

# Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

## Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

### March 1, 2016

#### Location

Franklin Township Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mr. Burian at 7:30 pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975.

#### Attendance

Members: Jean Ambrose, Andrew Burian, Thomas Gale, Anthony Ganim, Joanne Kaiser, Robert LaCorte, Barbara ten Broeke

Alternate: Nancy Hohnstine

Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer

Council Liaison: Dr. Theodore Chase

#### Absent

Members: Susan Goldey

Historian: Robert Mettler

Mr. Gale noted that there was a quorum and that, with the absences, Ms. Hohnstine would be voting.

#### Guests

Bill Bowman, reporter, Franklin Reporter & Advocate

Lynn Dunn, attorney representing Verizon Wireless, 100 Barron Circle, Somerset, NJ, 15-00039

Jean Gierlich, guest

Ron Igneri, civil engineer for Verizon Wireless, 100 Barron Circle, Somerset, NJ, 15-00039

Margaret Lyons, RF engineer for Verizon Wireless, 100 Barron Circle, Somerset, NJ, 15-00039

#### Formal Reviews

1. Review of a revised Certificate of Appropriateness application (FTHPAC recommendation to FTZBA for Use Variance application) submitted by New York SMSA Limited Partnership d/b/a/Verizon Wireless., originally requesting approval to install 12 cellular antennas on the roof of the existing building at 100 Barron Circle, Somerset, NJ, Block 424.01, Lot 39.07, zoned PRC and located within the D& R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00039

The Commission heard testimony from Ms. Dunn, Mr. Igneri, and Ms. Lyons and reviewed a packet of documents that contained a cover letter from Lynn A. Dunn to the Franklin Township Zoning Board of Adjustment, dated 2/16/2016, re: #ZBA-15-0026, and the revised plans for the ZBA meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016; a set of 10 architectural drawings by Ronald J. Igneri, P. E. of Stantec, revised on 2/11/16, that include: T01 titled Cover Sheet with site maps and information, T01A titled 200' Property Owners List, Z01 titled Site Plan, Z02 titled Roof Top Layout, Z02A titled Equipment Plan & Elevation, Z03 titled Cable Tray & GPS Mounting Details, Z03A titled Interior Fence & Site Details, Z04 titled Antenna Mount Details, Z05 titled Landscaping Details, Z06 Typical Generator Specifications; and a double-sided, letter sized page of undated printed black and white photographs presenting a view of the northeast corner of the existing building and the same view with a photo simulation of proposed wireless facility installation. At the meeting, Mr. Igneri provided

printed color copies of the same photographs included in the packet and provided samples of the proposed radio frequency (RF) transparent materials.

Ms. Dunn and Mr. Igneri introduced the revised plans by reviewing the history of the proposed project. At its December 1, 2015 regular meeting, the Commission reviewed and voted unanimously to take no exception to the applicant's proposal to install 12 cellular antennas on the roof of the existing building at 100 Barron Circle, Somerset, NJ as it was felt that the property is not historic and the project as proposed should have little negative effect on neighboring historic properties and on the local historic district in general. Mr. Igneri reminded the Commission that the original proposal was to install the antennas on white metal sleds that would rest on the existing roof behind the existing metal railing at the perimeter of the roof in two locations on the front as well as the front corners of both sides of the main building. Ms. Dunn explained that at the January 21, 2016 Zoning Board of Adjustment regular meeting the Board communicated their desire to see a more stealth installation proposed.

To meet that request, Mr. Igneri said he first went back to the radio frequency engineers to see if there was a way to reduce the size or number of the antennas and found that rather than installing the originally proposed 6' tall antennas at four antennas per sector for a total of twelve he would be able to use 4' tall antennas at two per sector for a total of six. He explained that the ability to use smaller and fewer antennas opened up more design opportunities. Ms. Lyons went into a bit more detail about the technology and their ability to use smaller antenna units.

