

PLANNING BOARD  
BOROUGH OF ALPHA  
 Regular Meeting  
 January 21, 1998

Municipal Building, 1001 East Boulevard, Alpha, New Jersey

The regular meeting of the Borough of Alpha Planning Board was called to order at 7:44 p.m., by Chairman Richard Barbadora with the following members present: Mr. Boyle, Mr. Dota, Mayor Fey, Mr. Mengucci, Mr. Olah, Mr. Savary, Mr. Seiss, Mr. Barbadora and Mr. Smeall, Alt. I. Mr. Kohler was absent. Also present were Douglas Mace, P.E., Board Engineer and Dolores Hanisak, Secretary. Mr. Lee was absent due to illness.

NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by mail to the Free Press and the Express Times; a notice of this meeting and all other regular meetings of the Planning Board of the Borough of Alpha, which notice sets forth the time, date, and location of this meeting by posting said notice on the bulletin board in the municipal clerk's office.

Mr. Savary moved to approve the minutes of the December 17, 1997 regular meeting, second by Mr. Olah. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Mengucci and Mr. Smeall abstained.

APPLICATION NO. 97-2, Block 105, Lot 2

**Hunterdon Industrial Gases, Inc., Amended Final Site Plan and Bulk Variance**

Chairman Barbadora said a letter had been received from Attorney Willam Edleston requesting the application be carried to February 18, 1998.

Mr. Boyle moved to carry Application No. 97-2 to the February 18, 1998 meeting, second by Mr. Mengucci. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. Z 97-3 (Village Design) had not been received and will be carried to the next regular meeting on February, 18, 1998.

Chairman Barbadora stated that the following members were not present at the October 15, 1998 meeting: Arthur Mengucci, Thomas Seiss, Colin Smeall and himself. He said that all four members

had listened to the tape of that meeting and all four members were certified to vote on the application for a major subdivision and variance for Block 103, Lot 1 submitted by Brian Properties.

**PUBLIC HEARING (CONTINUED)**

**APPLICATION NO. 96-1, MAJOR SUBDIVISION AND VARIANCE  
BLOCK 103, LOT 1 - BRIAN PROPERTIES**

Mr. Boyle disqualified himself and moved from his seat on the Board. Mayor Fey also disqualified himself. Lawrence Fox, Esquire was present to represent the applicant, Mr. Paternostro, who was also present. Robert Templin, the applicant's engineer was also present.

Mr. Fox said the public hearing for the major subdivision application submitted by Brian Properties was continued from October. He noted why the application was not heard in November and December and that consent was given by the applicant to continue in January. He said at the October meeting, there had been comment from the public and that at this meeting the school board would make its comments with respect to the impact the subdivision would have on the school. He said that although Mr. Lee is absent due to illness, they are willing to hear the board's comments. He said the applicant will not be expected to provide any additional expert testimony because of Mr. Lee's absence. He said they were ready to hear the Board of Education presentation and will make responses at the appropriate time. He said he did not expect to accomplish more than that during the meeting.

Thomas Leeper, 730 Sigsbee Avenue, said he is a member of the Board of Education and chairman of the finance committee. He said he was speaking on behalf of the board and he introduced Dr. Sandra Moore, school administrator and board member Edward Hanics. (Also seated in the public was Dena Seiss, school board member).

Mr. Leeper said a Community Impact Statement prepared by the Board of Education had been distributed to the Planning Board at the outset of the meeting that evening. He said the school board was concerned with the Community Impact Statement submitted by the applicant and said that statement did not represent the true impact the subdivision will have on the Alpha Board of Education. He reviewed the Community Impact Statement submitted by the Alpha Board of Education.

Mr. Leeper noted the school is kindergarten through eighth and currently there is a full day kindergarten program. He said that a pre-kindergarten program at age four has been mandated. He said special education is provided in the school. He said the school district is also responsible for educating high school age students. There are currently 257 students enrolled in the Alpha Public School. There are 22 classrooms used for instruction. He noted there is no classroom available for the pre-kindergarten and also said that Phillipsburg High School is at 105% capacity. He reviewed enrollment and classroom projections. Mr. Leeper also discussed the safety issues with respect to students, who will reside in the proposed subdivision. He noted the students will have to cross County Route 519 and that presently there is only one crossing guard stationed at the intersection of Warren Street and Route 519. He said there will have to be another crossing guard at Alpha Street and Rt. 519. He said it is hoped that the applicant will have to provide sidewalks throughout the major subdivision for the safety of the students and to provide crosswalks on Seventh Avenue at Warren Street and Alpha Street.

