

Florence, New Jersey 08518-2323
March 25, 2025

The regular meeting of the Florence Township Planning Board was held in-person and virtually via Zoom on the above date at the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, NJ. Chairman Pagano called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Secretary Fratinardo 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 to the official newspapers and posted in the main hall of the Municipal Complex."

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

Councilman John Fratinardo	Fred Gabriele
Bernard Isaacson	Mayor Kristan Marter
Carl Mattson (virtual)	Chairman John Pagano
Kecia Taylor (virtual)	Newell Kehr

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Solicitor David Frank, Engineer Hugh Dougherty, Planner Ed Fox

RESOLUTIONS

There were no resolutions.

MINUTES

It was the Motion of Mr. Gabriele, seconded by Mr. Isaacson to adopt the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 25, 2025. Motion unanimously approved by all members present. Mayor Marter abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Letter from Pennoni 1200 John Galt Way, Block 158, Lot 7 Compliance Review

Engineer Dougherty said that the Board heard this application for Phase 2. It was previously approved in 2024. The applicant submitted a set of compliance plans which reflects what the board wanted and what was in Engineer Dougherty's review letter.

Motion by Mr. Kehr, seconded by Mayor Marter to receive and file the correspondence. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

B. Letter to Planning Board from Township Administrator re: Climate Change Assessment

There is going to be a public meeting on April 10, 2025. Mayor Marter said it is going to be held in Burlington Township. Planner Fox said his firm is working on the analysis for this.

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Motion by Mayor Mater, seconded by Mr. Kehr to receive and file the correspondence. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

C. Letter from PSEG re: Application for Flood Hazard Permit

Engineer Dougherty said this is a notice to the township that PSEG has applied for this permit through the DEP for herbicides. It is important that the area of vegetation under the high-tension wires is kept clear for maintenance.

Motion by Mr. Isaacson, seconded by Mr. Gabriele to receive and file the correspondence. Motion unanimously approved by all members present

D. Letter from Trap Rock Industries

Planner Fox is also the Board Planner for Mansfield Twp where this site is located. He explained that Florence Township is being notified of the changes because of the shared boundary at Crafts Creek. The application for Trap Rock is to replace the existing asphalt plant, the facility will be bagged so it will not spread dust into the area and will be about 50% more energy efficient. The plant is going to be slightly further away from Route 130 which means it will be slightly closer to Florence Township by about 50 feet. This application was approved by the Land Use Board in Mansfeld Township.

Motion by Mr. Kehr, seconded by Mr. Isaacson to receive and file the correspondence. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

E. Administrative Approval Review Letter from Pennoni re: 900 Richards Run

Solicitor Frank stated that when projects begin construction, some minor changes might need to be made which is frequently done administratively by the Board or Township Engineer. The point of this letter is to inform that the change has been made administratively.

Engineer Dougherty said that they will submit plans that reflect the changes.

Motion by Mr. Gabriele, seconded by Mr. Kehr to receive and file the correspondence. Motion unanimously approved by all members present

APPLICATIONS

There were no applications.

NEW BUSINESS

A. 61 Cathy Lane Redevelopment Plan, Township Resolution 2025-78 for Review & Comment

The Planning Board is reviewing this Redevelopment Plan to determine if it is consistent with the Florence Township Master Plan.

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Planner Fox was sworn in by Solicitor Frank. Planner Fox's firm put together the Redevelopment Plan for the Township. The Plan involves two lots and one of the lots has minimal frontage on Route 130, both lots are situated between Cathy Lane and the NJ Turnpike.

The proposed redevelopment plan ordinance was introduced at the Township Council and the Planning Board was asked to determine if the Plan is consistent with the Master Plan. Some of the permitted uses in this plan are already in the Highway Commercial zone but it adds some other uses as well such as General Freight Trucking. It is a trucking service, not a warehouse service. This allows a business that has tractor trailers that go across the region. They are serviced at this site but not heavy engine repair. There are no warehouse uses and no product being brought to this site. There is also a conditional use of hotels and motels that are already permitted in the Highway Commercial zone.

