

**EAST AMWELL PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**7:30 PM East Amwell Municipal Building**  
**September 14, 2016 - Meeting**

**Call to Order, Attendance and Pledge of Allegiance**

This meeting of the East Amwell Planning Board was opened on September 14, 2016 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 28, 2016 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 September 9, 2016."

**Present:** Roger DeLay  
Fred Gardner  
Rob Gilbert  
Gail Glashoff  
Linda Lenox  
Don Reilly, *Chairman*  
Dart Sageser  
David Wang-Iverson  
Peter Kneski  
John Buckwalter – *Alt. #1*  
Dante DiPirro – *Alt. #2*  
Planner Slagle

**Excused:** No one

**Citizens' Privilege to Speak on Items not on the Agenda**

Chairman Reilly opened the floor to public comment. Frances Gavigan of 123 Wertsville Road came forward and commented on the Right-to-Farm. Seeing no other members of the public come forward a motion by Gail Glashoff, seconded by Rob Gilbert to close to the public was unanimously approved.

**Review of Minutes**

A motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Rob Gilbert to approve the Board's 8/10/16 open session minutes with no revisions noted was unanimously approved.

A motion by Fred Gardner, seconded by Rob Gilbert to approve the Board's 8/10/16 executive session minutes with no revisions noted was unanimously approved.

It was noted for the record that Chairman Reilly re-ordered the agenda to address the FOSPC oral report so that Ms. Robbi didn't have to sit through the new business discussion items on the agenda.

**Oral Reports – FOSPC**

Mr. Gardner commented that Lisa MacCollum of the NJ Conservation Foundation attended their last meeting and gave a presentation on the Higgins property preservation. Mr. Gardner noted that progress continues to be made with Phase II of the process moving forward. He stated Phase I will preserve 152 acres, Phase II consists of the preservation of 270 acres.

Glorianne Robbi, Chair of FOSPC added that the preservation will be completely funded by NJ Conservation Foundation and Hunterdon Land Trust. Ms. Robbi commented how wonderful both organizations have been to work with over the years. She stated that the Township Committee approved a resolution in support of them funding Phase II of the Higgins preservation and requested the Planning Board send a letter of support as well.

Ms. Robbi gave a breakdown of the Township’s preservation efforts over the past 10 years, noting the following highlights:

1. Nine projects have been done between 2005-2015
2. Less than \$250,000 of Open Space funds have been leveraged for \$4,000,000 in land value (owners have donated approximately \$211,000)
3. A total of 277 acres were preserved during that time with 46 additional acres being preserved through neighbors donating easements due to nearby preservation
4. Clawson Park was purchased in 1999 through a Green Acres grant of \$148,000 and the Township bonding for \$125,000
5. Preserved farmland accounts for approximately 95% of the acres and costs to the Township (1989-2014)

A motion was made by Dante DiPirro, seconded by Gail Glashoff for the Planning Board to send a letter of support to the County endorsing NJ Conservation Foundation and Hunterdon Land Trust’s preservation efforts regarding Phase II of the Higgins property. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Gardner commented that he believes all of the planning board members support preservation and noted that East Amwell has the most preserved land and lowest tax rate in the county. He remarked that he believes there is a correlation between the two. Chairman Reilly thanked all of the FOSPC volunteers for their dedication and for the tremendous impact their efforts have had on the Township.

### **New Business**

#### **Discussion: Possible Amendments to Land Development Ordinance for 2017 – Solar and Village Business District**

Mr. Wang-Iverson explained that the property owner next to the solar array that was just installed on Rosemont-Ringoes Road is very concerned about how close everything seems to be to her property line. He suggested the Planning Board review the ordinance and consider any necessary amendments now that there is a solar facility in the township specifically, setback requirements and equipment that the Board may want shielded from public view. Chairman Reilly commented that since the ordinance was adopted State guidelines have changed regarding how prime farm lands can be utilized for solar. Planner Slagle added that the State’s new Energy Master Plan was released and now indicates that solar should be installed on disturbed lands rather than prime agricultural farmland or open space. She also commented that the SRECS are not as valuable as they were so many solar companies have moved on. Planner Slagle suggested this matter could be listed on the Board’s 2017 Goals and Priorities Memo.

