

MINUTES

JULY 14, 2015

PLANNING BOARD

LONG HILL TOWNSHIP

CALL TO ORDER AND STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Chairman Pfeil called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. He then read the following statement: Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by posting a copy of the public meeting dates on the municipal bulletin board, by sending a copy to the Courier News and Echoes-Sentinel and by filing a copy with the Municipal Clerk, all in January 2015.

MEETING CUT-OFF

Chairman Pfeil read the following statement: Announcement is made that as a matter of procedure, it is the intention of the Planning Board not to continue any matter past 10:30 p.m. at any Regular or Special Meeting of the Board unless a motion is passed by the members present to extend the meeting to a later specified cut-off time.

CELL PHONES AND PAGERS

Chairman Pfeil read the following statement: All in attendance are requested to turn off cell phones and pagers as they interfere with the court room taping mechanism.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

On a call of the roll, the following were Present:

Excused:

J. Alan Pfeil, Chairman
Charles Arentowicz, Member*
Gregory Aroneo, Member (8:05 P.M.)
Ashish Moholkar, Member
Guy Roshto, Member
Timothy Wallisch, Member

Brendan Rae, Mayor
David Hands, Member
Guy Piserchia, Member

Kevin O'Brien, Board Planner
Cynthia Kiefer, Board Secretary

Thomas Lemanowicz, Bd. Engr.
Daniel Bernstein, Bd. Attny.

*The Oath of Office was administered to Mr. Arentowicz prior to the start of the meeting.

Ms. Kiefer advised Chairman Pfeil that he had a quorum and could proceed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – It was determined that there was no need to hold an executive session.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chairman Pfeil requested a moment of silence in memory of Suzanne Dapkins and the service she gave to the Township and to this Board.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Roshto nominated Mr. Arentowicz for the position of Vice Chairman. Mr. Wallisch seconded the motion. After hearing no further nominations, Chairman Pfeil asked for a **ROLL CALL VOTE**. Those in Favor: Mr. Arentowicz, Mr. Moholkar, Mr. Roshto, Mr. Wallisch, Chairman Pfeil. Those Opposed: NONE. Mr. Arentowicz was elected Vice Chairman by unanimous vote.

Chairman Pfeil asked Mr. Arentowicz if he would care to volunteer for the Administrative Site Plan Waiver Committee. Mr. Arentowicz agreed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Wallisch moved approval of the minutes of the April 14, 2015 meeting as written. Chairman Pfeil seconded the motion. A **ROLL CALL VOTE** was taken. Those in Favor: Mr. Roshto, Mr. Wallisch, Chairman Pfeil. Those Opposed: NONE. The minutes of April 14, 2015 were approved unanimously as written. Mr. Arentowicz and Mr. Moholkar were ineligible to vote since they were not present at that meeting.

Mr. Moholkar moved approval of the minutes of the May 12, 2015 meeting as written. Chairman Pfeil seconded the motion. A **ROLL CALL VOTE** was taken. Those in Favor: Mr. Moholkar, Mr. Roshto, Mr. Wallisch, Chairman Pfeil. Those Opposed: NONE. The minutes of May 12th 2015 were approved unanimously as written. Mr. Arentowicz was ineligible to vote since he was not present at that meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTION OR COMMENT PERIOD

Hearing none from the public, Chairman Pfeil moved to the next item on the agenda.

DOWNTOWN VALLEY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT ELEMENT (draft)

Chairman Pfeil noted that this element had come from the Master Plan Committee (MPC). He hoped to move this to a public meeting for their input. If there were any comments or questions from the board members, it would have to go back to the MPC.

Chairman Pfeil said that on the first page, Mr. O'Brien had highlighted a comment in terms of the element's name. The committee had a number of different options but that was the name the committee members settled on according to Mr. Roshto.

Mr. Arentowicz said that based on the recommendation from the committee, he did not have a problem with the name.

Mr. Arentowicz referred to page 4, Item #7. After reviewing some of the working documents pulled together by the MPC which were basically the maps of the hundred year and the floodway, he questioned whether more lots in the Downtown District should be added to the Conservation Zone. He noted that 11 lots had been purchased by the county, township and state with various funds because of flooding.

Mr. Roshto noted that he was the only member from the MPC that was present that evening and he did not want to speak *for* them however he was unsure as to whether the MPC should be the entity to answer that question. When the committee members looked at it holistically, they felt that because it was such a bad area, it should be part of the C Zone. They did not see any other areas that weren't already covered in some other aspect such as wetlands, for example. They felt comfortable that those were the only ones that needed to be included in the C Zone. If there were others that the Planning Board or Mr. O'Brien felt should be considered, it would be discussed.

