

**EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
MEETING AGENDA**

**East Amwell Township Municipal Building
1070 Route 202, Ringoes, NJ 08551
February 21, 2023 @ 7:00pm**

CALL TO ORDER : The East Amwell Planning Board was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this is a regularly scheduled meeting, pursuant to the resolution adopted on January 11, 2023, with a meeting notice sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat on January 18, 2023. A copy of the agenda for this meeting was posted to the Township website, posted on the bulletin board, and filed in the Clerk's Office on February 17, 2023.

ATTENDANCE : In attendance: Mayor Jenna Casper-Bloom, Town Committee member Dante DiPirro, Al Nardi, Jamal Kadri, John Seramba, Mike Mills, Emily Deadwyler, Richard Catenacci, Vice Chair Marnie Stetson, Chair Timothy Willey. Excused: Nathalie Nelson, Breona Pirrone, Michael Gum, Engineer Paul Ferreiro. Also in attendance: Attorney Alexis Smith, Planner Elena Gable.

REVIEW OF AGENDA Chairman Willey addressed adding the "approval of previous minutes" under the first open to the public.

CITIZENS PRIVILEGE TO SPEAK ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA : Al Nardi made a motion to open to the public for items not on the agenda, and second by John Seramba.

Noel Wiggins, East Amwell resident, asked about preserving land. Michael Mills explained the prospects of and the initial steps to preserving land.

Unidentified member of the public asked where the development in East Amwell is going. Chairman Willey responded with clarification about the location of the UAW development.

Joanne Engleman, East Amwell resident, spoke about the UAW application and her surprise that the vote had occurred at the Special Meeting on January 31, 2023. She asked about the legitimacy of the new members being able to vote on the application. Chairman Willey clarified that the new Board members have 1 year to complete the Planning Board course and that each member had to certify to our attorney that they have watched all 30+ hours of the UAW Region 9

testimony. Ms. Englemen further expressed her concern of Richard Catenacci's relationship with the attorney of the applicant. Ms. Englemen continued that Mr. Catenacci could have persuaded other members of the Board. Ms. Englemen further asked about the subdivision plans, and Chairman Willey clarified that the subdivision plan was not part of the application that was approved. She again reiterated how she believes the East Amwell residents were not heard. Ms. Emily Deadwyler responded that the Board has to work in a limited capacity and apply the law within the boundaries of the Master Plan.

A motion was made to close to the public by Vice Chair Marnie Stetson, seconded by Mr. Seramba.

Mr. Seramba left for the Historic Preservation Committee meeting at 7:25

RESOLUTION FOR UAW REGION 9 : The resolution for the UAW has been postponed as a professional courtesy. The courtesy was provided for the applicant's attorney to have adequate time to review the conditions of the resolution. The memorialization of the resolution was postponed until the March meeting.

RESOLUTION FOR SAPPHIRE EQUESTRIAN : Vice Chair Ms. Stetson made a motion to memorialize the Resolution for Sapphire Equestrian Lot 13, Block 13.03 application approved at the January 11, 2023 Planning Board meeting. Mr Nardi second the motion.

In favor: Al Nardi, Michael Mills, John Seramba, Vice Chair Stetson, Chairman Willey.

Opposed: None.

Recused: Mayor Casper-Bloom and Town Committee member DiPirro.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES : Town Committee member DiPirro provided further clarification to be included in the January 11, 2023 meeting minutes. Chair Willey asked for a motion to approve previous meeting minutes with the changes proposed. Mr. Nardi made a motion to approve the January 11, 2023 meeting minutes with the changes, Town Committee member DiPirro second the motion. All in favor.

RESOLUTION FOR CONTINUING WORK ON MASTER PLAN FOR 2023 There was a discussion that there is a carry over of previously approved funds for doing the Master Plan. The planning firm says it can complete the reexamination report and do revisions for an amount not to exceed \$172.50 remaining in the appropriation. The Planning Board resolved that the continuation of the reexamination report will not exceed \$172.50 unless there is prior written

authorization obtained from the Planning Board. A motion was made to approve the PB resolution 2023-08 by Ms. Deadwyler, Vice Chair Stetson second the motion.

In favor: Ms. Deadwyler, Mr. Kadri, Mr. Nardi, Mr. Mills, Ms. Pirrone, Mr. Catenacci, Mayor Casper-Bloom, Town Committee member DiPirro, Vice Chair Stetson and Chair Willey.

