCO would be a great addition. Mayor Richardson stated Mt. Laurel area is the closest. Chairman Giangiulio mentioned Bass Pro Shop would be another great addition. Mr.

Chiddenton stated he loves the town center look, a gym, Applebees, etc. We don't have the young professionals that Voorhees has. Although we have great access, this property presents some problems. The challenge is residents that don't want change, and others are welcoming change. We have a property with water and sewer, and can't wait to see what can be done with it. It was mentioned for High Rise in the far corner may be a good addition, maybe a bank. Mrs. Ferguson added that we have a uniqueness, and keep the idea of working in the city, yet come home to the warm country feel. Chairman Giangliulo mentioned a gated community, as we move forward, this type of development with young professionals to support the businesses. Mr. Condo added not just considering Philadelphia and Atlantic City, Camden as well. Billions of dollars will be spent in Camden, jobs created, and however we proceed with this, Camden is looking to partner with someone. Within 5 to 7 years, you get all of your capital back, it's a city enrichment zone. There are already high end condos and businesses, and what more of a better selling point, work in Camden and live in Waterford. Chairman Giangliulo mentioned Fieldstone that had a specific age bracket, and all the numbers in place with facts and statistics. It may be beneficial to contact them. The challenge is convincing the community since there is a large part of the community that does not want to see residential at all. Mrs. Ferguson stated have public meetings where we present the plan. Mr. Toussaint added that the road access to the property the way it sits is terrible, left hand turns are difficult. Chairman Giangliulo mentioned the movie theatre was the problem. Mr. Toussaint agreed the roads need to be changed. Parcel size is also an issue, they need to be cubed up into smaller sections, and Mr. Condo had mentioned that a whole plan needs to be presented to a developer. The larger developers have the financing, but don't want to deal with the smaller parcels. Mr. Yeatman asked what the risk is by involving the property owners. Susan stated you really need to involve them. Mr. Yeatman stated it has been a while since that has happened. Mr. Condo stated regarding the definition of involvement, if a plan is put together for the best interest of the community, what expertise or non-biased information the public would bring to the table. Mr. Toussaint stated there are only 2 property owners that actually live in town, the rest have no idea what Waterford Township needs. If the owners wanted to sell, the main issue is money, before they consider cooperating. Mr. Yeatman added to peak their interest, and that the board is of a like mind to move forward. The majority of the people are coming to the realization, and that the door is now open. Susan added that we have come a long way, the committee and planning Board are working together, we are open to move forward, and she thanked everyone for coming, and offering ideas. She is looking forward to working together, and asked that everyone send her their emails, ideas so she can forward them to Susan and Fred.

Susan mentioned that they would be willing to meet with the public, and at times messy meetings have a better end result, and the public feels that they have vented and their ideas are out there. She suggested having a public meeting after the New Year. Mr. Condo suggested to work with Susan, the Administrator on how to put that information out there. Chairman Giangliulo suggested having an RSVP, so we know where to hold the meeting, and notice the property owners first. Susan agreed and then open it to the public, and still have the property owners there. Mrs. Strauss stated she feels that is the right approach. Mr. Condo agreed with what Susan suggested, and make it clear that this is step 1. Susan stated yes, and how we lay it out, social media is a part of it. Mr. Condo stated values is not an issue at this point, it is to be determined. The Landowners need to see or hear what our ideas are, and may decide to sell or not to sell. This will more informing and gathering information.

Resolutions:

None

Minutes:

None

Reports:

None

Public:

Board Comments and Questions:

None

Adjournment:

Mayor Richardson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Rich Jacoby seconded the motion. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ed Toussaint, Planning Board Secretary