

PLANNING BOARDBOROUGH OF ALPHA

Special Meeting

January 22, 1998

Municipal Building, 1001 East Boulevard, Alpha, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Borough of Alpha Planning Board was called to order at 7:34 p.m., by Chairman Richard Barbadora with the following members present: Mr. Boyle, Mr. Dota, Mayor Fey, Mr. Mengucci, Mr. Olah, Mr. Savary (arrived 7:35 p.m.), Mr. Seiss, Mr. Barbadora and Mr. Smeall, Alt. I. Mr. Kohler was absent. Also present were Charles Lee, Esq., Board Attorney; Douglas Mace, P.E., Board Engineer; Betsy McKenzies, P.P. and Dolores Hanisak, Secretary.

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.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a public hearing on the Land Use Element of the Master Plan.

Mr. Lee said the notice of the public hearing on the Land Use portion of the Master Plan was published January 9, 1998 in the Express Times and a proof of publication was filed with the secretary. The Warren County Planning Board received notice with a copy of the proposed Land Use Master Plan on January 9, 1998 and a copy of a stamped letter indicating receipt of the same is on file with the secretary. The Greenwich Township clerk, Phillipsburg Municipal clerk and Pohatcong Township clerk were served a copy of the notice of the meeting on January 8, 1998 by certified mail. Mr. Lee said adequate provisions of notice to the surrounding municipalities and the Warren County Planning Board in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55 D-13 concerning notice of Master Plan amendments have been complied with. Mr. Lee said state statute requires the Master Plan be reviewed by the municipality and its Planning Board every six years requiring a general re-examination of the Master Plan and Development Regulations by the Planning Board, which shall prepare and adopt a resolution, a report on the findings of such re-examination. A copy of that report

and resolution is to be sent to the county planning board and the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality. Failure to so re-examine and adopt by resolution shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the municipal development regulations are no longer reasonable. Failure to make plans and zoning districts consistent with periodic re-evaluations may lead to severe legal difficulties and invalidation of municipal acts. While the Planning Board is to formulate and adopt a Master Plan, the role of the governing body is to enact zoning ordinance based upon that plan.

Chairman Barbadora requested Mr. Mace to give his presentation.

Mr. Mace noted that the board had been working on the Master Plan for sometime. He reviewed the background of the Master Plan. He described how the Land Use Element of the Master Plan is created, noting that the Land Use Element was what was being presented that evening. He described the relationship of the Master Plan to the zoning ordinance. He noted that the law requires that the zoning ordinance be in agreement with the Master Plan.

Mr. Mace said that different nomenclature is being used to designate the land use areas as opposed to what is used in the zoning ordinance. He said a base map of existing land uses in Alpha was created in 1995. He said the next step was that every piece of property in the borough was looked at to determine the use of the property. He explained the map which was developed following that part of the process. He said a comparison was made of previous reviews. He noted it was found that there have been some changes in the borough. He said the residential uses have been broken down into a finer pattern. He gave examples of the changes which had been found. He said there has been a reduction of 14% of vacant land in the borough from 1973 to 1995. He said another important change has occurred in industry, noting an increase. He said commercial has remained stable.

Betsy McKenzie added that it is important to remember that when looking at the percentages, they are percentages of the total land area, so they are relative to one another.

Mr. Mace discussed the environmental features which had been reviewed. He noted the storm drainage projects which have been constructed. He said off-tract improvements monies are permitted to be charged to developers. He said the elements of the Master Plan support the off-tract improvement contributions and he gave examples of public infrastructure. He said the sanitary

sewer service areas were identified. Mr. Mace noted that most of the borough is served by sanitary sewer, which is also the limits of the wastewater management plan. Mr. Mace said that Alpha contractually has sewer capacity available, however, the wastewater management plan will have to be extended to utilize that capacity. He said in conjunction with the Land Use Element, areas will be identified where the wastewater management plan should be considered for extension. He gave examples, including the area designated for affordable housing. He described other mapping which had been done.

Mr. Mace discussed the two large areas of undeveloped land in the borough.

In response to a question from Mayor Fey, Mr. Mace gave the history of the sewer service area. It was recommended that the sewer service area be reviewed and based upon the gallonage in capacity, there should be an extension of the sewer service area. Mr. Mace also said that at sometime the water has to be looked at to obtain increased allocation allowances.

