

EAST AMWELL PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
7:30 PM East Amwell Municipal Building
November 13, 2013 - Meeting

Call to Order, Attendance and Pledge of Allegiance

This meeting of the East Amwell Planning Board was opened on November 13, 2013 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 17, 2013 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 November 6, 2013."

Present: Fred Gardner
Rob Gilbert
Don Reilly, Chairman
Dart Sageser
David Wang-Iverson
Linda Lenox – Alt. #1

Excused: Roger DeLay
Gail Glashoff
Joe Wolfgang
Gail Skupien – Alt. #2

Citizens' Privilege to Speak on Items not on the Agenda

A motion by Rob Gilbert, seconded by Linda Lenox to open to the public was unanimously approved. Seeing no members of the public come forward, a motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Rob Gilbert to close to the public was unanimously approved.

Review of Minutes

A motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Linda Lenox to approve the Board's 10/9/13 minutes with no revisions noted was approved with Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Wang-Iverson abstaining.

New Business – Other

Discussion: Prioritization of the Adopted 2013 Planning Board Goals for 2014

Planner Slagle provided a brief review of what the 2013 Planning Board goals were. Mr. Sageser and Mr. Wang-Iverson both noted that there has been some minor discussion by the Township Committee to consider the possible implementation of some type of incentive program in the Village District in an effort to help land owners who are struggling to properly maintain their homes and property. The idea of tax abatements was suggested with the discussion then focusing on possible planning guidelines the Planning Board may wish to consider.

Planner Slagle commented that NORWESCAP administers an assistance program for struggling property owners but noted that it's up to the owner to come in and ask for help. She suggested that perhaps the Board could review design standards for the Village and remarked that establishing guidelines will only be helpful in those cases where residents come before the Board with an application.

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Chairman Reilly commented that he doesn't believe this matter to be a design standards issue, but rather one where property owners simply lack the capital to maintain their properties. Mr. Sageser expressed that he believes establishing guidelines regarding property maintenance should be considered a Planning Board goal for 2014.

Mr. Gardner suggested that it may be beneficial to try and get feedback and input from residents on this matter. He commented on the hard work he and Valerie Rudolph did on the preservation program. He expressed the importance of having someone take charge, under the guidance of the Township Committee, to go out and survey the residents in the Village to determine what will enable them to better maintain their properties and then a proposal must be made to the Township Committee. Mr. Sageser suggested the Township Committee direct the Planning Board to do a study on the Village District. Planner Slagle added that a study would entail vision sessions, public hearings and a lot of input from residents. She noted that typically this type of study results in a change to the Master Plan because the Board is anticipating implementing some sort of regulation standards.

It was the consensus of the Board that the 2014 goals will include: A Village District study, the creation of a definition for corner lots and the establishment of fire protection and right-to-farm language standards. Chairman Reilly asked Planner Slagle to speak to Engineer O'Neal regarding what the time frame is for working on the anticipated 2014 goals and how much time each of them may need to put in on the various items.

Planner Slagle will provide the Board with an outline of what the Village study may include along with an estimated cost of such a project for budget purposes. It was noted that Planner Slagle will also provide some suggested design standards for the AVAD even though it was the consensus of the Board that this item doesn't seem to be a priority for 2014.

Chairman Reilly noted that he will reach out to the Historic Preservation Committee to get a status update on their previous desire to create an ordinance protecting historic sites.

Discussion: 2014 Planning Board Budget

Chairman Reilly indicated that the budget sheets provided to the Board depicted the actual budget but did not provide a breakdown of expenditures year to date (YTD). He stated that he added up the bills shown of each of the Board's agendas and has determined the following for 2013:

Legal services are just under \$2400.00 YTD and \$3000.00 was budgeted
Master Plan/Planner is just over \$10,000.00 YTD and \$11,000.00 was budgeted
Engineer costs are just under \$500.00 YTD and \$2000.00 was budgeted
Meetings/Conferences are under \$100.00 YTD and \$300.00 was budgeted

Chairman Reilly expressed that he would like to see the Planning Board's 2014 budget stay the same as it was for 2013. Mr. Wang-Iverson asked Planner Slagle if \$11,000.00 would be enough for her services to the Board for 2014. She remarked that with all projects there are varying degrees of detail and indicated a small Village study can be done to stay within budget.

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Oral Reports

FOSPC – No report was given.

Agricultural Advisory Committee – No report was given.

Environmental Commission – No report was given.

PB Secretary – No report was given.

Chairman – No report was given.

Open to the Public

A motion by Rob Gilbert, seconded by Fred Gardner to open to the public was unanimously approved by voice vote. Frances Gavigan of 123 Wertsville Road came forward and commented that she was present at the meeting years ago when Frank Banisch did a presentation on the AVAD design standards. She suggested the Board consider establishing a definition for “view shed” in order to protect people from such things as solar developments. She also stressed the importance of the Board addressing animals and farm uses on properties in the Sourland Mountain District. Seeing no other members of the public come forward, a motion by Linda Lenox, seconded by Rob Gilbert to close to the public was unanimously approved.

Presentation of Vouchers

A motion by Rob Gilbert, seconded by Fred Gardner to approve the vouchers for payment as listed on the agenda was unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Chairman Reilly adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Maria Andrews, Planning Board Administrator