He pointed out that each corner of the building currently has a steep pitch parapet or faux roof unit that they propose to utilize for the revised installation proposal. He detailed how pairs of antennas would be enclosed inside boxes made of RF transparent material. The boxes would be designed to look like dormers in the four front corner roof units. Specifically, they would draw from the design details of the existing building and would include similar horizontal siding detail with matching corner board and crown details. Simulated windows are also proposed but Mr. Igneri explained that he was not able to match the height of the windows used on the lower floors of the building. Each faux dormer would be a sealed unit with a flat top designed to sit on the existing roof. He suggested that they would be secured via inconspicuous posts that were tied into the main structure of the building and would be lifted into place as a complete unit by crane. Ms. Lyons and Mr. Igneri both explained that the antennas, once sealed in the faux dormer units, would not need periodic maintenance.

Mr. Igneri pointed out that they only need three faux dormers to hold the antennas but they would install a matching fourth dummy dormer to maintain the building's symmetry. When asked about the ability of other cellular providers to co-locate in the faux dormers, Mr. Igneri explained that there would be no room in the three occupied units but there might be an opportunity to replace the dummy unit with an active unit and Ms. Dunn suggest there could still be opportunities to install units elsewhere on the roof or on the property. We learned that the other parts of the application, namely the wiring and other support equipment on the roof, the other necessary support equipment in leased space in the underground parking area of the building and the generator and landscaping installed on the lawn near the underground parking lot entrance were not changed significantly from the prior application.

Facts presented at the December meeting were still true: the application requires a use variance from the Township Zoning Board of Adjustment as no cellular installations are allowed in the zone;

the site has 42 acres with many residential units in multiple buildings on the property; the building where they propose to mount the antennas is the existing, modern, four story building closest to Easton Avenue; Verizon has identified a gap in coverage in the area and typically attempts to co-locate on existing structures, if possible, so they look for tall structures in the coverage gap and they believe the proposed location is the most suitable site in the area. Also true is the fact that the main roof of the building is a membrane over wood framing and while ideally the antennas would be mounted on the roof, the fact that they need to be installed over occupied units complicates the installation and limits the options as Verizon feels that they can not disturb the occupants by working on their ceilings. As noted in December, the cabling will not be visible and the units will produce no noise.

In December, the Commission also addressed the visual impact of the proposal using photos taken from various off site locations and determined that due to distance and intervening solid evergreen screening, there will be no visual impact from the historic Van Wickle house and that while the building and installation will potentially be visible from the D&R Canal Towpath in the State Park, distance and multiple rows of deciduous trees will make the units difficult to see. In December, members commented that they felt that the height of the building as well as the elevation of the site above Easton Avenue along with the tree line in front of the building all help to mitigate the visual impact of the cellular antenna installation. Commission members felt the designs currently being presented do an adequate job hiding the cellular installation and therefore represent a stealth design that should have even less visual impact than the prior proposal.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made and seconded to ***take no exception to the proposal to install 6 cellular antennas in faux dormers on the roof of the existing building at 100 Barron Circle, Somerset, NJ*** as it was felt that the property is not historic and the project as proposed should have little negative effect on neighboring historic properties and on the local historic district in general. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

## Informal Reviews

None

## Correspondence

1. Copy of a letter from CRBE Telecom to the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, dated 2/11/16. Re: Section 106 Public Outreach "NYNYNJ0361" on behalf for AT&T Mobility LLC related to the proposed colocation on the existing 199' residential building at 575 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, CRBE Project No: TS60215173

Mr. Dominach explained that if there is an application it will come to the Commission for review regardless if it only needs administrative review, as in the case of equipment simply being swapped out, or a Zoning Board of Adjustment review triggered by an equipment increase of 10% or more.

The meeting was amended to allow discussion of items in Unfinished Business portion prior to Mr. Dominach leaving the meeting.