Opposed: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Reexamination Report prepared by Heyer Gruel & Associates

Planner Gable explained that the Master Plan Reexamination Report is based on the statutory criteria from the Municipal Land Use Law, on Section A, B, C, D, E & F.

Section A identifies the issues that were addressed in the 2013 Reexamination Report; Section B goes through changes that have occurred in respect to those issues identified; Section C covers changes that occurred in the Local level, County level and State level; Section D includes proposed recommendations to include; Section E regards new development plans; and Section F address infrastructure for electric cars.

Vice Chair Stetson opened the floor to the new Planning Board members for discussion. Town Committee member DiPirro asked whether public input was sought before the creation of the reexamination report. Planner Gable said no, that it was cumulative of her experience with East Amwell and commentary by the public during the meetings, and adding information from the County and Regional level that could be of an improvement to East Amwell. Town Committee member DiPirro expressed that some townships would host a public visioning meeting. Planner Gable said her firm could provide a cost estimate for a public visioning meeting.

Town Committee member DiPirro asked Planner Gable to explain what the difference is between the Master Plan Re-Exam Report from the different Land Use element and the other parts of the Master Plan. Planner Gable explained that every ten years a reexamination report has to be prepared. There are different elements within the Master Plan. The Land Use Element the Board adopted last year was a chapter within the Master Plan. Land Use Elements are adopted to make new policy and change zoning regulations to be more consistent within the Master Plan. The Master Plan informs Zoning ordinances. Town Committee member DiPirro asked if the reexamination report is binding for the Planning Board and the Township Committee. Planner Gable used the example of the 2013 Circulation Plan Element to be adopted, that element has not been adopted as of yet. Planner Gable is still recommending that it be adopted because there are

issues brought up at public meetings regarding traffic in Ringoes. There are further improvements that could be recommended since 2013 and it can be looked at as a priorities list.

Attorney Smith clarified that the Master Plan provides recommendations that require action by the Governing body to adopt, and more discussion followed.

Mr. Catenucci thanked Planner Gable for preparing the reexamination report. He also asked about the definitions of the language used in the Master Plan, such as Agrotourism. He continued to talk about the speed of travelers on roads, and a traffic-centered discussion ensued. Vice Chair Stetson confirmed that the County Roads are something that had been included in the discussion notes. Planner Gable also confirmed that she had included the County roads issue in the reexamination report.

Mr. Catenucci raised alarm about a finding that the East Amwell water quality is poor. Town Committee member DiPirro agreed that if there is somewhere in the town that findings show could improve their water quality that it should be addressed. Planner Gable pointed out the adequacy of Septic Systems in the Village of Ringoes is mentioned in Section B and recommendations are made in Section D. Town Committee member DiPirro continued that the reexamination report states that the quality of the water needs to be examined. Planner Gable said we could add recommendations under General Recommendations about Inventory Water Quality Degradation in East Amwell Streams and determine whether Zoning Standards could be implemented to offset or improve that quality. As for the Ringoes Village, a note can be added about the septic systems and concerns about the Surface Water and Septic issues since the Township depends on wells.

Mr. Kadri asked about the County's responsibility to mitigate stormwater runoff from the County roads. Planner Gable stated that the County Roads have their own Stormwater Management facilities so she believes the County assumes responsibility for the Stormwater runoff. Town Committee member DiPirro wanted to add in the reexamination report that he would like to know if the County's stormwater management is dependent on the volume of water over the pollution or quality of water. Planner Gable will incorporate a recommendation about working with the County to address Stormwater runoff from County roads.

A further discussion was had about water quality and jurisdiction of waterways. As Mr. Catenucci spoke about resources, he remarked that it would be nice for the Board to provide education to residents to understand the resources available.

Mr. Nardi asked if statistics are available for the County roads within the Township that could be presented to the County for some recourse. Planner Gable explained that this issue would be addressed in a Circulation Plan Element. She explained the material that is covered within the

Circulation Plan Element. Last year the Stormwater Management Ordinance was adopted to meet current DEP requirements.

Planner Gable then circled back to the Stormwater Management Ordinance that was adopted last year. While it met the DEP requirements, there are new rules under review comment regarding inland flooding. Inland flooding will likely have an impact on East Amwell with the Stormwater Management Rules. The Township could implement stricter standards than DEP, as DEP sets the bare minimum. In the reexamination report it recommends to determine whether stricter standards are required for Stormwater Management practices.

