

Florence, New Jersey 08518-2323
November 25, 2014

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:

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood Tim Lutz
Wayne Morris Mayor Craig Wilkie
Councilman Ted Lovenduski James Molimock

ALSO PRESENT: Solicitor David Frank
 Planner Barbara Fegley
 Engineer Chad Gaulrapp

ABSENT: William Federico, Thomas McCue, Ray Montgomery

RESOLUTIONS
None at this time.

MINUTES
It was the Motion of Lutz seconded by Lovenduski to approve as submitted the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 28, 2014. All ayes.

CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Letter from Engineer Dougherty dated November 12, 2014 regarding deed review for Burkhardt subdivision, 715 and 725 Fifth Street, Roebing. Block 113, Lots 2.01 and 2.02.

It was the Motion of Lutz, seconded by Morris to receive and file correspondence A. All ayes.

APPLICATIONS
None at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS

54.

A. Township Resolution No. 2014-165. A resolution of the Township of Florence referring a proposed redevelopment plan for a parcel within the Route 130 Redevelopment Area to the Township of Florence Planning Board, and directing the Planning Board to take certain actions pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7 (f).

Planner Fegley explained after Council passed Resolution No. 2014-165 her office prepared the redevelopment plan dated November 14, 2014. It is for a site designated as Block 155.47 Lot 12.02, located on Cedar Lane north of Cream-O-Land. The property is about 50.39 acres. It is undeveloped and wooded. There is a large drainage easement that causes restrictions for development unless it is relocated.

In 2013 the Township identified a large area as In Need of Redevelopment, and that area included this site. The site is in a general manufacturing district. This plan was prepared and is being reviewed to determine if it is consistent with the township Master Plan. There have been a number of redevelopment plans in the past.

This plan was compared to the Reexamination Report of the Master Plan that was dated August 20, 2007. It was determined that this type of redevelopment was consistent with the Master Plan. The Master Plan noted the imbalance of industrial and commercial type ratables as opposed to housing. The Master Plan talked about the GM Manufacturing District, specifically this parcel and a couple of adjacent parcels. At that time it was recommended the zoning be changed to the Special Manufacturing overlay. The difference is that the SM uses have less noise and odor. The zoning was never changed for the parcels.

The proposed land uses are very similar to the GM District. There are also other uses that would be considered SM, such as research and development facilities and food processing facilities that would be consistent with the Township's ability to treat wastewater generated by the facility. Light manufacturing and fabrication would also be permitted. There are a number of accessory uses that are similar to the General Manufacturing Zoning, except for the addition of solar panels that would serve the facility or having guard houses.

The bulk standards are pretty much the same as in GM except for some minor changes. For accessory structures the distance used to be 50' but in this plan it is 20'. The distance to other buildings was 50' and now is 15' and the coverage was increased to 45% as opposed to 40%.

There were some concerns with the residences so there are building setback lines from Cedar Lane to the parking lots, to Independence Road., to the Turnpike and to Firehouse Lane. There are three basins proposed and there will be adequate buffer from the road to the basins. That was added to the GM. The most significant was the buffer to residential uses. That is currently 50' but would be increased to 100' under this redevelopment plan. The developer would use natural vegetation or supplemental trees and shrubs.

Planner Fegley reviewed the general requirements. Most of it was taken from the requirements for the GM district except for the requirement that truck ingress and egress shall only be from Cedar Lane. Firehouse Lane would only be used for passenger vehicles. It would be for employees only. Any truck traffic would use Independence Road or from Cedar Lane.

Regarding off-street parking, currently it is 1 per 1,000 sq. ft. The redeveloper felt their proposed use should have 1 per 4,000 sq. ft. The developer would need to demonstrate on the site plan that there was enough off-street parking. Another change from the GM is that there will be one space for every 250 ft. of office space.

The off-street loading spaces were usually required to be 15'X40', it was reduced to 12'X40'. Regarding signage, the developer can have a monument sign up to 40 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 6'. There will be one free standing or attached sign. The site is situated on the New Jersey Turnpike. The developer would like to have a larger freestanding sign visible from the turnpike. The plan allows for up to 80' in height, but the redeveloper will be required to perform a visibility study showing the sign face and message will not be visible to the residents in any season of the year. The signs are limited to the owner's name and the logo. Two façade signs would be permitted along with directional signs.

She said there were some miscellaneous items to address. Regarding trees larger than 6", there was discussion regarding this requirement. The site is almost entirely wooded, there is concern about removing the trees but when there is a site of this size and its nature it is not feasible to relocate the trees. A certain buffer will be required.

Sidewalks will be required. They will be placed along Cedar Lane and along Firehouse Lane. There will also be a crosswalk to the other side of Firehouse Lane.