Mr. Leeper said the board is trying to demonstrate that as a result of the proposed major subdivision, the board will have to provide a way to increase the amount of space. He said one solution, which is currently under consideration, is to acquire a private residence to accommodate the board business office. He said one classroom could become available by moving that office out of the building. He asked if the applicant could provide financial assistance to acquire that site and noted that with some other creative steps, an expansion of the building could be avoided.

Mr. Mace questioned the capacity of the school, noted in the applicant's report as between 344 and 381 students. He asked if that was an accurate statement. Dr. Sandra Moore, administrative principal said that what is not being considered in those numbers is the space required in the building for special education programs, speech and language therapy and basic skills instruction. She said a more accurate number is about 325.

Mr. Fox said he wants the record to indicate who is speaking and said he believed that Dr. Moore was sworn at the last meeting to give testimony.

Mr. Mace asked if the 22 classrooms include those used for art, music, speech, computer, etc. Mr. Leeper said that is correct.

Mr. Mace said Mr. Leeper indicated that Phillipsburg has found out that the Averbach & Associates study versus actual students is a conservative or low estimate. He asked if that was true for the Borough of Alpha. Mr. Leeper responded saying that he has a feeling that his numbers will also be low compared to the actuals.

Mr. Mace asked Mr. Leeper what his estimate would be of the number of school children, that can be assumed a house generates. Mr. Leeper said it is believed to be 1.5 students at the present time.

Mr. Mace asked if the Alpha school population has remained steady during the last 10 years. Mr. Leeper said it has been extremely stable.

Mr. Mace said that he had seen 63 or 64 students in the study. He asked if the current guideline would be violated or if three classrooms would be established. Mr. Leeper said that grade is currently three classes and that there will be three classes next year. He said it would be reviewed at the fourth grade level but at fifth grade the class would be divided into two classes.

Chairman Barbadora said the study indicates the maximum school capacity is estimated to be between 344 and 381. He asked if there is a definite number the school would hold at the present time without doing anything. He asked if the school could hold 381 students at the present time. Mr. Leeper said it would depend upon the distribution. He said there is a sufficient number of special needs students to hold a perceptually impaired classroom in the building and to support two basic skills full-time teachers and classrooms. He said there are seven students in the perceptually impaired classroom and basic skills has approximately 14 or 15 students.

Mr. Leeper said he would not want 30 students in the primary grades but from fifth through eighth, it would not be a problem.

Mr. Fox asked how many students are in the special ed program at the present time. Mr. Leeper said there are seven students presently in a special ed classroom. Mr. Fox asked if the needs vary for those classrooms as well as the general classrooms. Mr. Leeper said there is a maximum capacity for special ed classrooms, which today is seven. He said if an eighth student needs to be placed in the classroom, a waiver is sought from the county superintendent. He said most likely that would be granted but he did not believe that 11 students would be

acceptable. He said another classroom would have to be created. Mr. Fox said when the report was first prepared there were 265 students and the enrollment is now 257 students. Mr. Fox asked how many staff members are in the Board of Education classroom. Mr. Leeper said that two employees are there at the present time. Mr. Fox said there are two employees using what could be a classroom. Mr. Leeper said it is a common area used for other purposes. Dr. Moore said it is a teacher work area as well. Mr. Fox said according to Dr. Moore's numbers, the school could hold 325 and the enrollment is currently 257.

Dr. Sandra Moore, administrative principal of the school and an Alpha resident, said there would also be an impact to the budget with respect to the high school tuition. She said Phillipsburg is a special needs school district and is receiving a significant amount of school aid in order to increase their facilities and their programs. She said that is reflected back to Alpha in the form of tuition increases. She said the cost range projected for the houses in the development is a bit lower than most in the area and her concern is that younger families may be able to afford those houses which may generate more children than what has been projected. Dr. Moore said she has considerable concern with the detention basin, as she had noted at a previous meeting. She said the school is legally responsible for the children from portal to portal and at the present time, there is no plan to enclose the detention basin. She said she would like protection for the children and suggested it be enclosed. Dr. Moore said with respect to the special education program, the state sets requirements for the programs and limits the numbers of students which may be contained in those programs. She said one classroom is currently divided with a room divider to permit two special education groups. She said one section of the library is used for a couple of special education classes, which only need two periods a day. She said the space within the building is being utilized to its best capacity.

Mr. Dota asked the cost per pupil for a student from Alpha to attend Phillipsburg High School in 1997. Dr. Moore said the cost is approximately \$8,000.00. She said when new programs or facilities come in with the special needs status, the tuition will increase.