Ms. McKenzie said that if the Land Use Plan Element is adopted tonight, it shows an area that had been zoned R-1 to be a PRD (Planned Residential Development). She described the requirements noting sewerage would be required for that zone. She said if adopted, the next step would be to go ahead with the Utility Service Element and Community Facilities Element of the Master Plan. She said that is the appropriate place to make the recommendation for the area discussed to be included in the sewer service area and then follow-up with amending the wastewater management plan to reflect that.

Discussion was held on the density of the proposed PRD zone including clustering on the tract.

Ms. McKenzie discussed the affordable housing area to comply with the affordable housing obligation and noted that a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan had been adopted. She said there is no changes in the current policy with respect to the affordable housing, however, the zoning map must be changed to reflect that change.

Ms. McKenzie said that goals and objectives were noted in the document, which had been discussed earlier. She elaborated on encouraging appropriate business development and making Alpha more of a town center, which it is already. She said it also addresses the results of the construction of I-78, which effectively cut-off a part of the borough. She said there is

no change proposed for that area but it recognizes that it is more difficult to access from the remainder of the borough. There was discussion on the land on the other side of I-78, which had been zoned for industrial use.

Ms. McKenzie said what is different from the previous Land Use Plans is dual designations in some areas which she said means the Land Use policy for the particular area is to consider mixed use developments. The discussion included uses on the southern section of Rt. 519, as well as the remainder of Rt. 519.

There was discussion on existing uses on Rt. 519. Ms. McKenzie noted they would continue except they would be non-conforming hoping that if they left, it would be an office use which would come in. Mr. Lee noted that the non-conforming use could not be expanded without a variance. Mr. Lee said that type of variance would be a use variance. Ms. McKenzie explained the designations further with respect to the PO (Professional Office) Zone. Mr. Mace said in past discussions it had been noted that due to the size of the lots, which are presently in the zone, it was inappropriate to encourage those lots to be used commercially. He said commercial uses require larger parking spaces and more area. Ms. McKenzie discussed the GB (General Business) Zone.

Mr. Dota referred to the corner lot on Rt. 519 and Vulcanite Avenue and said that an office building is allowed in that zone. Mr. Mace said it is not at the present time but will be included. Mr. Seiss said that a strip had been taken out of that zone and should be included in the GB Zone. Mr. Mace said that may have been an error and will be corrected.

Mayor Fey asked the benefit in having the business segregated the way it is proposed. Mr. Mace responded driveway access and location of driveway access, parking areas, how to get people in and out of Rt. 519. He also noted Rt. 519 is a county road and that the board does not have total control of driveway access.

Ms. McKenzie gave additional reasons for the proposed land use plan on Rt. 519. Mr. Mace discussed transportation issues with respect to Rt. 519.

Mr. Lee requested the board decide the issue of the PO Zone.

Chairman Barbadora asked if there was anyone in the public who had any comment with respect to extending the PO Zone line through the area indicated on the map in yellow. There was

no objection from the public.

Mr. Boyle moved to amend the plan to square off the PO Zone so that the PO Zone is continuous along Fourth Avenue from Vulcanite Avenue to Warren Street, second by Mr. Dota. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

AYES: 8 (Boyle, Dota, Fey, Mengucci, Olah, Savary,
Barbadora, Smeall)

NAYS: 0

Abstaining: Seiss

Absent: Kohler

Mr. Mace requested that the plan be amended to include the circle ball field (McKinley Field) and Walters Park in the P (Park designation).

There were no objections from the public.

Mr. Dota moved to amend the plan to include McKinley Field and Walters Park in the P Zone, second by Mr. Smeall. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

AYES: 9 (Boyle, Dota, Fey, Mengucci, Olah, Savary,
Seiss, Barbadora, Smeall)

NAYS: 0

Abstaining: 0

Absent: Kohler

Mr. Seiss noted that one other area to be discussed, which is located in the HD-1, is a commercial use currently occupied by Buds and Blooms and is owned by Mr. Pettinelli. Mr. Mace said the existing B-3 ends at Cement Alley. Chairman Barbadora noted that there had been a request by the owner, Mr. Pettinelli, to locate a day care center in that building. The issue was discussed. There was discussion on the issue with concerns for sight distance to access Rt. 519.