There is no property to be acquired. The property is privately owned. There are no other municipalities contiguous to this site so the relation to neighboring master plans does not apply. As far as the Burlington County Plan, the County does not have a plan but where applicable relies on the 1997 Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Strategic Plan. The plan identified different nodes and this site was identified even it is not right on the Route 130 corridor. It is consistent with the county plan. It is located in close proximity to major roads and railroads including the New Jersey Turnpike, Route 130, Conrail and the Light Rail Line. It is a good location for redevelopment and for economic use. It is consistent with the State Redevelopment and Development Plan recognizing that it will target economic growth in areas that are situated in proximity to available utilities, roads and infrastructures. It also demonstrates effective planning for vibrant regions and tactical alignment of government resources. It is development in an area that is suitable for redevelopment.

As far as the relationship to the Municipal Land Use Law, it encourages developing areas that promote public health, safety, morals and general welfare. It encourages redevelopment.

The last component is the affordable housing provision. Right now the township does not know the status of the Council on Affordable Housing. The developer will need to meet the requirements of any future legislation is passed.

There are three different plans in the Appendix C. She though it would be appropriate for the potential developer to explain the different plans.

Solicitor Frank asked for the record did Planner Fegley, as a professional planner, believe that this plan is fundamentally consistent with the Township Master Plan vision for redevelopment. Planner Fegley confirmed that she believed it is.

Member Lutz asked if this was out of the realm of how the Planning Board operates. He felt he was being asked to give an informal hearing, the board is discussing potential layout and usage but he learned at a class that the board is not supposed to have any information prior to a real application. Solicitor Frank said the board was operating under a different authority than its usual Municipal Land Use Law authority. The board is operating under the redevelopment law. Under that law, the governing body can direct the planning board to develop a redevelopment plan for a specific parcel or area that has been determined to be "In Need of Redevelopment." That was received through council Resolution No. 2014-165. In this instance there have been ongoing talks between the township administration and a potential redeveloper for this property. In conjunction with the redeveloper a redevelopment plan was created that could effectuate the vision for this property. It describes not just the vision but also the rules of the game. If they ended up not being the redeveloper or wanted to do something else, the rules are in place. It is like creating a zone for that zone. The reason for the specific proposal included is because the redevelopment law allows the township to work with a developer that closely to develop that plan. Municipal Land Use Law does not allow that. The Redevelopment Law permits a wide range of things that ordinarily could not be done by the Planning Board. The board is being asked to look at the proposal and either confirm in whole or in part that the vision is consistent with the Master Plan and whether it should be recommended to the governing body as the redevelopment plan for this location. It is not site plan review. Once the plan is adopted there will be an application submitted under the Municipal Land Use.

Mayor Wilkie said about thirty years ago the site had a number of warehouses approved. The one that Cream-O-Land now occupies was the first warehouse to be built, sometime in the mid-80's. There were supposed to be seven or ten more but it didn't happen. The township knew this was supposed to be a warehouse type area and that is one of the reasons Council sent the redevelopment plan to the Planning Board.

Vincent Pallozzi, an attorney with Eckert, Seamans, Charron and Mellow said the firm is representing the owner of the property, Liberty Venture One LB. He introduced Mark Goldstein and Jim Sunday, officers of the company. They were on hand to answer any questions about the company itself or its vision for the property. He then introduced Thomas Bechard, Jr., President of Mohawk Land Development Consultants. He is the

company's professional engineer. He will present the renderings of what the developer would like to do with the property. All were sworn in by Solicitor Frank and accepted as qualified.

Mr. Bechard explained there are three different options, each with three different phases. The only change on each of the plans is the third phase. The site is currently wooded and there is an existing county easement that runs through the center of the property. The developer has been meeting with the county and the county is willing to relinquish the easement. The developer would take responsibility of stormwater management. There have also been discussions about the intersection of Cedar Lane and Railroad Avenue. The county asked the developer to make improvements to the intersection and the developer agreed to do so. The developer will be paying for it and the county will do the design.

He presented a rendering of Option A. Phase 1 is a building that is 432,000 sq. ft. There will be two drive-in loading docks, 119 loading docks, 202 car parking spaces and 92 trailer parking spaces. The tractor trailer loading would be on the north and south sides of the building. The car parking will be on the west side. In all the scenarios there is a 100' natural buffer along Firehouse Lane to shield the existing residential developments. The plan is very residential-friendly because all of the trucks will come from Independence Road on Cedar Lane and will not be coming down Firehouse Lane into the driveway. Cars will be coming down Firehouse Lane and parking in the car parking lot on the west side of the building and in a small lot on the north side of the building. Also included in Phase I is all of the stormwater management infrastructure for the site. The developer will put all of the basins in for the full build out during the first phase. The two driveways will be part of Phase I. Phase II is an extension of the building, a loading area and a parking lot. Phase I and II will actually be one building. Phase II will be 201,600 sq. ft. There will 2 drive-in loading docks, 52 loading docks, 141 car parking spaces and 25 trailer spaces. The trailer loading and unloading will be on the north and south sides of the building, the car parking will be on the east side of the building and there will be a small lot on the south side of the building.

