

Florence, New Jersey 08518-2323
September 26, 2012

The regular meeting of the Florence Township Planning Board was held on the above date at the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, NJ. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood then read the following statement: "I would like to announce that this meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided and posted in the main hall of the Municipal Complex."

Upon roll call the following members were found to be present:

Mildred Hamilton-Wood
James Molimock
Mayor Craig Wilkie
Ray Montgomery

Tim Lutz
Wayne Morris
Councilmember Ted Lovenduski
Thomas McCue

ALSO PRESENT: Solicitor David Frank
Engineer Anthony LaRosa
Planner Barbara Fegley

ABSENT: William Federico

MINUTES

Motion of Lutz, seconded by Lovenduski to approve the Minutes from the Regular meeting of June 27, 2012 amended as requested.

Motion of Lutz, seconded by Molimock to approve the Minutes from the Regular meeting of July 30, 2012 as submitted.

Motion of Lutz, seconded by Montgomery to approve the Minutes from the Regular meeting of August 22, 2012 as submitted.

RESOLUTIONS

None at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Letter from Burlington County Soil Conservation District Dated September 4, 2012 regarding NFI Warehouse.

B. Letter from Freeholder Director Bruce Garganio to Mayor Craig Wilkie, dated September 13, 2012 regarding Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program Acquisition Targeting List (ATL) Request for Municipal Review.

24.

Motion of Lutz, seconded by Morris to receive and file the correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said there is an informal presentation by Mr. Lee Grover regarding the Tolle property located at 1001 Potts Mill Road. She announced that since this is an informal presentation there would be a fifteen minute time limit.

Mr. Grover said he is looking at the property. It is zoned highway commercial. He would like to run a power equipment repair shop at the site. The property is 5.25 acres.

Mayor Wilkie explained that he and Township Administrator Richard Brook met with Mr. Grover and his realtor to go over what Mr. Grover proposes to do. The Board received a letter from Administrator Brook and a minor site plan. The issue is that it is a permitted use, but the Township wanted to get a feel from the Board if it would require a full site plan.

Mr. Grover said it is small engine repair. There would be no additional buildings. The driveway is already there. The handicap parking spot would be in front of the building and it would be a hard surface. There is no need for a ramp. The business would be run out of the garage and the house itself would be a residence for Mr. Grover's son. He explained there will be a sign on Route 130 and on Potts Mill Road to indicate the entrance. The other driveway would be marked "private drive" for the house. Mayor Wilkie said there is a secondary entrance closer to the creek that would be used for the business entrance. The one closest to Route 130 is hard to maneuver. He explained the layout of the property and the entrances. Member Lutz said he would like to see a site triangle done to delineate the pathways to be sure there is clearance in and out. Mr. Grover said he does intend to do some clearing on the property. The members agree that it is a use issue and does not require a full site plan approval. Mayor Wilkie explained that if the business does grow they will need to return to the Board for a full site plan. The site is large enough to expand in the future. Anything that would require a permit would trigger the need for a full site plan approval. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood inquired about employees. Mr. Grover said there would probably be two employees and his son will be running the business. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said the Board does not need to do anything formal but all seem to be in agreement that at this point Mr. Grover can proceed.

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said the next item is an informal presentation from the Burlington Coat Factory, Route 130 North, Block 160.01, Lot 1.01.

Member Lutz said because of the size of this type of project he would like to allow the presentation to have a thirty minute limit instead of the fifteen minute limit. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said that based on the size of the project there would be no time limit.

John Gillespie of Parker McCay approached to represent the Burlington Coat Factory. He introduced Bob LaPenta, Vice President and Treasurer of the Burlington Coat Factory, and Robert Stout of Stout and Caldwell. Mr. Gillespie said the company just

opened its 500th store and its corporate growth is impressive. He said the idea is to build a minimum 180,000 square ft. building that has the potential to be 500,000 square ft. The initial plan is a two story building with the future potential of five stories. He said much of it depends on the market needs. The traffic will enter and exit through the existing location on Route 130. There are some future improvements that will need to be approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT), but the DOT said the existing route is adequate at this time for access to the new building.

Mr. LaPenta said he has worked for Burlington Coat Factory for 28 years. He first came to a \$200 million retail company and there were 31 stores. Now there are 500 stores in 44 states and Puerto Rico. He said there will be over \$4 billion in sales this year. The company has a good business model with lots of growth. Since 1988 all of the corporate offices have been in the building on Route 130 near the Florence/Burlington border. He said the company has outgrown that facility. They are looking for a place to build their corporate offices and would like to do it in Florence Township. He said they are just now hiring the architects so there are no specifics but they will have them soon. It will be a two to three story glass office building. There will be about 700 employees to start but with the anticipated growth this would continue to grow and more office space would be added as needed. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked about warehousing at the site. Mr. LaPenta said it would only be office space. Member Morris asked about parking. Mr. LaPenta said there would be adequate parking. The hours would primarily be Monday through Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm. There are some employees that might work late or on weekends on occasion, but there is no second shift.