Chairman Pfeil said that those were the two properties that were in very bad shape.

Mr. Arentowicz agreed that that area experienced a lot of flooding.

Mr. O'Brien added that there were buildings there that had not been touched for several years.

Mr. Arentowicz asked Mr. O'Brien if there were any other lots that he would suggest adding to the C Zone.

Mr. O'Brien responded that he did not know which properties were being purchased by the township and therefore he did not know how that would affect Valley Road.

There was discussion among the board members. It was decided it was not necessary to add Blue Acres properties to a conservation zone as they were purchased because nothing could be done with them anyway regardless of how they were zoned.

Mr. Arentowicz said that he was comfortable if based upon what happened to each property, it could be added.

Mr. Arentowicz then questioned Item #9 on the same page. He asked Mr. Roshto to list the uses that the committee was looking at to ensure that business was encouraged in that zone.

Mr. Roshto said that he did not recall specifically which ones they were. When the prohibited uses were reviewed, they saw some that might make sense for the downtown area based on this Master Plan. When the ordinances are rewritten, the MPC would advise that the prohibited uses list be reviewed to see if any of them should be changed.

Chairman Pfeil said that in parallel with this element, the MPC also worked on fine-tuning the list of prohibited uses which would come to the board later. He offered to share this list with the Planning Board. The board did not need to have that list in front of them in order to move forward on this element.

Mr. Arentowicz moved to Section 2, Item #1 and asked who would pay for things such as benches. Would it be the property owner, the business on the property or the township?

Mr. O'Brien responded that it could be any of those. If the property came before one of the boards, during a review of the application the consultants would point out to the applicant that the Master Plan called for some public space and a public gathering area and they would be encouraged to put such a place on the property. On township owned property, the township would have the ability to put benches or other amenities in place. He felt that the committee envisioned that it would be a dual effort, both private and public.

Mr. Arentowicz moved to Section 4, Item#1, "... and other appropriate flood remediation practices..." He asked what they would be. He noted that the Board Engineer, Mr. Lemanowicz was not present at the meeting that evening however he encouraged whatever needed to be done to mitigate the flooding. It would be beneficial to all the residents of the township.

Mr. Arentowicz moved to Section 5, Item #1, "Connect Bay Street to Plainfield Avenue..." He asked if it was a walkway or a bicycle trail.

Mr. Roshto responded that various alternatives were discussed but it was left open so that the Planning Board could make whatever determination it wanted. There was debate on what the best approach would be. Mr. Roshto was against making it a street. He felt the whole point was to develop an epicenter or small area where people could park in a public parking lot and walk the area. He felt that the pathway needed to be a walking pathway not a drivable pathway.

Mr. Arentowicz agreed that he did not want to see it expanded into a roadway. He questioned whether it should be refined or left generic.

Mr. Roshto said that phrase "...park and stay, pedestrian and bicycle friendly..." was towards that goal of making it a safer area to walk around in. He added if the board wanted it could be strengthened.

Chairman Pfeil said that the other side of the argument was if that was a road, one could circulate without having to go on Valley Road.

Mr. Moholkar added that the one in Berkeley Heights by the train station had been discussed.

Mr. Wallisch said that if the goal was to get people to go back and forth from Valley Mall and the ShopRite Shopping Center, removing cars from Valley Road would be helpful. He could see the value in having a roadway going through there to keep the cars off of Valley Road.

Mr. Roshto said he would agree if that was the intent. Some people felt that the intent should be to divert traffic to make it easier to get to the malls. He felt they already had that. In his opinion what was missing was a small area where one could park, stay and enjoy having an ice cream cone. It was a different use. However both were very valid.

Mr. O'Brien said that having a pedestrian and bicycle oriented roadway would be very different and would encourage that mode of transportation between the township's two biggest draws: Valley Mall and ShopRite. It would also allow access to the Little League fields and would serve a multitude of uses particularly if public improvements were installed along the way. Having an alternative to Valley Road in terms of bikes and pedestrians would be more advantageous than having another roadway.

Mr. Roshto added that Metzler Road, a small area off Plainfield Avenue, was going to be made residential. It would be a nice access for Metzler.

Mr. Wallisch felt that a bicycle path off Valley Road would not be used very much.

Ms. Kiefer noted for the record that Mr. Aroneo had arrived at 8:05 PM.

Mr. Roshto said that another option would be some sort of limited access such as one way, no trucks-- a narrow roadway with speed bumps perhaps. He added that there needed to be some sort of parking back there and there was a possibility for a small lot off Bay.

Mr. Wallisch asked which lot he was referring to.

