MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD
TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM
OCTOBER 5, 2020

Mr. Franko called the Regular Meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:32 P.M.

Adequate notice of the meetings of the Planning Board of the Township of Chatham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice in the form of a Resolution setting forth the schedule of meetings for the year 2020, and January, 2021 was published in the *Chatham Courier* and the *Morris County Daily Record*, a copy was filed with the Municipal Clerk and a copy was placed on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building.

Oaths of Office

Mrs. Abbott and Mr. Choi were both sworn in as alternate members of the Planning Board. The oath was administered by Ms. Wolfe.

Roll Call

Answering present to the roll call were Mr. Franko, Mr. Nelson, Mrs. Ozdemir, Ms. Hagner, Mrs. Ewald, Mr. Hoffmann, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Sheth, Mrs. Abbott and Mr. Choi.

Mr. Coviello arrived late.

Also present were Township Planner Frank Banisch, Engineer John Ruschke, and Attorney Amanda Wolfe in place of Board Attorney Steve Warner.

Mr. Coviello was sworn in as a Class IV member of the Planning Board.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Nelson moved to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2020 meeting. Mr. Sheth seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with an abstention by Ms. Hagner.

Ms. Hagner asked if a Planning Board member has been appointed to serve on the Environmental Commission. Mr. Coviello said that he was appointed to serve on the Environmental Commission. Ms. Hagner also asked if Mrs. Abbott and Mr. Choi were appointed by the Township Committee. Mr. LaConte said that the appointments are mayoral appointments, and were announced at the last Township Committee meeting.

Master Plan Consistency Review – Ordinance 2020-17

Ms. Wolfe said that there were some inconsistencies in Ordinance 2020-16, which was tabled by the Township Committee and reintroduced as Ordinance 2020-17 with the errors corrected.

Mr. Banisch reported that the topic was previously discussed, and the updated memo was adjusted for the dates and ordinance number.

Mr. Banisch further reported that the proposed Redevelopment Plan is inconsistent with the Master Plan, because the Land Use Plan lists the subject area as a commercial zone rather than residential. However, the Redevelopment Plan advances the goals and objectives of the Land Use Plan and the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. Mr. Banisch said that the new development would blend into the landscape, harmonize with the neighborhood and enhance the quality of life of Township residents. Mr. Banisch also stated that the intent of the ordinance is to advance the goals of balanced housing and meeting the Township's Constitutional Mandate to provide Affordable Housing. Although the Redevelopment Plan is inconsistent with the current zoning for 522 Southern Boulevard, Mr. Banisch recommended that the Planning Board recommend the adoption of Ordinance 2020-17 because it advances the aforementioned goals.

Ms. Hagner asked about the structure being four stories or three stories. Mr. Banisch confirmed that the current draft is for three stories. Ms. Hagner also asked about allowing a commercial use at the location. Mr. Banisch said that references to a commercial use were eliminated at the request of the Township Committee. Ms. Hagner said that she would like the Board to consider recommending that the commercial use be added back into the Plan.

Mr. Kelly said that if the Planning Board has a strong enough desire for a fourth story with a commercial component, that should be communicated back to the Township Committee. Mr. Banisch said that the commercial use would make the Redevelopment Plan more consistent with the Master Plan. Mrs. Ewald said that the Township Committee objected to four stories. She said that the Township Attorney also indicated that the plan can be amended. Mr. Sheth asked why there was an objection to four stories. Mrs. Ewald said that there was consideration to be consistent with other development in the Township.

A straw poll was conducted as to whether the Board wished to recommend the addition of commercial space in the Redevelopment Plan. There were seven aye votes and two nay votes. The Board opted not to make a recommendation on the number of stories.

Mr. Banisch was sworn in to give testimony, and confirmed that everything he said is true.

Mrs. Abbott asked about the statewide trend to have mixed use developments. Mr. Banisch said that the State does have plans for more mixed use development, and people are increasingly moving into mixed use housing.

Mr. Franko opened the floor to the public to make comments. He also opened the floor for the public to comment on the resolution.
Seeing no public comment, Mr. Franko closed the floor to the public.

Mr. Nelson moved to adopt the resolution to adopt the memorandum prepared by Mr. Banisch with the amendment regarding commercial space. Mr. Coviello seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Mr. Franko, Aye; Mr. Nelson, Aye; Mrs. Ozdemir, Aye; Mr. Coviello, Aye; Mrs. Ewald, Aye; Ms. Hagner, Aye; Mr. Hoffmann, Aye; Mr. Kelly, Aye; Mr. Sheth, Aye; Mrs. Abbott, Abstain; Mr. Choi, Abstain.

Mr. LaConte asked Mr. Banisch to work with the Township Attorney on a Reasons Resolution.

Discussion

Update on Proposed Revisions to Circulation Element of Master Plan

Mr. Franko said that some revisions and updates to the Master Plan are needed. The Open Space Plan in particular needs to be updated in order for the Township to remain eligible for grants. Mr. Franko further noted that a subcommittee consisting of himself, Mr. Hoffmann and Mr. Banisch would review the updates before the matter comes before the whole Planning Board.

Mr. Banisch said that the Circulation Element has been discussed by the Board in the past. He also said that a draft Open Space Plan has been received, and the subcommittee will review the draft before the Board considers the updates. Mr. Hoffmann noted that the subcommittee has not yet had a chance to meet.

Ms. Hagner asked if the Open Space Committee were for amendments to be made. Mr. Ruschke said that the Open Space Committee has been asked to review the draft before the Planning Board reviews the updates.

Mr. Hoffmann said that he will review the draft Open Space Plan from a grant writing perspective. Mr. Franko asked for a progress report at the next Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Franko asked Mr. Banisch and Mr. Hoffmann to have a conference call to review the Circulation Plan. Ms. Hagner noted that former Board member Jack Hurring had shared comprehensive updates a few years ago, which was reviewed by the Board. Mr. Franko said that maps were to be updated, and Ms. Hagner added that traffic data needs to be updated.

Mr. Ruschke said that the Master Plan will guide the prioritization for grant applications, which is part of the reason why updates are warranted.

Ms. Hagner asked if there will be a public hearing at the next meeting. Mr. Franko said that the Board should review the draft before a public hearing is held.

Mr. Coviello moved to adjourn at 8:18 PM. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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Gregory J. LaConte
Planning Board Recording Secretary