Mr. Stout referred to the informal site rendering. The project is right on the Florence Township line. The current warehouse in Burlington Township will remain. It does have some offices but a majority of office use will be in the new facility. Dulty's Lane currently has a full interchange traffic light so the applicant is proposing developing the site and having a cross agreement between the two properties. There are actually two concurrent applications to the DOT. He said this is unusual but it is a way to get the approval to start construction without being tied up waiting for access approvals. Access will be through Dulty's Lane coming into the site with the main boulevard already designed in the Burlington Township site. The parking will be funneled to the rear. There will be a gymnasium and cafeteria so there will be some loading and unloading for these, but the building is for office use. The parking field is designed for the full build out of 500,000 square feet. There is no footprint yet, but it is approximately 65,000 to 90,000 square feet. That can be two to three floors. The minimum the applicant is coming in with is 180,000 square feet as the base. Everything after that will be future expansion. The footprint that is shown is approximately 125,000 just in footprint. The project is ADA compliant, the sidewalks will be interconnected and the two properties will function as one even though there will be two separate uses. He said from a design standpoint, there will be four retention basins that are required by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The property is a 50 acre tract. The applicant is proposing to keep the front two parcels (labeled B & C) as future development parcels. The Route 130 frontage is prime for retail or other types of uses. There is no plan for development of those parcels at this time. The rear parcel that is about 35 acres is the

parcel that the building will occupy. The access will be a divided boulevard effect. It will be tree lined down the center. The applicant is in the process of getting approvals for this but he said it takes a very long time to get the permission from the DOT. This creates the need to use the Dulty's Lane access. He said at this time there is no landscaping or lighting plan but the applicant is in the design phase. He concluded his informal presentation.

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked if the front parcels were going to be marketed or if they would be used in the future by Burlington Coat Factory. Mr. Stout said they will be owned and maintained by the Burlington Coat Factory. There will be a subdivision dividing the two parcels out. The development plans will show the entire site but only parcel A will be developed. Stormwater will be designed for the entire site. There will be cross access agreements with the current site and the future site. The front parcels will be designed to utilize the Route 130 corridor to enter and exit. All utilities will be run in the center. The mechanical systems will be in the rear of the facility. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked how the building would grow from two to five stories. Mr. Stout said right now they are engineering the building itself. He said the one here this night is conceptual. When the application is filed it will have the pad and the square footage. He said the minimum is going to be 180,000 square feet. If the footprint is 60,000 square feet it would be a three story building. At this time it will not be anything over three stories. There is potential to go higher and they are looking at designing for the possibility of third and fourth stories. The zoning for the site allows five stories. At this point that is not what is being done but the applicant would like to have the option.

Mayor Wilkie said that this site is in the redevelopment area. The planner is developing a redevelopment plan that the Township Council will be reviewing next week. Once it is approved it will be referred to the Planning Board for their comments. The plan is consistent with what is being presented in this application. He said June 20th was a great day in Florence because NFI announced it plans for the Subaru Distribution Center and there was the announcement that the Burlington Coat Factory had been awarded the funding from Grows New Jersey. Part of the condition of the funding is that the applicant has approvals by the end of this year. That is what this timeline represents. He said this timeline was put together with the Coat Factory to tie in with the dates of the Planning Board meetings are. There is a possibility that a special meeting will be required to be sure everything is done before the deadline.

Township Administrator Richard Brook said if all goes well the approvals should be in place by the Board's November meeting. He said at that time the applicant will be looking for completeness, preliminary and final approvals on the same night. The applicant will then need to address the Grows New Jersey requirements. He is not sure if a resolution will be needed for that, and it is possible that it will be approved on the same night. If not, there may need to be a special meeting in December to approve the resolution if it is necessary. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said it is a very energetic schedule and it is going to take hard work on everyone's part to complete it. Administrator Brook concurred and said there will be many informal meetings to be sure there is a good set of plans for the November meeting so there won't be many issues to

iron out. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said she likes the fact that there are no traffic issues because that is in the Burlington section. Member Montgomery asked how many people work at the current location in Burlington. Mr. LaPenta said there are about 650 to 700 employees in the office and another 150 in the distribution center. A good portion of the office employees will move to the new building. None of the distribution employees will move there. There is a 650,000 square foot distribution center in Edgewater Park and there is 120,000 square feet of office space attached. As the company has grown, different divisions have been sent there and they are evaluating what departments will come back into the new facility.

Mayor Wilkie asked if there were any other concerns of the Board. Member Lutz asked if there was any solar component to the project. He was told at this time there is no plan for solar on the ground. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said that office space is a good option. There is no noise.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Wilkie distributed a time line for the former Duffy School. It is part of the Township's COAH obligation. The redeveloper, MEND, is also in the process of applying for grant funds. The timeline for that will be aggressive as well. In March the Township made the decision to move away from the former redeveloper. MEND has a commitment to retain the facility. The previous developer wanted to demolish the building. MEND will try to retain the historic nature of the building. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood stressed the importance of attendance at the upcoming meetings. She asked that members let someone know ahead of time if they will not be able to attend to be sure there will be a full board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Motion of Lutz, seconded by Lovenduski to open the meeting to public comment. Motion unanimously approved by all those present.

Seeing no one wishing to comment motion was made by Lutz, seconded by Montgomery to close the public comment. The Board voted unanimously to close the public portion.

Motion of Lovenduski, seconded by Lutz to adjourn at 8:06 p.m.

Wayne Morris, Secretary

WM/ak