Mr. Roshto responded block 10515, lots 5 and 6.

Mr. Arentowicz asked Mr. O'Brien if this could be left open at this point or did a decision have to be made regarding walkways, bike paths, or roadways.

Mr. O'Brien said that unlike in an ordinance, this type of thing could be left loose in a Master Plan for interpretation at a later date. If there were several thoughts about this, it would be best to leave it loose at this time.

Mr. Arentowicz asked how the rest of the board felt about this recommendation.

Chairman Pfeil felt that if there was no reason to make it specific, leave it open.

Mr. Wallisch added that he wanted input from the public.

It was the consensus of the board members to leave it flexible.

Mr. Arentowicz moved to Section 5, Item #4, "...coverage bonuses." He noted that a lot of properties in this zone were in the 100 year floodplain and he did not want to grant any coverage bonuses because a driveway was removed. He highly recommended that that be stricken from the draft because of the flooding problem in the township.

Mr. O'Brien asked if Mr. Arentowicz was in favor of shared parking.

Mr. Arentowicz said he did not have a problem with that. He did however have a problem with lot coverage.

Mr. Roshto recalled that the feeling of the MPC when this was written was that there was a need to approve existing development with shared parking for example. By providing lot coverage bonuses, properties would be encouraged to do other things such as raise the buildings. It was leverage or a trade-off.

Mr. O'Brien added that the committee had discussed it at length but had not come up with a mechanism. They felt that throwing some ideas out in the Master Plan would be helpful. He noted that shared parking was a bonus also. If parking was shared between two businesses, there would not be as much pavement required. By not requiring as much parking as was listed in the ordinance, lot coverage was being reduced along with saving the property owner money.

Mr. Moholkar asked if they removed the phrase "lot coverage bonuses" and left in "such as shared parking," would that allow for some interpretation.

Mr. O'Brien responded that although "shared parking" was specific, the phrase "such as" would give an applicant the opportunity to suggest another idea.

Mr. Roshto said that in order to reduce the number of entrances and curb cuts, there had to be some incentives. He wondered if "shared parking" would be enough.

Mr. Moholkar felt that the phrase "such as" would not limit it. It simply didn't give other examples.

Mr. O'Brien said that a larger building in relation to the provided parking could be another bonus. If parking was being shared, a larger building was possible since it did not require as much parking.

Mr. Roshto asked if the phrase might be "bulk coverage bonuses." Lot coverage was a concern when it came to flooding however setbacks might not be.

Mr. Arentowicz said that he would be more comfortable with that.

Mr. O'Brien stated that this would include setbacks between buildings and building coverage. Building coverage could be increased if impervious coverage was decreased. He suggested the phrase, "...shared parking, building coverage and building setbacks."

Chairman Pfeil suggested, "...modification of bulk standards."

Mr. Roshto felt that the phrase "bulk requirements" was sufficient. There was no need to be more specific. He questioned however if some reference should be made to flooding issues.

Mr. O'Brien said, "...such as shared parking and bulk requirements that do not adversely impact stormwater runoff."

Mr. Arentowicz was satisfied with that. He also noted that after reading the document, he felt it was well written.

Mr. Roshto noted that the Ordinance Review Subcommittee (ORS) had begun discussions on ordinances to support this element. Lot coverage was becoming a debate -- what was the appropriate lot coverage for the B-D Zone? After reading the element, he felt the reason for the debate was the lack of guidance on what to do in terms of density, layout and amount of lot coverage. He asked if more should be put into the element to help guide them in crafting the supporting ordinances. He referred specifically to lot coverage but added that it could be any of the bulk requirements.

Mr. Moholkar said that during the Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) the term "visual density" was used.

Mr. Roshto clarified that the term had come from Mr. Sandow and him. In some of the multifamily developments the green space was often a place that was not seen. They were trying to capture the concept of *perceived* density.

Mr. Moholkar asked about using a term like that to drive the ordinance so that specific bulk requirements would not be required in the element.

Mr. Roshto stated that he and Mr. O'Brien had discussed using a "range" for lot coverage. He felt they needed to decide what would be appropriate for the downtown area.

Mr. O'Brien added that 40% lot coverage was allowed in the B-2. A recent study by Mr. Sandow and the MPC came up with a number of lots in this zone that were in the 60% range.

Mr. Roshto added that these lots were approximately half of the total lots in the zone.

Mr. Arentowicz said that if a number of the lots that were in the 60% range were in the 100 year floodplain, he wanted to keep the number at 40%. Because of the flooding, he did not want to change the element to accommodate what was done in the past. He felt they should try to correct some of the things that were done in the past.

