

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON
WARREN COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Municipal Offices: 211 Route 31 North, Washington, NJ 07882 (908) 689-7209

MEETING MINUTES: May 29, 2013

PUBLIC NOTICE was given through publication in the **Star Gazette** and **Express Times**. Notice was also posted on the municipal bulletin board in the Township Administration Building in Washington Township, New Jersey, and notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The special joint public meeting of the Environmental Commission, Township Committee, Land Use Board and Highlands Council representatives was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

In attendance: Cheryl Burket, Ron Greenwald, Charlie Shields, Marilyn Sendell, Lydia Schmidt, Al Ivany

JOINT MEETING REGARDING THE HIGHLANDS CONFORMANCE PROCESS

Members of the Environmental Commission, Land Use Board, Township Committee and Highlands Council met in a special public meeting to discuss the Highlands conformance process. Washington Township Highlands process coordinator Sean Brown gave a brief history of the Highlands' process. He stated the Petition Phase of this process was approved by the Highlands Council on December 1, 2011. The Township is currently in the Implementation Phase, where the Township will finalize and adopt documents prepared during the Petition Phase. The Township needs to identify any immediate plan conformance needs. The Township Committee, Land Use Board and Environmental Commission need to coordinate activities to complete the requirements. The Environmental Resource Inventory needs input and approval from the Environmental Commission.

Environmental Commission member Cheryl Burket asked what the Planning Area entails. Sean Brown explained these are the areas with potential for development. The Township has the option of opting in. Margaret Nordstrom from the Highlands Council stated the State will not make the Township opt in, however the Township can always be stricter than the DEP rules and the Regional Master Plan.

Environmental Commission Chairman Al Ivany asked if the information the Commission provided would be incorporated into the Environmental Resource Inventory or be an addendum to the report. Keri Benscoter from the Highlands Council suggested any information be sent to her. She will put together a document for the Township to approve after discussing.

Environmental Commission and Land Use Board member Marilyn Sendell questioned the source of the planning funds. C. Danis from the Highlands Council explained they come from the Implementation Plan and Schedule which was approved as part of the Township's petition. \$102,000 was provided to

the Township by the Highlands in 2011. Committeeman Finke asked the amount spent to date. Township CFO Kevin McCarthy explained the Township has incurred expenses in need of Highlands approval in the amount of \$47,000. Township Administrator DeBoer stated these funds cannot be approved until certain items have been completed. Environmental Commission member Ron Greenwald asked if salaries are taken out of these funds. Mr. DeBoer stated \$10,000 was allocated for Sean Brown's salary.

Joel Schnetzer of the Land Use Board felt the Township needs to establish a Farmland Comprehensive Plan first, explained his reasons, and discussed with Margaret Nordstrom. A fiscal analysis would determine if the TDR Program would benefit the municipality. Sean Brown noted the TDR Study and the Farmland Comprehensive Plan could be identified by the Land Use Board through the Master Plan Re-Examination.

Sean Brown explained the handouts he provided and noted they will be added to the website. Mayor Klingel requested S. Brown be the liaison between the Committee, Land Use Board and Environmental Commission.

Committeeman Finke requested a map of the Township with the Protection and Conservation Zones as well as septic densities. K. Bencoter explained the available maps and will provide minimum acreage numbers to the Township.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A motion was made by Township Committee members Bob Finke and seconded by John Horensky, to open the meeting to the public. Hearing no one, a motion was made by Mayor Bob Klingel, seconded by John Horensky, to close the public portion of the meeting.

Erich Sodtalbers, Land Use Board Chairman, asked who is responsible for the Master Plan Re-Examination as he is concerned about the cost and time needed to complete this. Sean Brown stated the Master Plan is included in Natural Systems Utilities' budget. Township Administrator DeBoer explained. J. Schnetzer stated his displeasure that a representative from Natural Systems Utilities was not present at this meeting. He feels all three Boards should be in agreement as to who should do the Master Plan Re-Examination. Attorney Lavery stated the work was publically bid out and Natural Systems Utilities works for the Land Use Board. Discussion followed.

Members of the Land Use Board discussed next steps with C. Danis. E. Sodtalbers asked if the Highlands Council is re-evaluating the acreage size in the Preservation Area. C. Danis explained that is ruled by the DEP, not Highlands. E. Sodtalbers asked if it is being requested that land be taken out of the Preservation area along the corridors of both major county roads. M. Nordstrom stated she is working with the County to develop an analysis and any changes would involve the legislature.

Environmental Commission Chairman Al Ivany asked how the Township would be affected if the overall Green Acres funding is exhausted, as is currently the case at the state level. Margaret Nordstrom from the Highlands Council stated they need to locate TDR receiving areas which would create funds stating "failure is not an option." Committeeman Finke asked how the TDR will work regarding sending and receiving areas. Margaret Nordstrom explained and discussion followed. TDR receiving areas do not require planning area conformance.

Mayor Klingel felt all Boards now know their responsibilities and requested S. Brown be available for any assistance. The Mayor asked E. Sodalbers to contact Natural Systems Utilities and set up a meeting with them, himself, and the Mayor to discuss their progress.

MEETING ADJOURNED

A motion to adjourn the Environmental Commission meeting was made by Ron Greenwald and seconded by Cheryl Burket. All Environmental Commission members were in favor. 8:35 p.m.