

EAST AMWELL PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
7:30 PM East Amwell Municipal Building
May 9, 2012 - Meeting

Call to Order, Attendance and Pledge of Allegiance

This meeting of the East Amwell Planning Board was opened on April 11, 2012 at 7:30 PM. The following notice was read, "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this is a regularly scheduled meeting pursuant to the annual meeting notice as published in the January 19, 2012 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat, a copy of the agenda for this meeting was forwarded to the Hunterdon County Democrat, filed in the Township Clerk's Office and posted on the bulletin board on April 4, 2012."

Present: Fred Gardner
Rob Gilbert – Vice Chairman
Gail Glashoff
Linda Lenox
Dart Sageser
Michael Weis
Joe Wolfgang
Planner Slagle

Excused: Don Reilly, Chairman
Roger DeLay – Alt. #1
Edward Feinberg – Alt. #2

It was noted for the record that Vice Chairman Gilbert was covering the meeting for Chairman Reilly.

Citizens' Privilege to Speak on Items not on the Agenda

A motion by Dart Sageser, seconded by Michael Weis to open to the public was unanimously approved. Christian Plunkett of 17 Boss Road came forward and stated he is a consulting arborist who recently moved to East Amwell and indicated he would like to volunteer his time and expertise to assist the Township in applying for State grants that are available to help care for the municipality's trees through the NJ Community Forestry Assistance Act. Mr. Plunkett remarked that he has contacted someone from the State who indicated they would be willing to come to the Township and provide a presentation on how the municipality can benefit from working with the Forestry Assistance Act.

He explained he recently attended the Clawson Park Advisory Committee meeting to address some of his concerns regarding the health and maintenance practices of the trees in Clawson Park.

Several Board Members expressed their enthusiasm with Mr. Plunkett's offer to volunteer his time. Mr. Gardner suggested he contact the Township Committee. Planner Slagle commented that Mr. Sageser may be able to set something up through the Environmental Commission, at tomorrow night's Township Committee meeting, if everyone is inclined to do so.

A motion By Fred Gardner, seconded by Gail Glashoff to close to the public was unanimously approved.

Review of Minutes

A motion by Gail Glashoff, seconded by Dart Sageser to approve the Board's minutes from 4/11/12 was approved as revised with Rob Gilbert abstaining.

New Business – Other

Approval: Resolution PB#2012-06: (Section 26/Renewable Energy)

A motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Linda Lenox to approve Resolution PB#2012-06 (Section 26/Renewable Energy) was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote: Fred Gardner: Yes, Linda Lenox: Yes, Rob Gilbert: Yes, Gail Glashoff: Yes, Dart Sageser: Yes, Michael Weis: Yes, Joe Wolfgang: Yes.

Discussion: Tree Harvesting Ordinance – Status Update

Mr. Weis noted there is a meeting scheduled for specific members of the Planning Board and Township Committee to discuss the issues which continue to be raised with the Tree Harvesting Ordinance.

Oral Reports

FOSPC – No report given

Agricultural Advisory Committee – Ms. Glashoff reported that the Committee is looking into creating a hyperlink to the Township website and remarked that they are considering drafting a questionnaire which would be mailed to farmers.

Environmental Commission – Mr. Sageser recommended that everyone read Mr. Hummel’s article in the VIP regarding roadside clean-up.

Wastewater Management – No report was given

PB Secretary – No report was given

(Vice) Chairman – No report was given

Correspondence

It was noted for the record that no comments were made on any of the correspondence listed on the agenda.

Open to the Public

A motion by Michael Weis, seconded by Gail Glashoff to open to the public was unanimously approved. Frances Gavigan of 123 Wertsville Road came forward and commented on the excessive expenses to the County and farmers over recent Right-to-Farm challenges brought up at the CADB meeting. Ms. Gavigan suggested that some type of mediation or screening process be implemented and remarked that if a challenge is brought forth without success, the person who challenges should be responsible for paying some of the costs associated with hearing the matter as well as the costs incurred by the farmer. Mr. Sageser asked if this is a problem in the Township. Ms. Gavigan said yes and indicated several Boards and Attorneys are currently involved in a Right-to-Farm dispute between residents which is costing the Township money.

Mr. Gardner commented that he believes the definition of farm in some cases has gotten exaggerated within the community. He remarked about a property owner with a 10 acre parcel who asserted Right-to-Farm in order to build a large indoor riding arena and several people believed the situation to be purely a commercial proposition unrelated to anything else taking place on the land. Mr. Gardner stated he would be hesitant to make challenging the Right-to-Farm difficult.

Mr. Weis remarked that in a lot of cases where there are challenges which result in expenses to all of the parties involved, the right thing to do is to review the Ordinance for clarification to determine whether or not there is a pattern to the challenges. Ms. Gavigan stated that farming is a marginal business and it’s a shame to see farmers getting driven out of communities.

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Planner Slagle commented that Ms. Gavigan should take her suggestion to the Township Committee since this matter is out of the Planning Board's purview.

A motion by Linda Lenox, seconded by Dart Sageser to close to the public was unanimously approved.

Presentation of Vouchers

A motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Gail Glashoff to pay the vouchers as listed on the agenda was unanimously approved.

Adjournment

A motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Gail Glashoff to adjourn was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Maria Andrews, Administrative Officer