This Plan was put together with consultation with the Township Administrator, Township staff, the property owner and their professionals because the use is not permitted in the Highway Commercial zone. There was an application at the Zoning Board for a Use Variance last year but it was adjourned while they looked into the Redevelopment Plan option.

No equipment, products, waste or equipment will be stored or displayed outside. There will be landscaping and buffering outside of the site because of the adjacent residential uses. These uses will comply with the State Air Pollution and Noise Control ordinances.

This property was already recommended to be re-zoned as Highway Commercial-- it was initially in the Special Manufacturing Zone where this use would have been permitted. The concern was that the Township did not want to have anymore warehouse uses.

Chairman Pagano stated that during the Master Plan re-examination, the Special Manufacturing zone was removed from this area to prevent tractor trailer traffic. Planner Fox said that since the Master Plan recommends that it be a Highway Commercial Zone, then this Redevelopment Plan is inconsistent with the Master Plan, however this area has not developed commercially as other areas in town have. This site is difficult to develop and hard to access for commercial uses.

Mayor Marter asked what is the current use of the property. Planner Fox said it is currently being used as a trucking facility by the current owner.

The current owner plans on improving the circulation of the area and has the opportunity to improve the site.

Solicitor Frank said that the current operation has a history with the Zoning Board. Prior to this use, the properties were being used as an industrial roofing contractor. The building is 15,000sf that half was used for the roofing material storage and the other half was used for storing the equipment and vehicles. This site was used as primarily an industrial site. The current owner then started using it as the current use. The Zoning Officer was alerted to the fact that there is a use there without site plan approval or use approval. The response of the enforcement was for the owner to come before the Zoning Board a year ago for a use variance. During the hearing, it became clear that there were opportunities for the Governing Body to implement a Redevelopment Plan as opposed to a use variance. The Redevelopment Plan would do a better job of improving

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the site and protecting the public than a Use Variance. The Zoning Board application for the Use Variance is currently on hold pending the outcome of the Planning Board's decision. If the Plan doesn't make it through now, then the application will go back to the Zoning Board to seek the Use Variance.

Planner Fox addressed some of Mr. Gabriele's concerns about the current traffic patterns in that area and said this proposed development would require NJDOT approval to widen Cathy Lane as well as make sure that the median cannot be crossed illegally. Also, Planner Fox said that the truck companies don't drive during rush hour due to the traffic.

Mayor Marter pointed out that trucks are currently using Cathy Lane to access the building without it being widened. Planner Fox said that the NJDOT would require the developer to widen Cathy Lane so that trucks can turn on and off of Route 130. Mayor Marter attended a recent meeting regarding the new NJ/PA turnpike bridge project and eventually, the Turnpike wants to create a new exit lane from the Turnpike to 130 which would affect the frontage of the property there.

Planner Fox confirmed that the approval of the redevelopment plan, the property owner would expand the use and create more space for trucks. Planner Fox also added this this plan is a non-condemnation redevelopment plan which means that it cannot take people's property.

Chairman Pagano stated that the reason the zoning was changed from Special Manufacturing to Highway Commercial for a reason which was to avoid more truck traffic. Solicitor Frank said that this area was developed for industrial activities, there are other uses allowed but it is not probable that the property would be used for any other use.

If the Redevelopment Plan is not approved, then it is likely that this application or another applicant would end up back at the Zoning Board for another similar Use Variance. Solicitor Frank said that a Redevelopment Plan is useful because it's a contract between the property owner and the Township. The redevelopment agreement can outline all the requirements such as restricting backup noises from the trucks and the town also has the authority to require a monthly report which indicates that the fleet meets that standard. That is not something that can be handled under the Zoning Board alone.

Mr. Mattson asked if the Zoning Board deny if it were to end up back at the Zoning Board while the Planning Board already voted that it is inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Solicitor Frank said that the obligation of the Zoning Board when there is a D1 Use Variance is to address the positive and negative criteria for granting the Use Variance. The positive criteria is required to find that the site is suited to the Use. The Master Plan is not taken into consideration as much as it is at the Planning Board.

Solicitor Frank pointed out that the Planning Board is not obligated to hear from the public regarding a redevelopment plan but Florence Township has always been accommodating and welcome comments from anyone in the public.

