

**WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD – REGULAR MEETING
December 19, 2023 Minutes – 7:00 PM**

The West Amwell Township Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Tomenchok followed by the salute to the flag.

The following statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act as listed on the meeting agenda was read into the record by Chairman Tomenchok: This meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. This meeting was noticed as a regularly scheduled meeting transmitted to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Times of Trenton on January 26, 2023. A copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the Office of the Planning Board and Township Clerk.

The following general policy statement of the Planning Board was read into the record by Chairman Tomenchok: The Board's general policy is to end the presentation of testimony on applications by 10:30 PM and to conclude all Board business by 11:00 PM. When necessary, the Chairman may permit a reasonable extension of those time limits.

Attendance – Roll Call

Present: Bob Balaam
Jim Cally
John Haug
Carl Ippolito
Joe Petrucci
Rob Tomenchok
Connor Montferrat – Alt. #2
Attorney Tara St. Angelo
Planner Joanna Slagle

Excused: John Dale
Nella Hamtil
Christopher Morgan
John Flemming – Alt. #1

New Business – Other

Consistency Review: Ordinance 13, 2023 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 109 OF THE WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL CODE ENTITLED “LAND DEVELOPMENT” AND MORE PARTICULARLY BY AMENDING ARTICLE VIII, ENTITLED “PLANNING BOARD” AND ARTICLE IX ENTITLED “ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT” FOR THE PURPOSES OF VESTING IN THE PLANNING BOARD ALL OF THE POWERS OF THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Attorney St. Angelo explained the Planning Board will now hear all of the land use applications and she noted when a use variance is being heard, the Class I and Class III members will need to recuse themselves entirely. Mr. Cally asked for clarification on whether or not he could still participate in the hearing but just not vote on the application. Attorney St. Angelo advised that when someone recuses themselves, they are completely removed from the proceedings. She stated she does not recommend the Class I or Class III members participate in any way. She explained if it is a use variance, the board will be voting on the Land Use Ordinance which is technically enacted by the Township Committee. Attorney St. Angelo commented that if the Class I and Class III members participate it can be viewed as undue

West Amwell Township Planning Board Minutes – 12/19/23

influence. She remarked the optics are bad and stated she does not recommend the Class I and Class III members ever participate in any of the Boards she represents.

Mr. Montferrat suggested the new board be called the Land Use Board so there is no confusion among applicants applying to the Board.

A motion was made by Bob Balaam and seconded by Joe Petrucci finding Ordinance 13, 2023 not inconsistent with the Master Plan. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Approval: Updated Planning Board By-Laws

A motion was made by Connor Montferrat and seconded by Bob Balaam to approve the updated Planning Board By-Laws. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Chairman Tomenchok thanked Mr. Haug and Ms. Hamtil for all of the time they spent updating the By-Laws.

Continued Review of the Master Plan: Circulation Plan Element

Chairman Tomenchok commented he has been updating data as he gets the opportunity and recently imported amended tables and noted a road mileage increase due to Holcombe Grove Road.

There was some discussion on the need to clarify the definitions for the various street classifications: Collector Roads, Secondary Roads, Feeder Roads and Arterial Roads. Planner Slagle commented that the Township's Master Plan should be consistent with NJDOT's definitions which is helpful when applying for grants. Mr. Cally asked if there is any negative impact to using the NJDOT definitions. Planner Slagle said no. She clarified that anything not identified as being part of an NJDOT road category would be considered a "local" roadway.

Mr. Cally commented on a discussion at the Township Committee meeting regarding GPS devices routing large trucks onto local roadways. He noted DPW Supervisor Chris Gabel was asked to install "*No Thru Truck Traffic*" signage on certain roads. Mr. Cally also commented on his desire to install "*No Parking*" signage along Rocktown-Lambertville Road due to safety concerns with the new school being built.

Planner Slagle suggested a recommendation in the Circulation Plan Element to establish specific truck routes for GPS devices. Attorney St. Angelo suggested a recommendation for signage "packages" so there is consistency between State, County and local road signs. It was noted for the record that the Board agreed with both suggestions.

Mr. Cally asked about specific language for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Planner Slagle noted she will provide verbiage to cover these items.

There was some additional discussion on "Jakes Law" under Green Acres which provides for inclusive playgrounds. Chairman Tomenchok suggested this be included in the Recreation Plan Element.

Mr. Montferrat suggested cell towers be updated in the Utilities Plan Element. He also noted all references to Duke Energy should be corrected to reflect that the company name is now Enbridge.

West Amwell Township Planning Board Minutes – 12/19/23

Mr. Cally commented that he wants the wastewater disposal system language updated throughout the Master Plan.

Chairman Tomenchok noted the next elements to review will be:

Recreation Plan Element
Conservation Plan Element
Historic Preservation Plan Element

Bill List

A motion by John Haug, seconded by Bob Balaam to approve the Board's 12/19/23 bill list was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Open to the Public

Chairman Tomenchok opened the floor to public comment.

Dave Beaumont of 205 Rock Road West came forward and noted the code already indicates there is no parking allowed on Rocktown-Lambertville Road. Attorney St. Angelo commented there must be signage installed in order for it to be enforceable. Mr. Beaumont also encouraged the Board to review all roads because he believes some are misclassified.

Seeing no other members of the public come forward, a motion was made by Jim Cally and seconded by Bob Balaam to close the floor to public comment. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

It was noted for the record that Chairman Tomenchok excused Attorney St. Angelo and Planner Slagle from the meeting at this time.

Executive Session

A motion by Carl Ippolito, seconded by Joe Petrucci to approve Resolution #2023-07 and enter into executive session for the purposes of discussing the professional's contracts was unanimously approved by voice vote.

It was noted for the record that the Board was in executive session from 8:27 PM – 8:42 PM.

Minutes

A motion was made by Carl Ippolito and seconded by Joe Petrucci to approve the Board's 11/21/23 meeting minutes with no revisions noted. The motion was approved by voice vote with Mr. Montferrat and Mr. Balaam abstaining.

Adjournment

A motion by Bob Balaam, seconded by Connor Montferrat to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Maria Andrews, Planning Board Secretary