Mr. Wang-Iverson also explained that in the Village Study there was a recommendation to revise the list of permitted business uses in the Village District in an effort to expand upon what is already allowed. He commented that he doesn’t want the Board to lose track of this matter. Planner Slagle added that the goal of the study was to determine ways to bring economic viability back the Village District so it’s important to review and expand the permitted uses. She suggested this be looked at along with affordable housing in this area of the Township. Mr. Sageser asked that the Board also review the standards for the condition of buildings within the Village District.

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Chairman Reilly clarified that the Township Committee is asking the Planning Board to review these issues and make any necessary recommendations. He noted the Township Committee will hold the required public hearings on the matters.

### **Discussion: COAH – Status Update: The Board May Enter Into Executive Session**

It was noted for the record that the Board did not enter into executive session. Planner Slagle explained that the Township is still awaiting a determination by Judge Miller on what the final required number of units will be. She noted that the only update is that the Courts have taken out the “GAP” period which means the number of COAH units that were required during the period of 1999-2015. She commented this is a good thing for all municipalities but the decision is being appealed by the Fair Share Housing Center. Additionally Judge Miller appointed Richard Redding to be his own advisor regarding the interpretation of the Econsult and Kinsey reports. Mr. Redding will review everything and apparently come up with his own number of required units for each municipality.

Chairman Reilly commented that the Township can't work on a plan if the final number of COAH units is still unknown and remarked that the 10/31/16 deadline will likely be extended yet again. He also commented on the Intervenor who filed with the Courts. He said it appears that if the Township were to do inclusionary zoning this property doesn't seem to have the capacity which throws the economics of the development out the window. He remarked that it is his opinion that COAH will likely have to be dispersed throughout the Village District which may be expanded to accommodate new growth.

### **Open to the Public**

A motion by Roger DeLay, seconded by Dante DiPirro to open to the public was unanimously approved. Frances Gavigan of 123 Wertsville Road came forward and commented that one reason the taxes are low in East Amwell is because the Township didn't reach the “magic number” for establishing a police force. She remarked that depending on what the final number of required COAH units is, may tip the Township into having to create one and suggested the Committee review long term financial planning. Chairman Reilly and Mr. Wang-Iverson both commented that there is no “magic number” anymore and remarked this may be a legitimate concern, though. They thanked Ms. Gavigan for her thoughts.

Luke Kirby of 41 Dutch Lane came forward and asked what the development capacity of the Thompson property is. Chairman Reilly commented that he wasn't sure but believes a treatment system could be put in, however, it would be cost prohibitive for large scale development. He remarked that in his opinion this property doesn't seem to be economically viable for the development of a large number of apartments. He also expressed that the family lives here and they have a vested interest in doing good things for the community.

Seeing no other members of the public come forward, a motion by Roger DeLay, seconded by Gail Glashoff to close to the public was unanimously approved.

### **Oral Reports**

Environmental Commission – No report was given.

PB Secretary – No report was given.

Chairman – Chairman Reilly commented that a special meeting was being considered to hear The Ridge application because the Planning Board's October meeting falls on a holiday which is inconvenient for the applicant and his attorney. The November meeting date also apparently poses a problem because the applicant and his attorney will both be traveling. Chairman Reilly stated that since no one has gotten back to Administrative Officer Andrews regarding the available special meeting dates, it appears that the application will be scheduled for the Board's December agenda.

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**Presentation of Vouchers**

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

Mr. Wang-Iverson reminded the Board that there will be a seminar on rain gardens here at the Municipal Building tomorrow evening at 7:00 PM. He stated there will be cookies and refreshments at 6:30 PM and encouraged everyone to attend.

**Adjournment**

A motion by Dart Sageser, seconded by Rob Gilbert to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

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Maria Andrews, Administrative Officer