

**EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
East Amwell Township Municipal Building
1070 Route 202, Ringoes, NJ 08551
September 18, 2023 @ 7:00pm**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. FLAG SALUTE

III. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE/ATTENDANCE

In Attendance: Chairman Al Nardi, Vice Chair Marnie Stetson, Mayor Jenna Casper-Bloom, Jamal Kadri, Township Committee Member Dante DiPirro, Nathalie Nelson, Emily Deadwyler, Mike Mills. Also in Attendance: Attorney Alexis Smith and Planner Meagan Stanley.

Excused: Richard Catenacci, and Engineer Paul Ferriero.

IV. REVIEW OF AGENDA

V. CITIZENS PRIVILEGE TO SPEAK ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Stetson made a motion to open the meeting to the public for items not on the agenda. Ms. Deadwyler seconded the motion.

No citizen came up to speak.

Chairman Nardi closed the meeting to the public to speak on items not on the agenda.

VI. PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

1. August 21, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
2. June 8, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes – carry
3. July 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes – carry
4. August 10, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes – carry
5. September 14, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes – carry
6. September 29, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes– carry
7. October 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes- carry

Ms. Deadwyler made a motion to approve the minutes from August 21, 2023. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

VII. RESOLUTIONS FOR APPROVAL -

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS -

1. Electric Vehicle Charging Station Ordinance

Mayor Casper-Bloom explained that this ordinance was recommended within the Master Plan Reexamination Report, and the language was by the statute. The first reading of the ordinance at the Township Committee meeting was on September 12, 2023. A summary of the ordinance was provided by Township Committee Member DiPirro and discussion was held by the Board. Ms. Deadwyler asked to add a clause to the ordinance to state “nothing in this shall be construed to override the zoning as it relates to the number of allowable parking spots.” Attorney Smith said that could be added as long as the allowable parking is also included in the zoning, or it could also be added within the purpose section of the ordinance.

A motion was made by Town Committee Member DiPirro to recommend the EV Charging Station Ordinance to the Township Committee with revisions as it is not inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Roll Call was made. In favor: Chairman Nardi, Vice Chair Stetson, Mayor Casper-Bloom, Mr. Kadri, Town Committee Member DiPirro, Ms. Nelson, Ms. Deadwyler, Mr. Mills.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Subcommittee Reports-

A. Review of local ordinances related to warehousing and resolve inconsistencies

Planner Stanley reviewed the findings made by Ms. Deadwyler in conjunction with what the State recommends in regards to the site location of warehousing. Since East Amwell largely consists of rural and/or environmentally sensitive areas of zoning, having large warehousing facilities would be inconsistent with planning. One thing that could be specified within an ordinance has to do with Last Mile warehousing, where merchandise is transported from a distribution center to the purchaser. It typically does not consist of large truck traffic, but rather vans, and operates at under 150,000 square feet.

Planner Stanley also recommended looking at the language of the industrial uses within the ordinance. The uses could be updated to include what uses are permitted or which are prohibited. Ms. Deadwyler asked if the ordinance could state explicitly that Last Mile Warehousing is prohibited. Attorney Smith advised the Board to be careful regarding the wording. She explained the wording should be broad enough to cover the objective, but narrow enough to explicitly cover what needs to be covered within the ordinance, i.e. Last Mile Warehouse, or small Amazon Parcel Hubs.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion was made by Town Committee Member DiPirro to open the topic of discussion to the public. The motion was seconded by Ms. Deadwyler.

Linda Ranft, East Amwell resident, asked when a copy of this information would be provided to the public. Township Committee Member DiPirro stated that at this time the Board had done the initial gathering of information, which is currently in review by the professionals. Upon the completion of the professionals’ review, our attorney will have to weigh in on the matter. There may be a list of bullet points that could be made available to the public at the next meeting.

Francis Gavigan, East Amwell resident, thanked Ms. Deadwyler for her thorough report.

A motion was made by Mayor Casper-Bloom to close the portion of the meeting for public comment on the warehouse subcommittee. Vice Chair Stetson seconded the motion.

B. Review of dark sky ordinance standards

Vice Chair Stetson spoke about the review of the Dark Sky Ordinance stemming from resident's concerns regarding 24 hour greenhouses and updating the ordinance since its last amendment in 2006. She had provided the Board with a red-lined version of the ordinance, which gives some thought to protecting biodiversity and limiting light pollution.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Vice Chair Stetson made a motion to open the meeting to the public for comment on the Dark Sky Ordinance. Mayor Casper-Bloom seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Francis Gavigan, East Amwell resident, asked when the public would be able to see the proposed changes to the Dark Sky ordinance. The Board discussed sending the ordinance to the Planner for a review and then making it available in one of the coming meetings.

