

**Town of Phillipsburg
Planning Board Meeting
535 Heckman Street
Minutes for October 24, 2019**

Chairman Corcoran called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Corcoran read the Open Public Meeting Acts Statement. Those Present were: Mayor Stephen Ellis, Councilwoman DeGerolamo, Chairman Kent Corcoran, David P. Morrisette, Derrick Lewis, Dominic Vangeli, Rosanne Rohm, Darren Bodogh, and Bernard Rooney. Also in attendance were William Mandry, Planning Board Attorney; Mr. Stan Schrek, Board Engineer; and Ms. Charee Carney, Recording Secretary.

Minutes-

Mr. Rooney motioned to approve the minutes from 9-26-19 and Mr. Morrisette seconded. The motion carried with abstentions from Chairman Corcoran and Mr. Vangeli.

Resolutions- I-78 Logistics Park - amendment to the GDP

Mr. Rooney motioned to approve the resolution and Ms. Rohm seconded. The motion carried with abstentions from Chairman Corcoran and Mr. Vangeli.

Old Business - Terrascend

Attorney Mandry explained that the proposed business Terrascend is within 500 feet of a public park. He spoke with several people from the Department of Health and they concurred with his opinion in that there is very clear guidance in the NJ Statutes and Administrative Code which provides exemption for state, criminal and civil penalties for the medical use of marijuana particularly within 500 feet of a park. There was no opinion reported from the Warren County Prosecutor's office, Green Acres doesn't report an opinion. The only issue would be with the Federal Government, if they ever decide to prosecute. There was no action taken.

New Business- 1 Fairview Ave, Athens Castle- Case 19-003

Attorney Mandry stepped down and Attorney James Bryce joined the board as the replacement attorney.

Mr. Bodogh joined the meeting.

Attorney Ira Weiner, representing the applicant, explained they are seeking a site plan waiver and a change of use for 1 Fairview Ave. Mr. Schrek said that only the board can decide if the site plan waiver is allowed.

Mr. Harold Heerwig, president, was sworn in for testimony. He has been in the salon wear and the apparel business for 19 years. They do not plan to do anything outside to the building except for repairs. The business does internet sales and call in sales for salon wear and do not manufacture. They embroider logos etc. on the merchandise such as t-shirts and normally do not stock the merchandise, it comes in via UPS. They do a lot of work for Fallen Officers

families and another police organization, Brother's Before Others and many other local organizations. Everything is special order.

There are three employees and they will not have more than four or five in time. Most employees drive together because they are related. No tractor trailers will come to the facility and deliveries are usually once a week. Most of the space will be offices, storage and an embroidery section. They will not have foot traffic. Everything will be inside, and the business is pretty quiet. The hours of operation will be 8 to 4 or 5 Monday through Friday. Mr. Schrek asked if there is lighting in the parking lot. Mr. Heerwig said that there is lighting on the side of the building. Mr. Schrek stated that if there are going to be employees in the parking lot, they're needs to be lighting. Attorney Weiner said that they are happy to work with the Building Department for lighting and permits. Attorney Weiner mentioned that the building was a school and there weren't any hazards. Mr. Schrek said that the lighting can a condition of the resolution and to work it out with the engineer. Also, the Construction Official might need an update to the restrooms making them ADA compliant and they should coordinate with the engineer's office for a handicapped parking space. Attorney Weiner said they planned to update the bathrooms anyway and there is a ramp outside already, but they will do whatever is required.

Chairman Corcoran recommended that the board approves a waiver of the site plan. The school will now be a business and taxes can be collected and feels that the application is good for the town.

The board opened the meeting to the public and there was no public comment.

There was a motion to approve the application with conditions and was seconded. The motion carried.

Discussion of the Land Use, Open Use Plan

Angela Knowles began the presentation of the Land Use, Open Use Plan discussion and noted that action will not be taken. A public meeting will be scheduled. She handed out maps to everyone.