A Motion was made by Councilman Fratinardo, seconded by Mr. Kehr to open the meeting to the public. Motion was unanimously approved by all members present.

Peter Stricker 606 East Sixth Street, Florence asked what the exact use is going to be on this property. Planner Fox answered that it is General Freight operation. This location will be the headquarters of a trucking company. There is an existing house that is going to be improved to be an office and there is a large building in the back which will handle some repairs. Mr. Stricker stated that he doesn't believe this should be allowed with the narrowness of Cathy Lane. Mr. Stricker is concerned about the changes and requirements not being enforced.

Pamela Mueller 42 West Broad St Palmyra is attending the meeting to speak about 50 Cathy Lane which she co-owns with her brother. Ms. Mueller is the executor of her mother's will.

Ms. Mueller said that when she went to the Zoning Board last year for the initial hearing regarding 61 Cathy Lane, they showed videos of trucks going in and out of Cathy Lane at all hours of the night and day. Her house on Cathy Lane is right across from this property and she doesn't feel like it is possible to buffer any noises since it is so close. The trucks are currently being illegally parked and have been for some time. Ms. Mueller said she was at her property for two hours earlier in the evening and she thinks she saw around twenty trucks going up and down Cathy Lane.

She is concerned that ten feet from each side of the residential homes' properties will be taken in order to widen the street for the truck access. Planner Fox asked Engineer Dougherty that if street right of way is thirty feet and requirement is fifty feet then the developer would have to buy all that property. Engineer Dougherty said that it is already a fifty foot right of way for Cathy Lane because. The township does own the fifty foot right of way.

Ms. Mueller also asked if the township was to take the right of way, if the residents are required to be noticed. Engineer Dougherty said that a contractor would be hired on behalf of the township, and the contractor would most likely give notice to the residents. Councilman Fratinardo said that requiring notice is something that can be added to the redevelopment agreement.

A Motion was made by Mr. Kehr and seconded by Councilman Fratinardo to close the public comments. Motion was unanimously approved by all members present.

Councilman Fratinardo said he would like to take some recommendations to offer to the redevelopment agreement. Planner Fox said suggested that it should be noted that it is consistent with the Master Plan because the Master Plan was specifically changed this lot to remove the Special Manufacturing overlay to make it Highway Commercial.

A Motion was made by Councilman Fratinardo, and seconded by Mr. Mattson that the Redevelopment Plan is inconsistent with the Master Plan. Upon Roll Call the Board voted as follows:

YES: Councilman Fratinardo, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Gabriele, Mr. Isaacson, Mr. Kehr, Mayor Marter, Chairman Pagano

NO: None

Motion Carries

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The Board can request that Solicitor Frank make some recommendations to Council if Council does approve the plan. Councilman Fratinaro requested that it be required that the developer installs a barrier on Route 130 to prevent trucks from making illegal left turns on to Route 130 South.

This plan outlines the changes to be presented to the Planning Board but there is also the Redevelopment Agreement where there can be recommendations made to Council should they approve the plan. This way the Planning Board can request certain things for the developer which is contractually enforceable. Some of these items are a conceptual site plan for a traffic study as well as to show parking, operational projections, a barrier, a comparison of this use and a commercial use in that location, required notice to the residents if/when construction is starting adapted backup alarms and buffering.

A Motion was made by Mr. Gabriele, seconded by Mr. Isaacson to authorize Solicitor Frank to issue a letter to Council outlining these requests/recommendations. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Public Meeting about the NJ/PA Turnpike Delaware River Bridge Project

Mr. Isaacson attended a recent public meeting regarding the NJ/PA Delaware River Bridge Project. Their plan stops prior the exit for Route 130. Mayor Marter also said there is a link for anyone to make a comment on the plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was the Motion of Councilman Fratinaro, seconded by Mr. Kehr to open the meeting for public comment on any item. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

Seeing and hearing no one wishing to speak, it was the Motion of Councilman Fratinaro, seconded by Mr. Gabriele to close public comment. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Councilman Fratinaro, seconded by Mr. Kehr to adjourn the meeting at 9:57PM, which was unanimously approved by all members present.

John Fratinaro, Secretary

JF/ah