Township Committee Member DiPirro made a motion to close the meeting to public comment on the Dark Sky ordinance review. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

C. Review of Farmland Preservation Plan update

Mr. Mills reported that a kick-off meeting with Stephen Bruder, Planner Stanley and Mayor Casper-Bloom had been held last month. Planner Stanley will be working on completing the mapping effort to submit by the end of October or early November with updated language. The update to the plan now has funding from the SADC and the AAC. Mayor Casper-Bloom is also working to acquire additional funding from Hunterdon County.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion was made by Mayor Casper-Bloom to open the portion of the meeting regarding Farmland Preservation to the public. The motion was seconded by Ms. Deadwyler. All were in favor.

Francis Gavigan, East Amwell resident, asked when the reports would be available to the public. Chairman Nardi indicated that the information will be provided to the public in one of the upcoming meetings.

Vice Chair Stetson made a motion to close the meeting to the public. Mayor Casper-Bloom seconded the motion. All were in favor.

D. Review of Historical Preservation Committee

Richard Catenacci was not present to discuss the Historic Preservation Committee portion of the meeting. Vice Chair Stetson brought information from Elona Bell before the Board regarding previous approvals

from the Department of Interior forming the historic districts within East Amwell. Questions were asked by Board members and discussion was held regarding Historic Commissions.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Vice Chair Stetson motioned to open the meeting to the public on the HPC review. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nelson. All were in favor.

Francis Gavigan, East Amwell resident, spoke about when the Historic Preservation Committee was created in East Amwell.

Linda Ranft, East Amwell resident, provided her thoughts regarding what should be the priorities of the HPC and what could be included within the Master Plan.

Tamara Lee, East Amwell resident, spoke about her knowledge of the Historical Preservation Plan element. She discussed the significance of having a National Historic registry and explained that it simply means if a project requires federal funding, they will have to be reviewed by the Department of Interior. Alternatively, if a project does not need funding, then the registry does not mean anything because it will not need to be reviewed by the Department of Interior. For local planning purposes, there needs to be a local Historic Preservation ordinance that addresses the architectural design issues that are defined in the registry, and having a National designation justifies putting a local historic ordinance together that addresses architectural issues. She explained there is a broad range of restrictions that the governing body could implement. Ms. Lee stated the current historical preservation ordinance does not cover architectural design issues and she provided an example of what she believes is one of the more successful paths to ensuring homeowners are observant to the historic characteristics of the Township. The example she provided is a model that refers homeowners to an Architectural Review Committee, which volunteers their time to the town. The Planning Board would require each applicant to work with the Architectural Review Committee. The Architectural Review Committee does not have to approve the applicant's application, they will only review the applicant's projects to make them more architecturally consistent with the surrounding properties, and usually the Committee also helps to find ways to save the applicant money. Ms. Lee explained the ordinance that recommends applicants to an Architectural Review Committee does not even provide guidelines or standards, but it is successful. She feels as if the Historical Preservation ordinance is an unfinished project, and she would love to see something in place for the Township. Board members followed up by asking Ms. Lee several questions.

Francis Gavigan, East Amwell resident, came up to speak about possibly imposing a demolition ordinance.

A motion was made to close the meeting to public comment on historic preservation by Vice Chair Stetson. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nelson.

X. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Invoices

Township Committee Member DiPirro relayed to the Board concerns he and the Chairman shared regarding invoices from the Attorney's office. These concerns were discussed with a Partner at Parker McCay and resolved. A discussion was held by the Board with Attorney Smith regarding the invoicing.

A motion to approve the invoices was made by Vice Chair Stetson. The motion was seconded by Ms. Deadwyler. All were in favor.

XI. ORAL REPORTS

1. FOSPC- Mr. Mills stated there is nothing in addition to the Farmland Preservation Plan to discuss.
2. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION - Vice Chair Stetson informed the Board that Alison Kavchok acquired resources to get pollinator habitats planted on the roadside jughandles. These pollinator habitats will be taken care of by the State of NJ, so they will not be a burden on the Township's DPW.
3. AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Mr. Mills reported that the AAC will meet again on Wednesday, September 20, 2023.
4. HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE - Mr. Catenacci had been excused from the meeting and was not present to provide a report.
5. TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE - Mayor Casper-Bloom said she had been working with the AAC in regards to the Farmland Preservation Plan. She also added that in addition to the HPC working on a catalog of historic houses, HPC member Paul Carlucci is also working on cataloging historic barns; if anyone has a historic barn on their property they should reach out to the HPC to document it.
6. PB SECRETARY - Township Clerk Giliberti reported that PB Secretary Kristen Panos was excused from the meeting to go on her honeymoon.
7. PB CHAIR - Chairman Nardi thanked the subcommittees for all of their hard work and for the commitment of the public to come and share their thoughts.

XII. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion was made by Mayor Casper-Bloom to open the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nelson. All were in favor.

Francis Gavigan, East Amwell resident, asked for copies of draft minutes. She had been informed they are posted after they are voted on in the meeting.

A motion to close to the public was made by Vice Chair Stetson and seconded by Ms. Nelson. All were in favor.

XIII. CORRESPONDENCE

None

XIV. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Deadwyler and seconded by Township Committee Member DiPirro. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.