Phase III, Option A would be a third building. It is really a second building but the developer is calling it building three because of the two previous phases. The building would be 136,080 sq. ft. It will have two drive-in loading docks, 35 loading docks, 117 car parking spaces and 12 trailer spaces. The trailer spaces are on the south side of the building. Loading will only be in the rear of the building and car parking will be on the north side of the building between Cedar Lane and the building. There will also be a new driveway entrance with this phase coming off Cedar Lane.

Member Lutz asked about the placement of the billboard sign. Mr. Bechard said it will be near the turnpike but the developer needs to do some research to determine the thickness and height of the existing trees along the turnpike. Solicitor Frank noted for the record that all of the renderings are attachments to the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Bechard said the buffering along Firehouse Lane will be 100' from the property line. There will be more buffering because there is additional area to the road. There will be a 100' natural buffer and the only break will be for the driveway. The developer plans to maintain the existing buffer, nothing will be taken out. It is a very substantial buffer and does a very good job. Mr. Palozzi expanded on the description. There would be a basin, then trees, then road then residences. Mr. Bechard said if you a resident living across Firehouse Lane, there is 100' of trees, then there is the basin that is 50' up to 200' then there is a car parking lot before you actually see the building. There is quite a buffer.

Member Lutz asked about the sidewalk. Planner Fegley said it will be on the side of the street where the firehouse is. He inquired who would be responsible for maintaining it. The fire district would most likely maintain it.

Mr. Bechard said the next plan is Option B. There are also three phases with this plan. It is identical to the other plan with the exception of the area on Cedar Lane. Liberty would like to have the maximum flexibility to market the property. They have looked at all the different types of uses that could go into the building. One would be a very high car parking use. This option showed what it would look like if there was a user with a high car parking demand. There would be 726 car parking spaces and there would be a driveway entrance off Cedar Lane. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked if the parking was for employees. Mr. Bechard confirmed that it was.

Option C is again identical to the others with the exception of the area near Cedar Lane. Instead of a building or car parking there would be tractor trailer storage and a staging area. This would allow for 188 trailer spaces. There would be a driveway off Cedar Lane.

Mr. Bechard said he didn't know if anyone had seen any Liberty Property Trust properties, but they do a phenomenal job of landscaping and property maintenance. Along Cedar Lane there would be landscaping berms. Mr. Sunday said the landscaping is something to be explored because there might be an opportunity to use the natural buffer and once the project gets started there would be a large amount of topsoil generated. The landscaping is something that is still not decided. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood noted that the landscaping was something that would be more of a site plan review issue.

Mr. Bechard said regarding the circulation of the site, for all three plans the truck traffic will be coming in on Independence Road. There will be a driveway for cars and trucks but in no case will there be trucks coming down Firehouse Lane. Member Lovenduski asked if there was an increased buffer for Option C. Mr. Bechard confirmed there is a buffer of 101.5'. Member Morris asked if there had been any traffic studies. He speculated there could be an adverse effect to the intersection on Route 130. Mr. Bechard said there will be traffic studies done for all three options and they will be analyzed to see if there would need to be any improvements required on Cedar Lane. Preliminarily he doesn't believe there would be because Independence Road was designed for fairly heavy duty traffic and it was anticipated for that type. There are turn

lanes already incorporated. Member Morris said the traffic he is concerned with was the volume of trucks getting to the major roads. Mr. Bechard said that was part of the discussion with the county. They had the same concerns. The county is proposing a round-about at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Cedar Lane. It would handle more than what the site would generate. Member Morris said his concern was with the intersection of Cedar Lane and Route 130. Mr. Bechard said that a traffic study would be done prior to them coming for Planning Board approval.

Mayor Wilkie said with the previous developer the county notified them how much money they had to provide for certain improvements. He speculated that could be the case with the new developer.

