

TOWNSHIP OF QUINTON PLANNING BOARD

May 14th, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Quinton Township Municipal Building by chairperson John Allen.

The Flag salute was held. It was determined that the meeting was posted in a public place and advertised in the official newspapers.

Roll Call: John Allen, Cody Banks, Donald Brown, Joseph Hannagan Jr., Alison O'Boyle, William Remster, Marjorie Sperry, Suzanne Van Sciver, and Larry Winkels

Absent: Kiel Winkels

Also Present: Richard Coe, Lawrence DiVietro, Andrew Hogg and Melissa Thom

A motion was made by Marjorie Sperry to approve the April meeting minutes. Joe Hannagan seconded the motion and all were in favor. The April meeting minutes were approved.

Under old business Larry Winkels asked to follow up on a prior conversation of reviewing the site plan for a few changes. He stated that there were a few ordinances that were obsolete. Lawrence DiVietro stated that his office collected information in regards to this and that a workshop would need to be scheduled with the planning board to review. Larry Winkels stated he wished to move forward with this and review of the master plan. Marjorie Sperry stated that the professionals need to give the board an estimate on the cost of the review of master plan so the funds can be set aside. Larry DiVietro agreed that his office would hold a special meeting hosting the workshop without compensation and after review an estimate would be provided for the actual process.

John Allen opened the floor to the Native American Advancement Corporation so they may give their presentation. Board member Donald Brown recused himself from the boards seating for this section of the meeting and any voting that would take place regarding this matter. Richard Coe explained this matter is an appeal from a decision made by the townships zoning office. The Native American Advancement Corporation is seeking that they NOT have to apply for a conditional use approval from the planning board.

Attorney Heather Kumar representing Native American Advancement Corporation began her presentation explaining that her client is looking for a continued use for an existing house of Worship previously used by the Morning Star Fellowship Church. A slide show presentation was provided showing the history of the property and key points of why the applicant believes it is a continued use much like a change of ownership of a home. It is a 64-acre property much of which is wooded. The existing structure is 7,915 square feet and no change of the structure is needed. In 2007 a permit was issued to rebuild the church after a devastating fire and the size of the church doubled, and no visit to the planning board was required at that time. Also, a listing of zoning ordinance exemptions was presented and they believe their use of the property falls in that list of exemptions.

Richard Coe asked numerous questions of Ms. Kumar to clarify that the Religious Land Use Act does not state that a religious organization is never required to apply for use variance, conditional use, or site plan. Attorney Kumar agrees and states that she is simply stating that in this case the Native American Advancement Corp. is just looking to continue the same use as previous ownership and nothing is changing requiring any additional applications. It was clarified that in the original zoning application it was mentioned the property would host events such as tours, camping, outdoor adventures, and research centers. Later the attorney for the applicant requested that be disregarded as they believe it falls under their normal religious practice. Attorney Kumar states if any of the listed activities create an issue the township would need to submit a zoning violation.

Marjorie Sperry read a newspaper article stating what the NAAC hopes to provide the community with their new property site and location. She explained that the township needs to be made aware if indeed schools or buses of people are being brought in to maintain the safety of the visitors and surrounding

residents. The applicant states that the structure has a capacity of 250 people and they are simply required to keep the visitation of the building under that number.

Larry DiVietro stated that from a planning perspective he believes because the building had been vacant for two years the zoning officer believed he could not approve the request without the planning board getting additional information. Marjorie Sperry pointed out that the organization that purchased the property was NJ Conservation Foundation that transferred it to the NAAC. Attorney Kumar pointed out it was converted the same day. Kumar also explained it is called a corporation because it heads up or acts as the hub for several locations but they are indeed a church.

A motion was made to open to the public by Marjorie Sperry and seconded by Joseph Hannagan. All were in favor.

Miriam Jones of Quinton Hancock's Bridge Rd. stated that all Salem County Methodist churches are all incorporated and have been since 1940's.

Amy Soma of East Ave. stated that her father was part of breaking ground for the Living Hope Worship Center in Swedesboro NJ. She is supportive of the NAAC ideas and plans for the property.

At this time a motion to close the public portion was made by Marjorie Sperry and seconded by Joseph Hannagan. All were in favor.

Richard Coe proposed a motion to vote if the board believes a zoning permit should be issued to the applicant to have continued use of the property. Joseph Hannigan made the motion to vote and seconded by Larry Winkles. All board members present and eligible voted yes for zoning permit approval.

Acting chair Donald Brown asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public for general concern. Motion was made by Marjorie Sperry and seconded by Larry Winkles. All were in favor and meeting was open.

Mark Shultz of Cross Rd. asked status of the plans for property formerly Wild Oaks. Marjorie Sperry explained there is currently no open application for that location before the planning board.

Todd Boker of Hiles Ave. questioned Larry Winkles on his previous statement during the meeting. Larry had been asking when the board could revisit a look into the master plan.

A motion was made by Marjorie Sperry to close the public portion of the meeting and seconded by Joeseeph Hannagan. All board members were in favor and the public portion of the meeting was closed. At this time chairperson John Allen and Vice-chair Suzanne VanSciver recused themselves from the board seating.

Larry Winkles asked attorney Richard Coe for clarification on a waiver and variance. It was explained in summary that a waiver is asking for an exception to a designing standard based on what the applicant feels does not apply. A variance is asking for approval to deviate from a zoning code standard for that property.