Mr. Mace described the amendment as follows: starting at the alley that runs from Alpha Street, one block behind 519, to Ellen Street, along the rear property line of the Pettinelli property to William, out William to 519, down 519 to the railroad, east on the railroad to the lot line of the lot that fronts on 519, back up that lot line to William and then down the rear lot lines through the alley to an alley east of 519, back to Alpha Street.

There was no objection from the public with respect to the issue.

Mr. Dota moved to amend the plan in accordance with Mr. Mace's description as stated, second by Mr. Boyle. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

AYES: 9 (Boyle, Dota, Fey, Mengucci, Olah, Savary,
Seiss, Barbadora, Smeall)

NAYS: 0

Abstaining: 0

Absent: Kohler

Ms. McKenzie said the Mayor was asking why the yellow triangle along Hawk Avenue is not included. She said since there were existing houses on small lots, it might not be a place to extend commercial development. She said it was better to preserve the residential uses that are there.

There were no comments or objections from the public on the Land Use plan of the Master Plan as presented with the modifications that had been discussed.

It was noted that the Land Use Element was not complete and Mr. Lee recommended, if the board agreed with the presentation, the board move to accept as amended the Land Use plan of the Land Use Element and then it would be completed. The board would re-notice for adoption when the plan is completed.

Mr. Boyle moved to accept as amended the Land Use Plan of the Land Use Element, second by Mr. Dota. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

AYES: 9 (Boyle, Dota, Fey, Mengucci, Olah, Savary,
Seiss, Barbadora, Smeall)

NAYS: 0

Abstaining: 0

Absent: Kohler

It was suggested that when the Land Use Element is completed and a public hearing is scheduled that the utility plan and community facilities plan be introduced.

Mayor Fey had questions on the density of the PRD. There was discussion on the issue and it will be considered at a future meeting. Mr. Seiss commented on the issue and said he favored larger lots. Mr. Mace, Ms. McKenzie and Mr. Lee commented on the issue with respect to density, open space and clustering.

Art Hance, who was present for an informal discussion on land in the Industrial Park, commented on the issue. He discussed it from a builder's standpoint and said a builder will want to get everything in as small an area as possible to keep the

improvement costs down. Mr. Hance discussed clustering and he said the open space will be preserved. He explained density.

Chairman Barbadora commented on the issue and he noted that there had been discussion on that area at workshop meetings. Mr. Mace suggested that a workshop meeting be scheduled for February or March to further discuss the issue. Mayor Fey urged the board to consider the density issue further. Chairman Barbadora said a workshop meeting will be scheduled to continue the discussion on the issue.

Mr. Lee advised the board that no official action could be taken on items 3 and 4 on the agenda since the meeting was advertised as a public hearing on the Master Plan. Chairman Barbadora noted the other items were only for discussion and were informational.

Mr. Lee was excused from the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON ROADS IN THE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Art Hance was present at the meeting to discuss roads in the industrial park with respect to future development. Mr. Hance said he had been approached by one of his clients in the industrial park, who owns another piece of property in the industrial park, to develop that property. He said there had been a prior approval on that piece of property and that it is planned to start with a new application rather than a revision of the prior approval. He said in looking at other development in the park, the issue of roads was discussed. He said Industrial Drive is improved up to property before the water tank. He said Edge Road is improved by the DOT to a specific location, which he described. He said from that improved section down to New Brunswick Avenue, Edge Road is in bad shape. Mr. Hance said when Hunterdon Transformer got an approval, there was an easement as part of their site plan approval that goes from Industrial Drive to the back of their property line. He said his concern is with the parcel that the owner of the Bihler property owns at the top of the hill, behind the water tower. He said they want to build a warehouse and perhaps in the future some manufacturing but that they need to know what the board wants to do with respect to the roads. He asked what their requirements will be. He said he has had people interested in property in the Industrial Park but he cannot work any budget numbers since he does not know what it will cost for the improvements to Edge Road. He said he has discussed what requirements there are with Mr. Mace. He said the issues are Edge Road, where half of the road is another municipality and

Industrial Drive. Mr. Hance asked if they make improvements to Industrial Drive, will they build the road only to the center line along the property of the person who is building it? Chairman Barbadora commented on the 50' easement through the Hunterdon Transformer property, which he said was intended to connect Edge Road and Industrial Drive.

Mr. Mace said that it is obvious that whoever builds, there will have to be construction on the extension of Industrial Drive and on Edge Road to bring the roads up to standards. He said there is an obligation to do improvements on the frontage and an obligation to contribute to off-tract improvements.