## Unfinished Business

1. CLG application and Code amendments

Mr. Burian asked Mr. Dominach if he could create a memo with a timeline of the steps that will occur with the proposed code revisions and CLG application completion. Mr. Dominach and Dr. Chase briefly discussed the steps that should occur next including possibly a presentation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> monthly meeting of the Planning Board and then the 2<sup>nd</sup> monthly meeting of Township Council.

2. CoA application revisions

Mr. Dominach requested a digital copy of the proposed amended application and he and members discussed creating an editable PDF version for posting on the Township website.

At this point Mr. Dominach left the meeting and the agenda was again amended to allow Public Discussion to occur.

**Public Discussion**

Mr. LaCorte introduced Ms. Gierlich as a potential new member to fill one of the open positions. He said she has been a long time Township resident and the Commission learned that she has previously served on the Township's Environmental and Shade Tree Commissions. She was advised to submit a Citizen Leadership Application and resume to the Township for Council consideration.

Dr. Chase reported that he had approached several residents of Kingston about serving on the Commission but learned that they were not able to serve at this time.

Mr. LaCorte reported that his daughter might be interested in serving on the Commission.

At this point the Commission returned to the original order of the agenda.

**Correspondence (continued)**

2. Copy of a letter from Daniel Saunders, Administrator, NJ SHPO to Patricia Kalleser, Superintendent, Delaware and Raritan State Park, dated 2/22/16 and received via email 2/23/16. Re: A finding that the proposal does not constitute an encroachment pursuant to N.J.A.C 7:4-7.4 New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act in regards to the project authorization request for tree removal under PSE&G Distribution lines along Blackwell's Mills causeway.

Ms. ten Broeke and Dr. Chase gave some background on the project. We learned that PSE&G intends to cut down the trees that interfere with the transmission lines and that the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition is generally opposed to the technique. Ms. ten Broeke reported that the trees would be replaced with appropriate native species. Members felt that it might be prudent for the Township to announce the project so the public is aware of it and perhaps will not be alarmed by the sudden loss of the trees. Members also suggest that the Shade Tree Commission should be made aware of the project.

**Approval of Minutes of February 2016 meeting**

A motion to **approve the HPAC regular monthly meeting minutes of February 16, 2016 as submitted** was made, seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Reports**

1. Township Open Space Advisory Committee

Mr. LaCorte reviewed some of the budget figures and status reports for Township owned historic properties that were distributed at the February OSAC meeting and that he provided to the Commission last month. He also reported that Franklin Township Special Projects Manager, Tiffany Delaney, would be working on the condition of the historic marker on Amwell Road in Middlebush in front of the Stage House Restaurant. He proposed that we go into executive session to discuss a land acquisition related to a historic property but Mr. Bowman challenged the need for executive session. Mr. LaCorte simply reported that a historically significant property may be coming under new ownership soon and that should help protect it.

2. Historic Resource Survey Committee

No new progress was reported but Ms. ten Broeke asked if other volunteers would be welcome and members felt they would. Dr. Chase expressed interest in being included in the field survey work.

**New Business**

1. To Do list

Mr. Burian proposed generating a To Do of projects the Commission wants to focus on as a management tool.

This led to a brief discussion about the status of the Township owned historic properties, especially those not being managed by the Meadows and in particular the damaged tarp and general conditions of the Canal Road house at the intersection of Canal Road and Old Georgetown Road. Some members felt that there needs to be a discussion on what can be done with the properties.

Dr. Chase and Ms. ten Broeke also mentioned that the private rehabilitation of the historic Peter Berrian House on Old Georgetown road may be moving ahead again after a long period of inactivity.

2. Training Session

Due to the hour, the planned architectural plan reading training session was postponed.

**Upcoming Meetings**

None

**Next Meeting Announcement**

April 5, 2016

**Adjournment**

At 9:00 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gale, Secretary

EC:

Robert Vornlocker, Township Manager  
Ann Marie McCarthy, Township Clerk

Mark Healey, Director of Planning  
Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer  
FTHPAC members