

A special meeting of the East Amwell Township Committee came to order at 6:30 PM. Present were Deputy Mayor Dart Sageser, and Committee members Tim Mathews and David Wang-Iverson. Mayor Peter Kneski was absent, and Committee Member Patricia Cregar resigned her position as of December 4, 2013.

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, a copy of notice of this meeting was filed in the Clerk's Office, posted on the bulletin board, and sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, Times of Trenton, and Star Ledger on December 5, 2013. The purpose of this meeting is to interview candidates for Township committees/boards. The public is invited to attend the meeting. Action may or may not be taken.

Joe Nyce, Zion Road, was interested in serving on the Board of Adjustment. He has lived in East Amwell since 1983, and he served on the Board of Health from 1990 to 1998 or 1999. He is semi-retired now with less of a workload, and he would like to serve again on the Board of Adjustment. He has always had an active interest in the Township.

Deputy Mayor Sageser asked if he had any particular thoughts about the Board of Adjustment, which is a semi-judicial board. Mr. Nyce commented on the similarities with the Board of Health, when he served on that board, such as having the authority to write ordinances.

Mr. Nyce also felt that the Boards in all townships should have rotating representation for different perspectives of the town. He commented on the results of the past election, with township residents asking for different representatives to be on boards, and he believed that it was appropriate to offer to serve on the Board of Adjustment.

Mr. Wang Iverson asked about his profession; Mr. Nyce said that he was a contractor for 30 years with a civil engineering degree, a Master's degree from Lafayette College, and a Ph.D. from Princeton Seminary.

Mr. Wang-Iverson asked if Mr. Nyce was familiar with zoning laws. Mr. Nyce said yes, speaking about varying opinions, noting that the zoning laws must be applied with reason and with sensitivity or they can be restrictive of personal freedoms. He believed that this was something to keep in mind on the Board of Adjustment. He felt that it was too easy to let an ordinance or rule apply where reason and sensitivity would suggest the rule was not written for that purpose.

Deputy Mayor Sageser asked if Mr. Nyce was comfortable with the Master Plan and Land Management Ordinance; Mr. Nyce said yes. Deputy Mayor Sageser spoke about looking at each individual application and interpreting the Master Plan.

Mr. Mathews stated that he has known Mr. Nyce for several years, thinks he is a terrific guy, has a good perspective, is an open thinker, likes good discussion, is a civil engineer and contractor who understands issues, and would like to see him on the Board.

The meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month, and Mr. Nyce would be available.

Mr. Nyce also noted that Terri Stahl was the Board of Health secretary when he served, and she would provide a good recommendation for him.

Mr. Wang-Iverson asked if this was the only board upon which Mr. Nyce would serve, noting he checked Planning or Zoning; Mr. Nyce would prefer the Board of Adjustment.

The Committee thanked Mr. Nyce for attending the meeting.

James Atkeson, Wertsville Road, was interested in serving on the Board of Adjustment. He works at Princeton Day School in the technology department, living in East Amwell since 2003, when he and his family wanted a quainter and older place. Their property is next to The Ridge at Back Brook, an older home (built in 1742), which he and his family (wife and three children) love. He felt that East Amwell is a remarkable and unique area. Some comments were exchanged between Mr. Atkeson and the Committee about the proposed county roadwork that will take place near his home.

Deputy Mayor Sageser asked if Mr. Atkeson was familiar with how the Board of Adjustment works. Mr. Atkeson stated that he had a general description and read the rules, so he had some understanding. Deputy Mayor Sageser noted that the Board of Adjustment is a quasi-legal board, i.e., the Planning Board is policy driven and the Board of Adjustment has a specific agenda of interpreting the Master Plan and vision of the community. Mr. Atkeson noted that he is aware of the general goals of the Master Plan.

Mr. Wang-Iverson asked if Mr. Atkeson ever had any dealings with zoning on a personal level; Mr. Atkeson said no. He noted that he served on the Environmental Commission for a while, when the zoning issue in the Sourlands was on their agenda. The zoning had changed just prior to his service; he is also aware of the Sourland area, which he felt was unique. His service on the Environmental Commission was one half of a three-year term as a replacement. Deputy Mayor Sageser commented on the Master Plan being driven by environmental concerns, such as septic, well, etc.

Mr. Mathews asked why Mr. Atkeson did not seek another Environmental Commission term. Mr. Atkeson explained that raising his three children and a job change were challenging. He only has one child at home now, he thinks the town is unique and remarkable, and he now has the time to assist.

Mr. Wang-Iverson asked if there was another board he might be interested if the Board of Adjustment seat was not available. Mr. Atkeson said that he felt that this was the best place to contribute right now.

Deputy Mayor Sageser asked if Mr. Atkeson had horses; he said that he had leased a horse for a couple of years, but he didn't have enough time to enjoy it. Some comments were exchanged about the Amwell Valley Trail Association, with Mr. Atkeson noting there is an entrance to it on his property.

Mr. Atkeson would be available for the Tuesday night meetings on the second Tuesday. He was thanked for appearing this evening.

The meeting was open for comments, and there being none, motion by Mr. Wang-Iverson, seconded by Mr. Mathews, and carried to close to the public.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Wang-Iverson, seconded by Mr. Mathews, and carried unanimously at 6:57 p.m.

Teresa R. Stahl, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk