

TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
PLANNING BOARD
COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY

REGULAR MEETING
April 1, 2015

The regular meeting of the Township of Franklin Planning Board was held at 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, New Jersey and was called to order by Chairman Orsini at 7:30 p.m. The Sunshine Law was read, the Pledge of Allegiance said and the roll was taken as follows:

PRESENT: Councilman Chase, Carl Hauck, Raleigh Steinhauer, Cecile Maclvor, Robert Mettler, Charles Onyejiaka (arrived at 7:49 p.m.), James Pettit, Robert Thomas, Todd Brown and Chairman Orsini

ABSENT: Edward Potosnak

ALSO PRESENT: Filling in for Board Attorney, Mr. Peter Vignuolo, was Mr. Clarkin, Mr. Mark Healey, Director of Planning and Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer

Chairman Orsini opened the meeting and after the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call, he announced that Mr. Todd Brown would be stepping down from his position on the Board, after a short tenure, due to the fact that he was moving out of town and would no longer be able to serve.

The Chairman then welcomed Raleigh Steinhauer, who was joining the Board as the Mayor's representative.

MINUTES:

- Regular Meeting – February 4, 2015

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to approve the Minutes as submitted. Mr. Pettit seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Vice Chair Maclvor, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Pettit, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Brown and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

RESOLUTIONS:

- **Gianotto / PLN-07-00005 (Relief of Conditions/Amended Subdivision With Variances)**

Mr. Healey informed the Board that there were two actions to vote on, one that was regarding Lot 25.01 and the other was with respect to 25.02. He added that as such, there were different members that could vote on the individual issues.

The vote was taken on Lot 25.01, with Vice Chair MacIvor making a motion to approve the Resolution as submitted. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Vice Chair MacIvor, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Thomas and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

The vote was taken on Lot 25.02, with Vice Chair MacIvor making a motion to approve the Resolution as submitted. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Vice Chair MacIvor, Mr. Mettler and Mr. Pettit

AGAINST: None

- **PVP Franklin, LLC / PLN-14-00017**

Vice Chair MacIvor made a motion to approve the Resolution as submitted. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Vice Chair MacIvor, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Pettit, Mr. Thomas and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

- **Summerfields @ Franklin / PLN-15-00001**

Vice Chair MacIvor made a motion to approve the Resolution as submitted. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Vice Chair MacIvor, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Pettit, Mr. Thomas and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

DISCUSSION:

Vouchers:

- **Peter Vignuolo – April Retainer - \$833.00**

Vice Chair MacIvor made a motion to approve the Vouchers as submitted. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Mr. Steinhauer, Vice Chair MacIvor, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Pettit, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Brown and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

Extension of Time:

- **Timothy Kelly / PLN-08-00008 – Request for Extension of Time to file deeds**

Mr. Clarkin, standing in for Board Attorney, Mr. Peter Vignuolo, recused himself from this matter as he was counsel to the Applicant, Timothy Kelly, at the 2008 hearing.

Mr. Timothy Kelly, Applicant, appeared before the Board on behalf of himself. He indicated that he had to put monuments in the ground and conservation easement markers. Mr. Kelly then stated that they started the process, however, the cold, inclement winter weather came and it was difficult to get to the place on the property to finish. He then told the Board that they were planning on finishing that up in the next week and then would just have to put it on the Site Plan. He asked for an extension of time of 90 days to make sure he can complete the work, which would enable him to file the deeds.

Vice Chair MacIvor made a motion to approve the Extension of Time for 90 days, till July 1, 2015. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Vice Chair MacIvor, Mr. Mettler, Mr. Pettit, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Brown and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

HEARINGS:

- **VGS HOLDINGS, INC. / PLN-15-00003**

Amended Site Plan in which the Applicant was seeking permission to add pads, a ramp and a walkway, which increases the impervious surface, at 400 Campus Drive, Somerset; Block 517.06, Lot 9.01, in an M-1 Zone - **CARRIED TO APRIL 15, 2015 – no further notification required.**

DL - 04/24/2015

WORKSESSION/NEW BUSINESS:

- **Catalpa Park Recreation Improvements**

Chairman Orsini reminded the Board that they were tasked by the Township Council to determine whether the Catalpa Park plans conform to the Open Space and Recreation element of the Master Plan of the Township, last revised in 2006.