Solicitor Frank said the board's charge is to give its opinion of the redevelopment plan so the general parameters are embodied in some of the conceptual drawings. They are not the only result that could come from the plan. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said speaking for herself and not the board, the concept of having a warehouse type commercial is what she thought the site should have. She did not expect something of this magnitude. Those conversations would be more appropriate during the site plan review. Solicitor Frank said the way the board controls the intensity of land use is by the general parameters that are described in the bulk standards in the Redevelopment Plan. They are only slightly more intense than what the underlying zoning is currently. There is a 5% increase in building coverage. Planner Fegley said this was very similar to the current GM zoning district. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood expressed concern with the Route 130 intersection. Currently anyone who takes their children to the high school waits at the intersection for two or three traffic lights. The other intersection at Delaware Avenue is worse. She agreed it is GM, but most of the other GM is not "in town." It will have an impact. The development is necessary and commercial is needed but she is concerned with the intensity.

Solicitor Frank said the Master Plan is already essentially calling for something like this to be there. As a Planning Board, when an application meets the standards of the ordinance it is not allowed to deny. If someone came in with an as of right plan for something that was only slightly less intense than this the board would be obliged to approve it, and the board would not be able to look at the intersections. In the redevelopment context, the Master Plan and existing ordinances are the base. The board is looking at the shaping of them that is done in this particular plan. The scope is somewhat broader.

Mayor Wilkie said he met with the county Economic Development Director and explained the concerns with the intersections on Route 130. The Director said he would have the intersections studied by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to have them redesigned, taking into consideration not only this development but also the interests in the A&P Warehouse site. There has been work going on. Ready Pac has expressed an interest to do work on Railroad Avenue. It comes down to funding. It isn't clear if the funding would come from the developer.

Solicitor Frank said with assistance from the developer's attorney, a resolution was drafted. He gave everyone a chance to review the resolution. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked if the board had any authority to choose one of the options presented. Solicitor Frank said that was possible. Member Lutz said he liked the first option. He said he didn't care for the third one with truck parking.

Mayor Wilkie asked why the trailer storage would be needed. Mr. Goldstein from Liberty Property Trust said his company tends to build very high-end buildings. They do that to attract "Triple A" tenants. He concentrates on the turnpike corridor. The difference between bringing a tenant to location "A" instead of location "B" more often times than not is the availability of trailer storage. He said many of the warehouses in the Haines Center have hundreds of trailer storage spaces. The company has been working with the township and created greater setbacks. Second to location, trailer storage has become paramount. There is so much coming to warehouses and being sold on the internet that trailer storage has become crucial. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked if trailer storage meant just lining up trailers that will sit for 20 years and rust or would the trailers be coming in and out. Mr. Goldstein said the trailers would not sit for long periods of time. Mayor Wilkie asked if there would be less of a traffic impact on Route 130 if there was trailer storage at the site. Mr. Goldstein said there would not be as much truck traffic going in and out.

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood said she had a concern about the option with 700 car parking spots. She felt 700 people coming in and out was too much. Mayor Wilkie said if there are too many cars, the scheduling would need to be adjusted to fit around the high school start times. Mr. Goldstein said it was a "Catch 22" that the biggest job generators produce a lot of traffic. Mayor Wilkie said hopefully adjustments to the intersections would address the concerns. He asked if based on the comments, were there still any concerns regarding Option C. There were no further objections.

It was the Motion of Wilkie, seconded by Lovenduski to approve Resolution No. 2014-14.

Member Morris asked if the Motion was to approve as is or was there an option being removed. He wanted Option B removed. Mayor Wilkie said his concern is that he would like to see the property developed and he would not want to put a hamstring on it. The intersections would have to be addressed. Member Morris asked if any plan presented would be subject to traffic studies. Mayor Wilkie confirmed that anything presented would require traffic studies.

Upon roll call the Board voted as follows:

AYES: Hamilton-Wood, Lutz, Morris, Lovendusky, Wilkie
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

61.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was the Motion of Morris, seconded by Lovenduski, to open the meeting to the public. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Lovenduski, seconded by Morris to close public comments. All ayes.

Mayor Wilkie said the board will need a Conflict Engineer when Liberty Property Trust submits it application. He noted who submitted RFP's for the position for next year. He suggested a subcommittee of the board interview them and make a recommendation on this.

He asked for a closed session excluding the professionals for the board to discuss the professionals for next year.

Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked when the subcommittee needed to have a recommendation. She thought it would be fairly quickly and this was a busy time of year. Mayor Wilkie said it would need to be done quickly because there could be an application for the January meeting. Chairperson Hamilton-Wood asked how many should be on the subcommittee. Solicitor Frank advised there could be no more than three. The committee volunteers were Member Morris, Chairperson Hamilton-Wood and Member Lutz.

It was the Motion of Wilkie, seconded by Morris, to enter into closed session at 8:34. All ayes.

Motion of Montgomery, seconded by Lovenduski to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Wayne Morris, Secretary

WM/ak