Mr. Moholkar said based on that, everything would be left at 40%. Everything else would be either grandfathered or require a variance. This was his observation. He was not agreeing or disagreeing at this point.

Mr. Arentowicz referred to the second sentence of the third paragraph of the Introduction, "The architectural style and visual look and feel of the area reflects decades of un-planned development, resulting in an unattractive, unharmonious mix of newer buildings co-existing with older structures." He stated that if there was a question, he would rather restrict it to 40%.

Mr. O'Brien asked if that should be placed under "Zoning Changes" or "Environmental Improvements".

Mr. Arentowicz felt it fit either category but in his opinion it belonged in the environmental section.

Mr. O'Brien stated that it was Mr. Arentowicz's suggestion that the existing lot coverage standards remain.

Chairman Pfeil asked if that would be Point 6 under "Environmental Improvements".

Mr. Moholkar agreed since Point 1 of that section discussed mitigating flood damage. The 40% lot coverage kept that from becoming worse especially in the areas where there was flooding. He felt that it belonged in the environmental section because that was where the flooding was called out.

Chairman Pfeil asked if 40% was an unrealistically low number given the uses that they wanted. It would discourage the opening of businesses by limiting lot coverage to only 40% when those businesses could go to the next town where 75% lot coverage was available. If over 50% of the structures already exceeded 60% and now only 40% was being offered-- where were the incentives to invest in this community as opposed to going to the next community? He noted that Mr. Sandow had done a lot of research on what was there already and the numbers were pretty high. They reflected what one would expect to see on a main street in a commercial area. In other towns, they built right out to the sidewalk and parking was located behind. He used Berkeley Heights as an example of that.

Mr. Moholkar said, following the train of thought, perhaps they should look at what was being done in neighboring towns.

Mr. Arentowicz asked if Berkeley Heights had the 100 year floodplain that Long Hill Township had.

Mr. O'Brien felt that Long Hill was a unique situation. He noted that they had taken guidance from the surrounding towns however over the years the Planning Board had wisely taken the particular circumstances of this community into account and made their own decisions.

Mr. Roshto said that during discussions about the epicenter concept, the area around Bay Street was chosen because it was the higher ground. Any construction in the township would affect flooding however if it was developed to be a small walkable area, perhaps more lot coverage should be allowed there. He noted that lot coverage was already high in that area. In areas that flooded such as the areas around Valley and Main, higher lot coverage would not be allowed.

Mr. Arentowicz agreed with that idea.

Mr. O'Brien advised against having different standards for different properties in the same zone. Currently there were environmental constraints that existed on certain properties by virtue of the fact that they were wetlands or areas of special flood hazard or critical areas. They would be better off imposing environmental constraints than different bulk requirements in a single zone.

Mr. Roshto asked if the small area around Bay Street should be a separate to zone.

Mr. O'Brien replied that an overlay had been discussed for that area. He noted that an overlay could also allow separate bulk requirements. Because it would be recognized in the ordinance it could be done since it was its own zone.

Mr. Roshto felt that that was a good option. The B-D Zone would stay at 40% but the overlay zone would increase lot coverage in that small area.

Mr. Wallisch agreed with Mr. O'Brien that it should be kept consistent however he felt that if the township wanted to encourage businesses in that area, they should find a way to make it economically attractive for those businesses while still taking care of the flooding issues.

Chairman Pfeil asked if the proposed overlay would start on Poplar and go to Plainfield on both sides of the street.

Mr. Roshto responded that because that was all high ground, it made sense to him.

Chairman Pfeil then said that the high ground could be identified and an overlay zone would be created which would allow lot coverage exceeding 40%.

Mr. Roshto added that the highest ground was on the north side.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the Planning Board could make that change here. It could also go back to the MPC to make a recommendation.

Since the MPC was extremely busy, Chairman Pfeil suggested that it be done here.

There was discussion concerning the actual boundaries of the overlay zone. At this point the consensus was from Poplar to Plainfield, encompassing both sides of the street.

Mr. Aroneo voiced a reservation. There was nothing scientific about what was being proposed. They were simply "eyeballing" it and identifying it as higher ground.

Mr. Arentowicz said that they were looking at the flood maps.

Mr. Roshto reiterated that no matter where there was construction, it affected flooding in the township.

In response to Mr. O'Brien's question for a consensus, Chairman Pfeil summarized that the overlay would encompass the lots north of Bay Street from Poplar to Plainfield and that overlay zone would allow lot coverage of 60%.

Mr. Roshto added that it dropped off dramatically at the paper street located south of Bay Street.