Township Manager, Mr. Robert Vornlocker, came forward to give some historical information about Catalpa Park's concept. Utilizing an enlarged map of the park, he indicated that the first concept was presented to the public in June of 2014 and was the plan that was presented to the Township Council. He then stated that the plan came directly from the Township's Recreation Needs Assessment that was completed in 2012, and most of the elements to the Catalpa Park Recreation Improvement plan came from that Recreation Needs Assessment. He then spoke of the plan being put into place in three phases, with the first phase to include tennis courts, a basketball court, picnic pavilion, a trail network, a tot lot, restroom facilities and a parking lot. He went on to detail the plans for Phase II, which included a parking lot, picnic pavilion and two (2) cricket pitches. Finally, he told the Board that Phase III was to include two (2) softball fields, a parking lot and three (3) soccer fields. He stated that after the public hearing in June of 2014, there was significant concern that the plan was an over-build of the property and the Township Council requested that a new plan be designed. Moving on to the updated park plan exhibit, Mr. Vornlocker noted that Phase III of the revised plan for the park was completely eliminated from the plan, Phase I had been reduced in scope to lessen the impact to the area by removing the basketball courts and reducing

the parking lot size. He testified that the tennis courts, picnic pavilion, tot lot and restroom facilities would remain. Mr. Vornlocker then stated that Phase II has mostly remained the same, but the cricket pitches were requested to be moved as far from the neighboring property line as was feasible, taking into account the wetlands. He indicated that the parking lot and picnic pavilion would remain. Mr. Vornlocker notified the Board that the updated plan would be presented to the public sometime in June of 2015.

Mr. Mettler noticed on his copy of the revised plan that the verbiage “potential wetlands” were located within the park and wanted to know if specific delineation of the wetlands had been done and, if not, would there be possible changes to the plan as a result. Mr. Vornlocker indicated that wetlands delineation had already been done prior to putting the plans together.

Chairman Chase suggested that a Community Garden should be a consideration within the park, and the Open Space Committee specifically recommended one. He thought locating it near the entrance onto Old Vliet Road might be a good location as it wouldn't interfere with anything else there. Mr. Vornlocker stated that he was aware that the Open Space Committee did make that recommendation and that it would be part of the presentation at the public hearing.

Mr. Brown inquired as to what would happen to the property that was included in Phase III and Mr. Vornlocker indicated that it would remain open space. He also spoke of the 10-Mile Run Brook that runs through that area of the park, noting the concern of the Open Space Committee that building out that portion would ruin that beautiful, natural area. Mr. Vornlocker mentioned that there was a trail in that area that would still connect out to the Bunker Hill natural area.

Mr. Thomas inquired about the loss of softball fields and whether at least one field could be incorporated somewhere in the plan as it was established as a real need in the Recreational Needs Assessment. Mr. Vornlocker stated that there were topographical concerns as well as concerns of the adjoining residents that resulted in the decision to leave that portion of the property as open space. He also discussed the possibility of including these types of fields at the recently approved new school site on Claremont Road. Mr. Thomas reminded everyone that the Board of Education proposed the shared use of such fields with the youth organizations in the Township at their Planning Board hearing, so the cross-use sharing of those types of fields should be honored so that additional fields do not have to be built throughout the Township to accommodate the youth organizations.

Chairman Orsini was reminded by the discussion regarding the possibility of including a Community Garden, that there was a vegetable farm stand that might be displaced. He asked Mr. Vornlocker what would happen to it after construction of the park elements. Mr. Vornlocker indicated that there was an existing farmstead that still farmed their leased land and was not part of the park development. He added that they would still be able to continue with their vegetable stand. A discussion ensued among the Board

regarding the possibility of the farmstead being able to provide water for the use of a Community Garden.

Mr. Mark Healey, Planning Director, came forward and spoke about the proposal as it related to the Master Plan. He referred to a report that was before the Board that evening that was from the Technical Review Committee (TRC) that included many departments in the Township, including Planning, Engineering, Traffic Safety Bureau of the Police Dept., Health Dept., etc. He stated that they have all reviewed the concept plan and collectively put the report together to inform the Board of what they believe their role should be in reviewing the plan, which was to make sure it conforms to the Master Plan and also treat it like it was a pre-application for a site plan. He indicated that the report from the TRC could form the basis of what they ultimately send on to the Township Council and asked for the Board's input prior to their doing so. Mr. Healey then reviewed the TRC's report that included notations from the 1999 Master Plan, such as the need for neighborhood parks in the southern portion of the Township within 0-5 years as well as the need for larger community parks in the southern part of the Township within the 5-10 year time frame. Mr. Healey then read from the 1999 Master Plan the types of facilities that were recommended at that time, including tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, a roller hockey area, open play fields and playgrounds, circuit fitness/walking trails, passive recreation space and ancillary athletic field space as well as restrooms. He then noted that the May, 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan prepared by the Township Open Space Advisory Committee cited verbatim the recommendations made in the 1999 Master Plan. Next, Mr. Healey spoke about the updated, 2006 Master Plan, that reiterated the need for recreational facilities in the southern portion of the Township, but in a more specific manner by identifying the Catalpa site as well as the Township owned site at the corner of South Middlebush/Sudan Rd. In this recommendation, there was a long list of needed facility improvements that were noted. He went on to detail the 2012 Township Preservation and Recreation Needs Assessment and Action Plan. Included in the TRC report, Mr. Healey noted, on page 4, was a Concept Plan that came out of that plan showing possible recreational facilities and their locations. Mr. Healey then reminded the Board of the 2013 adoption of a new Open Space and Recreation Plan that was prepared for funding purposes, but incorporated the recreational recommendations that were in the 2012 study. He then told the Board that it would seem that the site had been looked at for many years as a possible location for active recreation in the many iterations of the Township Master Plan and not thought of for passive recreation or open space.