Mr. Seiss asked if there has been consideration with the impact of the changing population. He said there was a base of about 40% to 50% senior citizens which is now rolling over to smaller numbers due to the increase in new people coming in and the number of homes being sold. He said that will make an impact.

Dr. Moore said that computer education is a necessity. She said the school has 17 computers which does not service the present class. She said more computers would be needed as well as expanding the networking.

Mr. Mace clarified the increase in tuition for districts due to money Phillipsburg will receive as a special needs district. He asked what the benefit would be to the sending districts. Dr. Moore said the it would be the education of the children. Mr. Leeper said the instruction level would increase, however, Chairman Barbadora noted financially, there is no benefit. Mr. Leeper agreed it would not be a financial benefit but would be a benefit for the students because the diversity of programs offered will increase. Mr. Leeper said that since the population of the sending districts has exceeded the population of Phillipsburg students, the Alpha school district is now liable for the construction costs associated with facility expansion which presently amounts to \$113.13 per student.

Chairman Barbadora asked Mr. Mace about the disk which has been obtained with respect to the drainage. Mr. Templin has received the disk. Mr. Mace said he expects to obtain the additional data which is needed within the next week and he will pass it along to Mr. Templin.

Mr. Fox said with respect to the comments that were made, since Mr. Lee was not present, he would reserve his legal comments regarding the status of the board's ability to impose any obligations on the applicant as a result of the Board of Education's comments until Mr. Lee is present. Mr. Mace said he was going to suggest that the board wait until Mr. Lee is present to discuss any other issues.

Mr. Savary asked Mr. Seiss if had any data with respect to the sewer and water system. Mr. Seiss deferred to Mr. Mace. Mr. Mace said the impact has not been completely analyzed but there is legal capacity for sewer but he does not know the physical capability to transport the sewage. He said there are similar issues with the water.

Mr. Mace said those issues can be more directly addressed than some other issues because the provisions in the ordinance and Municipal Land Use Law clearly allow pro-rata contributions to utilities, roads, drainage, etc.

Mr. Savary moved to close the public portion of the public hearing for the evening, second by Mr. Olah. The motion carried unanimously.

The application will be continued at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 18, 1998, with no further notice to the public.

Mr. Paternostro noted he will not be present at that meeting. Mr. Fox said he will advise the board should there be any change with respect to their appearance at the next meeting and said as of the present time the application will continue on February 18, 1998.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

The secretary read a letter from Mr. David Johnson informing the board of his resignation due to being elected to Borough Council. Chairman Barbadora said Mr. Johnson's resignation was accepted with regret.

The secretary said correspondence had been copied and distributed to everyone with one exception. She said a letter had been received from the Office of State Planning, dated December 18, 1997, with respect to the comment period for the re-adoption of State Planning Rules.

Chairman Barbadora reviewed the agenda for the special meeting scheduled for the next evening during which he mentioned Bernard Rooney, from the Warren County Planning Department, will be present to discuss a proposed plan for the Rt. 22 Corridor.

Mayor Fey said with respect to the cross-acceptance process, Mr. Rooney has requested that any additions, deletions, etc. in Alpha's Master Plan be forwarded to him for the development of the State Master Plan. He asked Mr. Mace if there is any information to be forwarded. Mr. Mace said after the special meeting on the Land Use Element of the Master Plan the next evening, assuming it is adopted, ordinances will be re-drafted, which will be provided to Mr. Rooney.

Dr. Sandra Moore asked if there is any place on the agenda for the public to comment.

Dr. Moore noted Mr. Fucilli is no longer a member of the Planning Board. She said she would like recognition in the minutes with respect to his service to the community for 25 or 30 years as a member of the Planning Board. She said the community appreciates his long period of service to the Planning Board and to the citizens of Alpha. Chairman Barbadora thanked Dr. Moore for her comments.

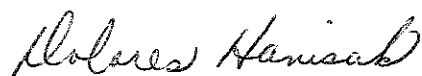
Clifford Crouse, Councilman in Pohatcong Township, spoke briefly to the board with respect to Mr. Rooney's appearance before the Pohatcong Township Planning Board the previous evening. He highlighted the proposals which were made in the proposed Rt. 22 Corridor study.

The secretary asked what the board would do for an attorney if Mr. Lee were still ill and unable to attend the special meeting scheduled for the following evening. Chairman Barbadora will contact Mr. Lee in the morning to determine his availability. If he is unable to attend meetings, he will be requested to send another attorney.

Chairman Barbadora said that the executive session which was to have been held last October was not held due to his illness. He said that an executive session will be held in February or at some future meeting to discuss personnel.

There being no further business to come before the board, Mr. Boyle moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m., second by Mr. Savary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dolores Hanisak, Secretary