At this time the applicant's attorney Bernd Hefele began with a summary of information discussed at their last hearing. They revised numerous items in their application to try and address concerns made by both the professionals and the community members. Engineer for the applicant presented an exhibit showing a presentation of the building from street view. A colored rendition of the site plan submitted and now includes landscaping. As per the zoning ordinance the average building height is 43.2 feet. Larry Winkles asked what existing grade level is and at highest is 15.6 and lowest is 10.5. The west side of the building shows a double row of landscaping and a 6-foot solid fence along property line. There is a 3-foot berm along Salem Quinton Rd. also with landscaping. The applicant agrees to shift the driveway so it will not be directly across from the one across the street from the property as long as DOT approves. They agree to add a 16-foot soundwall as an extension of the building near the loading doc area. A sidewalk was added to the plans from the building to the street and bike racks. The preliminary septic design was presented as being in front of the building and soil samples were taken to complete the design.

The review from our professionals and applicants' responses were gone over page by page and line by line. Information gone over such as hours of operation being within the hours of 5am and 11pm. There will need to be a 25-foot buffer zone. Light poles and electric lines added to the site plan. Estimated number of employees would be 60 and the disposal system is set to accommodate 2,000 gallons per day. A pressure test will have to be performed upon completion to determine what sprinkler system is required or a fire suppression tank according to the fire code. A waiver is being requested on landscaping on the grounds that the applicant is willing to comply with what our professionals require. Clarification was made that if the planning board approves the application there are still numerous permits and approvals needed by other agencies such as DEP and DOT or the project can not be completed. Larry Winkels questioned if there is a change of circumstance that could affect one of the submitted reports such as the overflow of the crick in recent days would that change anything. Mr. Hefe explained that situations such as that the DEP and other agencies will be looking into the same circumstances before any permits would be issued by those agencies. The parking spaces required are 277 according to township plans while applicant only requesting 111 with 4 spaces for EV vehicles so a waiver is being requested to have fewer spaces than required. William Remster questioned parking spaces being located within the setback zone. Larry DiVietro clarified that the setback zone includes the building only and not including the parking area. Applicant agrees to design for only 10 loading docks and bank the other 16 which would need a waiver. The owner will need to revisit if the business tenant requires additional loading areas.

Norm Dotti with Russell Acoustics who has been in the line of work for approximately 50 years, attested to the noise study that was completed by his agency. It was asked that the noise study be updated to include noises other than just trucks such as back up signals, trailer hitching, HVAC noise, and construction. Mr. Dotti explained there is a state wide noise regulation that regulates maximum sound level of sources associated with commercial or industrial use and effects to a residential receiver. It uses a frequency scale to determine how loud noises are to people. The dominant or loudest sound source for a dry goods warehouse would be trucks and the study would be based on the loudest source. Mr. Dotti agreed that the sound study meets the standard of the state requirements. Joseph Hannagan stated he does not agree that the sound study was done at the proper time of year.

A motion was made by Marjorie Sperry and seconded by Larry Winkels to open the meeting to the public. All those were in favor and the meeting was open.

Jack Sutton commented that the residents of Quinton Township do not want the building.

Ted Woodside of Salem Quinton Rd. is very concerned with truck traffic and how they will be entering the building especially with the lack of police and fire presence.

Mike Blachniak of Hilliard Ave. states his concern with the effects of constant exposure to exhaust fumes from the trucks in and out of building and those parked for loading. Also, that the count of people for the building do not include visitors.

John Carnevale of Salem Quinton Rd. expressed concern that other properties in the area are subject to similar building applications.

Beatrice Ricketts of Hilliard Ave. expressed her concern with how close this building will be to her back yard and the noise it would cause.

Resident of Salem Quinton Rd. is concerned with the noise as the trucks connect and disconnect.

Beth Fox of Hiles Ave. pointed out that current owner of the property is JJ Allen.

Al Bloemer of Hiles Ave. believes the noise within the sight will be minimum compared to the trucks exiting and entering the site.

Mark Shultz of Cross Rd. questioned the landscaping that is supposed to shield the building if they lose leaves would they still help with noise.

Ben Keen of Hilliard Ave. believes the township is to blame for this application even being capable of being presented and wants the master plan reviewed.

Pete Mattice of Hilliard Ave. grew up in New York and moved to Quinton for the atmosphere and the township has let him down.

Resident of Cross Rd. does not understand why build something with no tenant and what would this project benefit to the township.

Jackie Ciarlante of Hilliard Ave. believes the township has let the residents down.

Attorney Jeffrey Brennan was introduced as representing Quinton resident Ralph Warfle. He stated that the floor area ratio that was presented was not properly calculated. That the average height of the building would need to include the cooling units. Also, that the site plan shows several encroachments into the side yard setback area. He explained he believes there are numerous objections to the application and that there are variances that need to be applied for.

After discussion it was agreed by the board members that they needed additional time to get more information on the topics brought up by Attorney Brennan. Attorney Hefe for the applicant expressed that there was plenty of time for these objections to be brought forward and the board should be voting on the matter tonight. Solicitor Richard Coe for the planning board presented that Attorney Brennan would submit his objections within 10 days of the meeting after which Attorney Hefe would have 10 days to respond and the board would review and discuss at the regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting.

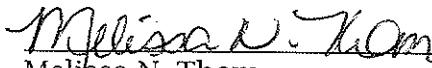
A motion was made to reopen the public portion of the meeting and seconded by Joseph Hannagan. Melanie Allen of Quinton Hancock's Bridge Rd. stated that there was a letter submitted at the last regular township meeting for the Planning Boards review. It was acknowledged that the letter was received and the board would review.

Amy Soma of East Ave. Expressed concern that the wildlife such as birds would be disturbed by the construction and continuous noise.

A motion was made to close the public portion by Marjorie Sperry and seconded by Larry Winkels. All those in favor and public portion was again closed.

Marjorie Sperry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Larry Winkels seconded the motion and all those were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 11:13pm.

Respectfully submitted by:


Melissa N. Thom

Approved: June 14th 2024