There was discussion about extending the overlay across Valley Road. Mr. Moholkar pointed out that they were much larger lots. Mr. O'Brien added that those lots were constrained in the rear and had split zones. Mr. Moholkar said, according to Google maps, the majority of the ones already there seem to be over 40% in terms of lot coverage. On the north side, the lots closer to Valley Road were probably less than 40% covered. If they were allowed 60% lot coverage there would be a lot more concrete. Mr. Moholkar felt that larger lot coverage already existed on the south side and they would not be able to build much more so the overlay would be more appropriate there.

Mr. Roshto said that this would only encompass eight (8) properties. He added that the element should only give a range for lot coverage, not a specific percentage.

Mr. O'Brien wondered if it was worth carving these properties out given the fact that they were small lots to start out with compared to some of the others on the north side. Combining those lots would be the only way to go anywhere with them. Over the last 12 or 13 years, three (3) of those lots had come before the Planning Board (the kennel, the eyeglass facility, the Uncommon Thread) for approvals. There had been no combination. They were all still separate and distinct lots. Allowing them higher lot coverage percentages might not be worth it considering the number of constraints on those lots.

Mr. Moholkar pointed out that a lot of them were already over 60% so they would be coming to the Planning Board regardless.

Mr. O'Brien stated if any alteration was made, it would come before the board for site plan. Currently if they were over 40%, they would need a variance. If 60% were allowed, they could go up to 60% without a variance but they would still need Site Plan Approval from this board.

Mr. Roshto asked Mr. O'Brien if it was his recommendation not to have the overlay.

Mr. O'Brien said if the only advantage of the overlay was to allow a higher percentage of lot coverage—

Mr. Roshto said that it might not be just higher lot coverage. It might also allow them to build closer to each other. It might include setbacks.

Mr. Wallisch indicated that he wanted to reduce the "gauntlet" and encourage nicer development by making the process easier.

Mr. Roshto felt that what should drive this decision was whether or not they wanted that area to be any different from any of the other parts of Valley or not. If they did, they should focus on it.

There was further discussion among the board members as to whether or not the overlay would be useful. Mr. Moholkar asked if 60% would help those lots. To him, all the lots looked as if they had over 60% lot coverage already.

Mr. O'Brien gave some examples. Lot 3 was at 58%. The Rossi-Ippolito building was at 68%. The diner was at 68%. The PNC Bank was at 57%. Those four (4) properties were already over the 40% currently allowed.

Mr. Moholkar responded that even at 60%, only two (2) of those would be helped.

Mr. Wallisch added that the gas station was well over 60%. Mr. O'Brien did not have the exact number.

Mr. Moholkar reiterated that the overlay might not be worthwhile.

Mr. Roshto stated that given these discussions, they should not do an overlay. He said that the board members should decide on a lot coverage recommendation to help guide the ordinance discussion for the entire B-D Zone.

Mr. Wallisch indicated that he would go along with the majority however he felt that if there was no overlay that would make it a little bit easier for the businesses to use the coverage they had currently, nothing would change. He reiterated the example of going to Berkeley Heights where lot coverage would not be an issue.

Chairman Pfeil said that if a portion of the area was on higher ground, they should make that portion less onerous to develop. He didn't know what the actual lot coverage percentage should be however he thought it should be close to what was existing which was 60%. If they stayed at 40%, basically everything along Valley Road could not expand. It would drive up the cost and open the township to competition from areas that were not as costly. He supported the overlay as a mechanism to give relief to some of the properties.

Mr. Moholkar asked if 60% was enough and Mr. Wallisch responded that it should not exceed whatever it was currently.

Mr. Moholkar said that regardless of what changes were made, the lots were grandfathered in at their current coverage. Those lots that were less than 60% could go up to 60%.

Mr. Roshto added that if the lot coverage was raised to 60% and a business came in at 62%, it would be a much easier argument than if it was 40%.

Mr. Wallisch said if this area was to be the focal point of the downtown development, they had to make it developable.

Mr. Roshto asked if the recommendation was that the B-D Zone would be substantially similar to the current B-2 Zone and the overlay would be similar in bulk requirements to the current B-3 Zone.

Mr. O'Brien asked if they would specify the 60% in the Master Plan language or give a range or simply suggest an increase.

Chairman Pfeil said that he would not be concerned with saying a maximum of 60%.

Mr. Wallisch said that this would give the Ordinance Review Subcommittee a general guideline of what the Planning Board was thinking.

Mr. Roshto agreed.

Mr. Wallisch added that the Ordinance Review Subcommittee should have some leeway in deciding that in order to maximize space, setbacks may be different.

Mr. Roshto thought that it would be a good idea to add that language also.