Vice Chair Stetson asked about the law that allows private events on farmland and how that will impact East Amwell residents. She asked if this is something that the Board has any say over, or could the PB make recommendations about it, as it has already received SADC's approval. Planner Gable said she would look further into this new law. Vice Chair Stetson asked if Planner Gable could parse out certain decisions that the Board would have jurisdiction over. Planner Gable said she could look into it and it would be incorporated into the Re-Exam. Further discussion was held. Planner Gable recommended that this issue might be something noted in the Re-Exam. Then when the Amwell Valley Land Use Plan Element is addressed, a new policy could be created in regards to the events in the district. Currently there is nothing in the Amwell Valley Land Use Plan about hosting events and innovative ideas could spur agrotourism for East Amwell. Mr. DiPirro suggested that it could be an incentive to persuade farmers to preserve their farmland.

Ms. Deadwyler mentioned the million trees that have died in the region and the potential damage that could occur from the dead or dying trees. She asked Planner Gable what kind of response could we have to remediate the dead or dying trees in the region.

Discussion was held regarding what timelines the Master Plan Reexamination Report will follow. Planner Gable and Attorney Smith provided clarification of the process and noticing guidelines.

Mr. Catenacci asked if Planner Gable was involved with the Historical Preservation Committee in regards to architectural standards. Planner Gable explained that the Historical Preservation Committee can make recommendations that are non-binding. There's also no implementation of a local historic district, either. Inventory would have to take place, that takes note of what their styles are to create a Historic Preservation Overlay district. When asked why the Planner had not been involved with the Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee, Chair Willey explained that there are no local historic ordinances. Town Committee member DiPirro asked if the Historic Preservation Element would help initiate this planning process. Planner Gable confirmed the Historic Preservation Element would assist with creating ordinances.

Mr. Nardi asked whether there was any ordinance in place for the management of abandoned or dilapidated houses. Planner Gable stated in the Master Plan that there is a recommendation regarding property maintenance for the Village, she was unsure if that was incorporated into the reexamination report but she could include recommendations for these properties.

NEW BUSINESS - No new business.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion was made by Mr. Nardi to open the meeting to public questions for items on the agenda, Ms. Catenacci second the motion.

Barbara DePiero, East Amwell, asked when the Master Plan Re-Exam will be made public to read on-line. Planner Gable responded that it should be after next month's meeting. She further asked when the public will no longer be able to comment, Chair Willey said after the public meeting it will be voted on and no longer available for comment.

Noelle Wiggins, East Amwell Resident, asked if something could be included in the Master Plan Re-Exam about cluster building and she pointed out the Stormwater Management in Clawson Park. Planner Gable responded that the comment period for inland flooding is still open. She also asked if something could be put in an ordinance to prevent major development to protect the history of the Village. In response, Vice Chair Stetson responded that as different issues are identified in the Master Plan, the Board will be looking for solutions that could be implemented. The public meeting will invite people to do the same, identify issues but also look for alternatives to mitigate the issues. The idea of the Master Plan is to responsibly guide the town's development.

Linda Ranft, East Amwell Resident, spoke about how the people who have moved to the area in the last ten years to have a few rural acres differ in mentality a lot from people who moved down to the area specifically to have a farm. As a small farmer, she loves seeing people walk up and down their barn, she did not move to the area to obtain privacy from her neighbors. When speaking about water quality, she used to have horses, and she used to be very careful about the excretion from her animals. Now that she does not have animals, she sees deer and geese soiling her field and there are not many management practices in place to mitigate the wildlife excrement from entering the surface water. In regards to septic systems and septic codes, she has a 15 acre farm and just purchased a \$55,000 septic system. She did this in the middle of Covid on a fixed income. She asked that the recommendations be reasonable for people who do not have resources that others have. She also asked if there could be more of a work session among public commenters at the Master Plan meeting.

A motion was made to close to the public by Town Committee member DiPirro and second by Mayor Casper-Bloom.

ORAL REPORTS

1. FOSPC- Mike Mills

We got a new member and it makes it easier to meet quorum. A shareable version of the Farmland Preservation Program is available for distribution.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION - Marnie Stetson

Reorg meeting was held and six subcommittees were developed. On April 23, 2023 the Green Scene will be held.

3. HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE - John Seramba

Mr. Serambo was excused by this time.

4. AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Mike Mills

No news to report.

5. PB SECRETARY

No news to report.

6. PB CHAIR

No news to report.

CORRESPONDENCE - No new correspondence.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Vice Chair Stetson to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Nardi second the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.