Mr. Mace said Mr. Hance is asking, with respect to Edge Road, what does the board want to do and how does he evaluate it. Mr. Hance said on behalf of his clients, he has to look at economies. He said the issues are what is to be done with Industrial Drive, Edge Road and the 50' easement. He said the costs for his client to develop his property have to include whatever the board wants with respect to the roads. He said everyone wants Edge Road rebuilt to New Brunswick Avenue. He noted that there is only a little piece of the frontage of the property on Edge Road that needs to be rebuilt, the remainder of the frontage of the property was done by DOT. He also said there is the question of building the road for the easement to connect the two roads. He said financially it is not feasible. Mr. Mace said neither the township or the borough will build Edge Road. He commented on the property in Pohatcong Township which fronts Edge Road and what is expected of that developer.

There was discussion as to why there was a need for the easement to connect Industrial Drive to Edge Road.

Mr. Hance said it is not economically feasible for an applicant to be asked to construct Edge Road and a road through the easement. He said a determination would have to be made as to what a developer would be expected to do with respect to the roads. He explained his efforts to bring industry to Warren County.

Mr. Hance suggested that a road be built through the easement and not take it through to Edge Road and the property will have access through the Industrial Park. Mr. Mace said that would not be a public road. He said if there is frontage on the property on the state re-built section of Edge Road, nothing would be required on that section and to build the remaining part of Edge Road which fronts the property and run the road

up from the road on the easement and eliminate off-tract improvements.

There was a question as to the possibility of having the easement become a public road and if there was interest in pursuing that issue.

DISCUSSION ON RT. 22 CORRIDOR

Bernard Rooney of the Warren County Planning Department was present to discuss the Rt. 22 Corridor Study. He said he is in the process of updating the Warren County Circulation Plan and Transportation Map. He said as part of the Master Plan update, he is visiting all the municipalities to hear their concerns. He said the Rt. 22 Corridor study consists of Rt. 22, Rt. 122, Rt. 57 and Rt. 519, in Pohatcong Township, Greenwich Township, Lopatcong Township, Alpha and Phillipsburg. Mr. Rooney said the study is also to show the impact that present development is having on the system and the impact future development will have on the system.

Mr. Rooney said the Rt. 22 Corridor Study has identified areas that have trouble spots and need improvements. He noted Memorial Parkway in the area of the high school to Roseberry Street and then Roseberry Street to Rt. 57 as an area of concern. He also noted the intersection of Rt. 519 and Rt. 22; Rt. 22 and Greenwich Street; Still Valley intersection of Rt. 22 and Rt. 122; and the intersection at Morries Acres, Rt. 57 and Rt. 519. He also identified the intersection of Rt. 519 and Rt. 122 at the traffic light at Baxter's and the intersection of Carpentersville Road and South Main Street in Phillipsburg. He said the intersection at High Street and Third Avenue is also a concern. He said Alpha has requested a traffic light at that intersection.

Mr. Rooney discussed funding which is available and identified the funding for the study which had been compiled. He explained the way in which the data was obtained and used in the study.

Mr. Rooney also said that three new interchanges were requested for I-78; Beattys Road in Greenwich Township and Rt. 173, Carpentersville Road and High Street and Rt. 519 at the Alpha/Pohatcong Township border. He said the study showed that an interchange at Beatty's Road would help traffic development and circulation in Greenwich Township, some areas of Pohatcong Township and Alpha. He said the interchange at Rt. 519 would help the traffic flow through Alpha in combination with the intersection at Beatty's Road. He said the interchange

at Carpentersville Road was dropped as an option, that it would not have a positive impact on the area.


Mr. Rooney said the entire system was analyzed and he explained the method that was used. He noted the new roads which had been built or proposed in the system. He said the study also determined the volume on the present system and what improvements would have to be made. He described the recommendations which had been made.

Board members asked questions of Mr. Rooney and commented on various aspects of the study, particularly the interchanges of I-78.

In closing, Mr. Rooney said the plan was only a concept plan and urged everyone to read the study. He said a public hearing is being planned for March and requested any comments be returned to him prior to that meeting. Chairman Barbadora suggested the study be considered by the board during workshops on the Master Plan.

There being no further business to come before the board, Mr. Savary moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m., second by Mr. Dota. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dolores Hanisak, Secretary