Mr. O'Brien asked if that would be tied to shared parking or would it simply be allowed in general.

Mr. Roshto felt that the shared parking and the curb cut reductions etc. would be at a higher level.

Mr. O'Brien said given that, in this language only lesser building setbacks would be specified. He summarized that the overlay zone would encompass those areas north of Bay, Poplar to Plainfield. Lot cover would be allowed at a maximum of 60% as well as allowing for lesser building-to-building setbacks.

Mr. Wallisch asked about the residential section next to Metzler. There were seven (7) smaller lots there. Next to that, they were looking for business and a potential parking lot and a potential street or bike path or walkway and then the businesses. He felt that a previous Application Review Committee application proposing a multifamily project would be a nice transition.

Mr. O'Brien said that that lot would not change. It was currently zoned B-2 and would change to B-D however neither allowed residential. Mr. O'Brien felt that the change would improve the Metzler properties' capabilities.

Mr. Wallisch said that he felt that the element was well done.

Mr. Roshto questioned whether Lot 7 should be included in the overlay. If Bay Street was extended there might be access to that lot on the side.

Mr. O'Brien said it could have two (2) front yards. He asked if the property was wet in the back of the property towards Bay Street.

Mr. Wallisch responded that it was considered wetlands and everything had to be pulled forward.

It was decided not to include it.

Mr. O'Brien noted that there were two (2) changes that the board had made. The first was to Section 5, Item 4 which discussed bulk requirements. The second was to Section 4. A new item, Item 6 adding the overlay zone was added. If the board was comfortable with the document as amended, it could vote to adopt the document as amended and refer it for noticed public hearing. At the public meeting, the board would take formal action.

Mr. Aroneo questioned his eligibility to vote since he arrived during discussions about the first change. It was decided to bifurcate the vote. Mr. Aroneo would then be eligible to vote only on the second change.

Mr. Moholkar moved approval of the first change which was in in Section 5, Item 4. Chairman Pfeil seconded that motion. A **ROLL CALL VOTE** was taken. Those in Favor: Mr. Arentowicz, Mr. Moholkar, Mr. Roshto, Mr. Wallisch, Chairman Pfeil. Those Opposed: NONE. The motion was approved unanimously. Mr. Aroneo was ineligible to vote since he arrived during the discussion of this change.

Mr. Moholkar moved approval of the second change which was the addition of Item 6 in Section 4. Chairman Pfeil seconded that motion. A **ROLL CALL VOTE** was taken. Those in Favor: Mr. Arentowicz, Mr. Aroneo, Mr. Moholkar, Mr. Roshto, Mr. Wallisch, Chairman Pfeil. Those Opposed: NONE. The motion was approved unanimously.

RECREATION ELEMENT (draft)

Mr. O'Brien said that by the end of last year the Recreation Committee under the leadership of the Township Recreation Director, Lisa Scanlon, had prepared a Recreation Element at the suggestion of the Planning Board which was the document the board members had in front of them. It discussed the recreational facilities in the township and the recommendations for future facilities. He had worked with them on clarifications for the document. He then reviewed the document and made typographical and grammatical revisions while also inserting land use language. The document as written came from the committee and reflected their wishes and desires for the Planning Board to review. The board had directed that after its review, the document be sent to the MPC to be used in its preparation of the overall Master Plan, slated for 2016.

In reading the document, Chairman Pfeil noted that the Introduction discussed and highlighted the proximity of the Great Swamp Wildlife Refuge. The introductory paragraph ended by noting there were 12 miles of the Passaic River within the township. However, neither the Great Swamp nor the Passaic River were mentioned again anywhere in the document. He felt that was an area that needed a lot of attention. In many of the other elements it was noted that the township should take advantage of the river and the Great Swamp as wonderful resources for recreation. That was totally absent in this document.

Second, Chairman Pfeil said that the Recreation Committee's primary observation and conclusion was the need for a turf field. The development of a turf field has begun to move through the Township Committee so he felt that the document needed to be updated. He added that the document did a great job of outlining what the township had, how it was used, and what was needed.

Mr. O'Brien said that there was a lot of clear language on active and organized recreation.

Chairman Pfeil felt more was needed on the passive side.

Mr. Wallisch said that he wanted to know what their thoughts were on the development of potential bike routes and walking trails.

Mr. Moholkar asked if that was part of the Recreation Element or part of "walking paths and bike trails". He felt that Recreation was separate from Open Space. They were together before but then they were separated so that only the parks that were considered recreation parks were to be discussed.