Ms. Knowles gave a brief background and mentioned that a portion was funded by the Highlands. She went over the different zones the Land Use Plan effects. The current vision statement is from the 2004 master plan. The master plan was reexamined through the highlands in 2013. She said that there is a decline in population. The projection for the population in 2040 is 17,460 people (which is where we were in 1070). Phillipsburg is most densely populated than in the county.

In terms of median age of residents and income, the median age is consistent with the county. The income of residents ranked lower than the county's census. 90% of the housing was built before 1970. Over 2/3s was built prior to 1940. The town exceeds the age of the county's housing stock.

She went over the existing land use map, data from 2015. The majority of the town is residential. The next largest percentage is vacant land (16.8%). The commercial percentage of acreage was 6.2.

As for proposed zoning, 3 new districts were created. Residential, multifamily, and B5 zone, B6 zone, and B2 zone (Business general to business highway). The zoning map was revised, which is in the report. Some of the zones were merged. There are now 19 distinct zoning districts. The riverfront redevelopment district was split into 6 districts. She said that there is a lot of water front, so it makes sense, 2.5 miles. There is an r-50 zone that was mistakenly placed in the r-75 zone and Ms. Knowles said that she will take it out and clean it up.

There are many reasons for the changes to the zones. There are several apartment complexes that are located in the r-50 family zone. There's a mixture of Bridge Commission facilities, commercial and residential buildings in the b-1 office and b-3 central business zones. There's a mixture of commercial, residential in the I-1 industrial zone along Broad and Judd Alley. There are commercial properties that are in the b-2 zone but the requirement for the b-2 zone is they have highway frontage and they do not.

They are recommending including residential uses as a permanent use in the b-6 zone. There are currently all residential with only a few businesses mixed in. The board should consider combining the 2 industrial zones along the riverfront just to clean it up. The I zone should become the riverfront redevelopment area, along with many other areas.

As for natural resources, riparian areas, we have 234 acres and includes the undevelopable land. The entire town is in a carbonate rock area. Mr. Schrek highly recommends the town create a carbonate rock (limestone) ordinance. Sinkholes can be a problem without the ordinance. There are recent changes to the stormwater management rules, requiring a recharge. There are 4 public community wells. The protection areas range from tier 1 to tier 3. The map shows the developable land.

The board discussed the problems with sinkholes in Phillipsburg.

Warren County did a corridor study to improve traffic flow. The plan proved that the pedestrian and bicycle movement in the corridor should not be together. The interstate 78 corridor analyzed bus and commuter traffic and gave recommendations. These different reports are important for planning development in areas, new or redevelopment.

As for the land use and residential districts (the largest percentage in Phillipsburg), the plan gives the recommendations of how they can be improved or changed. The hospital is not permitted in the b-1 zone in the commercial district. The land use plan can clean up areas such as this.

As for low impact development, the Highlands Commission will be funding the work, such as stormwater strategies. This is important because of flooding and sinkholes.

As for the Open space and recreation plan, it consists of goals and inventory of open space. There is only two percent, presently. This can be achieved with an open space advisory committee, which was with the open space referendum that the town passed. The open space advisory committee has not yet been formed. There's 130 acres of recreational open space in the town. All of the land is owned by the town or the state. Mr. Rooney said that there is state owned land that is big enough to build soccer fields, Ms. Knowles agreed.

The plan shows how it compares or effects other plans and zones. We are in line with the state, the Highlands plan and surrounding townships.

We've completed a historic preservation plan, a riverfront redevelopment plan. Now we're doing a land use and open space plan. There will be funding for a Sustainable Economic Plan and a Stormwater Management Plan. The Highlands Commission has been very supportive.

Ms Knowles plans to clean up the map. There needs to be a public meeting to formally adopt the plan. The next meeting will be on November 25th. The town will be reimbursed for funds paid for work already performed. The board decided that there will be a special meeting on November 14th.

I-78 Logistics Park update

Mr. Schrek said that there is a street sweeper out cleaning up the streets. They are going to have an area where trucks can pull off with a temporary entrance to divert all existing traffic off Roseberry Street. Bridge has been extremely cooperative.

Bills

There was a motion to approve the bills and seconded. The motion carried.

There was a motion to adjourn and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Charee Carney
Recording Secretary