Mr. Healey then detailed the TRC's recommendations based upon the latest plans that were shown that evening:

1. Traffic study should be prepared to determine the nature of roadway and intersection improvements, i.e., Old Vliet Rd., and should be reflected on the Engineering plans.
2. Public water should be extended to the site to serve the proposed park facilities.
3. The Engineering plans should propose fire hydrants in consultation with Township staff.

4. Bathroom facilities should be considered in conjunction with the cricket field pavilion. Proposed bathroom facilities should be connected to public sewer.
5. It is the TRC understands that none of the recreational facilities would be lighted. If so, there would appear to be no need to light the parking lots. However, if parking lot lights are to be provided, they should be modest in height and power and shielded to prevent off-site glare.
6. The plans should specify the proposed treatment of the field areas surrounding the cricket fields (i.e., would they be mowed regularly, mowed only occasionally or left to grow). If not mowed regularly, paths should connect to the parking lot pavilion to the fields. If portions are left to grow (e.g., the areas between the pitches and the residential areas) the growth would eventually serve to supplement the screening provided by existing vegetation.
7. Design and alignment of utilities and storm water facilities should seek to minimize removal of trees beyond that presented on the concept plan.
8. Identify the distances between the different facilities and surrounding residential areas. The main area of concern that the TRC identified was the area to the east (closest in proximity to residential areas) be considered, in particular, for some supplemental landscaping and buffering.

Mr. Brown noticed that many of the active recreational facilities had been taken off the plan due to residential concerns, i.e., baseball and soccer facilities. He wanted to know if there were any other alternative sites identified to accommodate these facilities in the southern portion of the Township.

Mr. Zilinek, Township Engineer, noted that the Township had identified the accommodation of baseball and soccer facilities, but there were limited locations in the southern portion of the Township where those needs can be met. He did mention, however, that the Board of Education property located on Claremont Road was a possibility for the construction of athletic fields. He did add that the number of recreation facilities that were removed from the Catalpa plan would most likely not all be able to be placed at the Claremont Rd. location. He also mentioned that they would pursue the addition of more basketball courts at DeLar Park, which was also located in the southern portion of the Township, since they could not be accommodated at the Catalpa Park location. He also mentioned that deed restrictions and conservation restrictions did not allow for any active parking facilities being constructed at the corner of South Middlebush Rd. and Suydam Rd. or at the Gunther farm property to the north.

Mr. Mettler suggested that the grass could be left to grow at the back of the cricket pitches near the residential properties, but that they be mowed elsewhere in order to facilitate safer play. Mr. Healey indicated that that suggestion as well as others from the Board could be incorporated into the memo that was presented to the Township Council.

Vice Chair MacIvor made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Rajiv Prasad, 9 Corteland Drive, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Mr. Prasad would like to urge the Planning Board, in the process of revising the Township's Master Plan, to consider the demographics of the area as well as the need. He commended the plan for its inclusion of cricket pitches, but wanted the Planning Board to know that there was still a much larger need for such facilities as there were about 16 teams in the Township and each one was required to have a home field before they can participate in the league. He noted that there were about eight (8) teams waiting for a home field to become available. Chairman Orsini suggested that Mr. Prasad write a memo to Mr. Healey and Mr. Vincent Dominach, Sr. Zoning Office, so that they have the information available during the process of updating the Master Plan. He asked Mr. Prasad to include information regarding how many more cricket pitches would be needed as well as a proposal of where they might be placed within the Township.

Seeing no one further coming forward, Mr. Mettler made a motion to close the meeting to the public. Vice Chair Maclvor seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to approve the memorandum presented by Mr. Healey for the Catalpa Park plans, along with the recommendation for the inclusion of a Community Garden and only allowing the grass to grow near the residential properties and mow the rest, to be submitted to the Township Council. Mr. Mettler seconded the motion and all were in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- Resolution authorizing Executive Session

Chairman Orsini made a motion to go into Executive Session. Vice Chair Maclvor seconded the motion and all were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:53 p.m. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Murphy, Recording Secretary
April 30, 2015