Mr. O'Brien stated that it was a very open ended direction. The committee members were asked for their take on recreation and being the Recreation Committee, they looked at the organized recreation in the township. When Open Space was discussed, it was stated that there should be open space dedicated towards both passive and active recreation leaving it to the Recreation Element to discuss the details of what that actual recreation should be. Bike trails and walking trails etc. could be discussed in this element. There would be a crossover to the Open Space since open space would be used for recreation. He felt it would be good to list those activities in this element. Mr. O'Brien noted that the Recreation Committee had concluded its work on this document which was why it was being referred to the Planning Board. He was looking for the board's feedback so that it could be sent to the MPC to revise the document as they saw fit and incorporate it into one comprehensive Master Plan document.

Mr. Wallisch asked if the Recreation Committee had any thoughts about the different types of trails.

Mr. O'Brien said that there was a section in the document that discussed the trails at the Hick's Tract as well as the walking trail in Kantor Field however he felt that a larger scale of trails was being discussed here.

Mr. Roshto had three (3) suggestions. First, he thought language about the Great Swamp and the river as recreational areas should be added. Second, another look at the turf field should be taken given the fact that the township was already moving in that direction. Third, more language about passive recreation should be added. This element did discuss hiking and biking trails however it ranked them as fifth among the other active facilities. He did not feel passive activities should be ranked with active activities. He personally felt that it was exceedingly important to have trails in the township and would rank it #1. He then questioned whether there should be a ranking system at all.

Chairman Pfeil felt that it should be broken apart. He felt that hiking and biking should be #2 behind the river and the Great Swamp.

Mr. O'Brien said that the document actually listed those activities on page 18, Section 7. Typical Master Plan language would not be that specific.

Mr. Moholkar wanted to make sure that it overlapped into the Open Space Element.

Mr. Roshto asked Mr. O'Brien if he was suggesting that the ranking process in the element may not be appropriate for an element.

Mr. O'Brien responded that it was unusual language for an element, not that it hadn't been done or shouldn't be done. It was up to the MPC.

Chairman Pfeil suggested that they leave in the bullet points and simply remove the ranking numbers.

Mr. O'Brien said that that would be more consistent.

Mr. Wallisch added that the use of the river and the Great Swamp should be added to that list.

Mr. Roshto stated that the Township Committee had used this information on a number of occasions as a draft. The fact that it was ranked was helpful in those discussions.

Mr. Moholkar asked if the ranking was done with a survey.

Mr. O'Brien responded that the ranking was done by the committee itself.

Mr. Moholkar felt that the ranking reflected the experience of people who dealt with the recreation facilities every day so it was more than just an educated guess.

Mr. O'Brien advised the board members that they could include the ranking with an explanation on how it was created. Based on that, the Planning Board could then make recommendations.

Chairman Pfeil felt that was a good balance.

Mr. Roshto explained that he did not like ranking because it was fixed. Five years from now situations could change but the ranking would remain the same.

Mr. Roshto said that if it was left open it would give more flexibility to those who use the information.

Mr. Wallisch added that if a survey was conducted using a segment of the population that did not have children, the ranking would look very different.

It was the consensus of the board members that the ranking should be removed because the Master Plan was a long-term document and the ranking was a point-in-time assessment.

Mr. Roshto motioned to move the Recreation Element to the MPC for inclusion in the 2016 Master Plan with the comments made by the Planning Board. Mr. Wallisch seconded the motion. A **ROLL CALL VOTE** was taken. Those in Favor: Mr. Arentowicz, Mr. Aroneo, Mr. Moholkar, Mr. Roshto, Mr. Wallisch, Chairman Pfeil. Those Opposed: NONE. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Pfeil asked if any of the board members would be unavailable to attend the next meeting scheduled for August 11, 2015. Mr. Moholkar stated that he would be unable to attend that meeting.

JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Mr. Roshto stated that the Master Plan Committee and the Planning Board held a joint meeting on June 23, 2015. Prior to the meeting, a survey had been distributed to the Township officials including the Township Committee and both Land Use Boards for a total of 24 individuals. He received approximately 20 responses to that survey. The survey asked a number of questions specifically related to transit oriented development in the Stirling area and in the Millington area in an attempt to get an understanding from the township officials about what they thought was appropriate or inappropriate. The information from that survey was distributed to the approximately 15 participants at the meeting.

Mr. Roshto felt that given the discussions held during that meeting, Stirling seem to be going in a good direction in terms of transit oriented development. There was some hesitation in the Millington area as far as which direction to go in. In general, the concept of transit oriented development was supported by this group however in Millington's case, they asked that other alternatives be reviewed by the MPC.

