

Township of Pilesgrove Planning Board

Minutes, Regular Meeting

June 16, 2021

Held at Public Works Garage, 7 p.m.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. He announced that the South Jersey Times and the Elmer Times were noticed on May 20, 2021. The agenda was posted on the bulletin board outside the municipal building. All of the above was done in accordance with the New Jersey Sunshine Law.

Members stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Members:

Jeff String, Chair
Mark DeSiato, Vice Chair
George Brooks
Joe Crevino
Russell Davis – absent
Jeff Dobbs
Milton Eachus - absent
Craig Lewis
Bill Miller

Alternate #1 Mat Hitchner -- absent
Alternate #2 Joe Blandino -- absent
Alternate #3 Mark Valente
Alternate #4 Ruth Peters

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Solicitor swore in the Board's professionals.

Motion to approve minutes from May 19, 2021 all ayes on (DeSiato/Crevino) all ayes on roll call.

Resolutions

Completeness Hearing

Curt Catalano, variance, Block 21 Lot 10.1

The Planner reviewed his report on the request for a residential shed, 14 x 20, which exceeds the size allowed under the ordinance. The shed would be located toward the rear of the property. He reviewed the waivers requested, and stated no objection to granting them. Prior to the hearing, the use and a site drawing should be submitted. The Planner said the application could be deemed complete.

Motion to deem complete (Dobbs/Crevino) all ayes on voice vote.

Mike Leonetti, variance, Block 42 Lot 3

The Planner reviewed his report on the request for construction of an 18 x 30 pole building and side yard setbacks. He reviewed five waivers requested by the applicant. He listed items the applicant should provide prior to the hearing, including proof of payment of taxes. The Planner said the application could be deemed complete.

Motion to deem complete (DeSiato/Dobbs) all ayes on voice vote.

Mark Danner, bulk variance, Block 18 Lot 5.02

The Planner reviewed his report on the request for construction of a 24 x 32 residential shed, 20 foot in height. Four variances and one waiver are requested. He recommended the application be deemed complete. The Board asked the Planner if, since this is on agricultural land, is it necessary to go through this planning process. The application only states the shed will be used to store seasonal items currently kept in the garage. Frank Hoerst, representing the applicant, discussed how the public notice could take place.

Motion to deem complete (Crevino/DeSiato) all ayes on voice vote.

The Board agreed that Oldmans Fence could be heard for completeness and also advertised for public hearing for the July meeting.

Discussion:

Master Plan Re-Examination

Special Planner Kevin Rijs said the formal hearing will be held next month, but Board may discuss the issue tonight. Mr. Rijs reviewed the framework for the review and re-examination of the Master Plan. He discussed the various elements of the Master Plan, including farmland preservation, and the goals and objectives of the plan, including agricultural preservation. He reviewed the various changes and recommendations, including the language addressing cannabis businesses within the Township, and warehouses, shopping and, pick-up points. He discussed changing assumptions on driving patterns, vehicles, and technology. He explained again that if the township does nothing on cannabis, the permitted uses/zoning permitted in state law will overlay municipal land use ordinances. Timeframes were discussed with the board. There was general discussion regarding tax revenue calculations, location, licenses, agricultural zones, and state restrictions.

Frank Hoerst, representing one of the nation's largest cannabis growers, discussed aspects of operations, which must be grown under roof, and security requirements. The Board discussed timeframes and impact under state law. Mark Valente said people tell him they love living here, but when they retire they leave due to taxes. He said it is important to explore other revenue streams and not be short-sighted.

Mr. Rijs reviewed various land use recommendations and ordinance updates.

Cannabis Businesses in the Township

Special Planner Kevin Rijs discussed the referral from Township Committee to the Planning Board on Cannabis businesses in the townships.

Mr. Lewis asked for clarification on the Board's role. The Solicitor advised the Board is to determine whether the proposed ordinance is consistent with the Township's Master Plan. The Chair said in the past the Planning Board has made recommendation, which Township Committee implemented.

The Board discussed use of agricultural lands, roll back taxes, and taxation. He clarified restrictions on using preserved lands for growing cannabis. Mr. Rijs reviewed definitions and categories.

Frank Hoerst discussed the state legislation, licensing and municipal approaches and options. He said the economic opportunity would be 2 per cent revenue on a \$60 million dollar annual operation, plus property taxes and jobs. He explained other residual positive impacts on a community. He discussed a potential ordinance he has drafted as an advocate, including security elements that need to be addressed, signage, hours of operation and other items. He said the township needs to look at host benefits and be prepared to move quickly.

The Board discussed a joint meeting with Township Committee. Joe Crevino discussed upcoming high-ticket items facing the township's budget.

Motion to direct the Solicitor to arrange a joint meeting with Township Committee (Valente/Dobbs)

Discussion on motion:

The Board discussed whether conditions or zone restrictions could be put in place.

Mr. Crevino said the Board accomplished a lot tonight in its discussion and now should sit down with Township Committee. Mr. Rijs said the township can also address licensing requirements. Mr. Valente discussed trends and experience in Colorado.

The Board said it would review template ordinances. The Solicitor said the Planner should draft a resolution stating the referred ordinance is not in sync and draft a resolution with recommendations to allow cannabis businesses. The Solicitor will discuss a joint meeting with the Township Committee's solicitor. Mr. Lewis said the safe thing to do is to vote no. The tough thing to do is to wade into

this and find out six years from now we didn't consider something important. The Chair noted the Board is already advertised for a June 21st meeting.

Motion to request Township Committee hold a joint meeting with the Planning Board (Valente/Dobbs) all ayes on voice vote.

Mr. Valente asked whether the Planning Board had any leverage to improve the aesthetics at the old Acme and Hess station location at the corner of Route 40 and 45.

Vouchers

Motion to approve vouchers (Crevino/DeSiato) all ayes on roll call.

Public Comment

Motion to open to public comment (Crevino/Lewis) all ayes on voice vote. There was no comment. Motion to close public comment (Crevino/DeSiato).

Motion to Adjourn (DeSiato/Crevino).

Minutes submitted by Board Secretary Rita Shade.