The ultimate goal of the MPC was to deliver a comprehensive draft Master Plan to the Planning Board by the end of 2015. With the amount of work involved in achieving that goal, Mr. Roshto planned to ask the committee members how much work should be done on the Millington Element. The most difficult part was the density of residential that would be required to develop that area in a transit oriented type of development. He asked the Planning Board members for some input as the direction in which the committee should head.

Mr. Wallisch asked what the participants of the joint meeting listed as items they did *not* want to see as far as developing Millington.

Mr. Roshto said that there were a lot of questions about the type of residential development. To identify alternatives that would satisfy everyone would require a lot more work.

Mr. Moholkar added that the area around Stirling seem to fall into a template already. It already looked like it was developing into a transit oriented area. The area around Millington contained a lot more differences.

Mr. Roshto stated that the magnitude of change in Millington was an issue. Trying to transform a Limited Industrial Zone, an Office Zone and a Village Zone all of which was surrounded by residential would become a significant change. Stirling did not suffer from that problem. The results of the joint meeting highlighted the concern that maybe more investigation was required.

Mr. Roshto felt that in order to deliver a solid Master Plan by 2016, the MPC had to deliver a preliminary draft to the Planning Board by the end of the year. He was concerned that discussion of the Millington area would delay that. In his opinion, this would require meetings with the public and an in-depth background study that was started by Mr. Arentowicz and others two (2) years ago but remained unfinished. His preference was to give the Planning Board a couple of alternatives and let the board members work it out at a later date.

Mr. Moholkar asked if there was anything preventing them from completing everything but the Millington Element. Would it still meet the state's requirements?

Mr. Roshto responded that that was what he was recommending.

Mr. O'Brien clarified that the township was within its state mandate currently and would be for the next several years. This was completely township goal oriented.

Mr. Roshto asked for guidance from the board as to whether or not the board members felt that it was appropriate to finish the draft Master Plan and leave the Millington Element for completion at a later date possibly in early 2016.

Mr. Arentowicz asked Mr. Roshto if he felt that the MPC could present two (2) options to the Planning Board by the end of 2015.

Mr. Roshto responded that he felt they could deliver two (2) high level options. Earlier in the evening there were discussions indicating that they wanted residential which might be five (5) units per acre. Limited Industrial and Office would be removed. He felt that this was where the MPC was currently however would the board be able to make any kind of a decision based on that general level?

Mr. Arentowicz recommended that the MPC continue to work on the remaining elements and move forward with Stirling. He asked Mr. Roshto to get a reading from the MPC members at the next meeting and come up with a couple of options for the board. He agreed with Mr. Roshto that there wasn't enough time to come up with a final Millington Element for the draft Master Plan by the end of the year.

Chairman Pfeil commented that the board had a commitment from Tifa's attorney to appear before the board on August 11, 2015 to deliver a status report on the sale of the property. Once the sale went through, he felt that there would be an application from the new owner for some sort of development on that property before the Millington Element could be written. He was concerned that if they delayed, there would be no element to support anything other than what was currently there which was Light Industrial. If the new owner proposed a townhouse development, it would require a use variance before the Zoning Board because of the current zoning.

Mr. O'Brien added that the new owner could ask for rezoning.

Chairman Pfeil reiterated that the Millington Village Element should not be delayed and that the key to the element was the Tifa and Barrett properties.

Mr. Roshto said that regardless, it would not be in effect until 2016.

Chairman Pfeil responded, given Mr. Roshto's comment, the element should be moved down the priority list.

Mr. Roshto stated that another option would be to fast-track the element in the same way that the Downtown Valley Commercial District Element was done. Because it would delay the Master Plan, he did not advise that. He noted that the Downtown Valley Commercial District Element had definitely delayed the Master Plan.

Mr. Moholkar felt that regardless, more research was necessary in order to formulate the two (2) high level options by the end of the year.

Chairman Pfeil said that from the Joint Meeting, there was not enough support to fast-track it. There were too many divergent opinions.

Mr. O'Brien stated that one of the concerns of the MPC was that regardless of what suggestions or options were formulated by them, if there was no support from the Township Committee for those options or suggestions, they would go nowhere. If a fundamental change was made to that area such as going from an industrial use to a transit oriented development which would include residential as well as some type of retail and commercial, it was important to know whether the township had an appetite for such a change. There was no sense in even starting, if the township was not prepared to go down that road.

Mr. Moholkar summarized by saying that given the previous comments, the board members recommended that the Millington Village Element be moved to a secondary position.

Chairman Pfeil asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Moholkar motioned and Mr. Arentowicz seconded. By unanimous **Voice Vote**, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Date: _____

CYNTHIA KIEFER
 Planning and Zoning Secretary