

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
WESTCHESTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
Cassella Conference Room
Michaelian Office Building
White Plains, New York
Tuesday, March 7, 2017

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dwight Douglas, Vice Chair (City)
James Arndt (City)
Holly Hasbrouck (Town)
Andrea Carapella Rendo (Town)
Dennis Starr (City)
Neil Sullivan (City)
Vincent Kopicki, Commissioner, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Thomas Lauro, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Facilities
Kathleen O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jeremiah Lynch, Chair (Village)
Michael Camoia (Village)
Mark Rosen (Town)

STAFF PRESENT:

Eileen Mildenberger, Acting Commissioner
Norma Drummond, Deputy Commissioner
Patrick Natarelli, Chief Planner
Lukas Herbert, Associate Planner
Anthony Zaino, Director of Design
David Kvinge, Director of Environmental Planning
Kay Eisenman, Planner

GUESTS:

Donna Maiello, Divney, Tung, Schwalbe
Dante Daly, Board of Legislators

I. Call to Order

Dwight Douglas Vice-Chair, in the absence of Jeremiah Lynch, Chair, called the meeting of the Planning Board to order at 8:10 a.m.

II. Meeting Dates

Mr. Douglas announced the upcoming dates of the Planning Board meetings. The Board approved these dates on a motion of Mr. Arndt, seconded by Mr. Sullivan.

III. Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Douglas said he had reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting of February 7, 2017 and asked if members had any comments on the draft. There were no corrections or revisions. A motion to

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approve the minutes of the February 7, 2017 meeting of the Planning Board was made by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Lauro and adopted unanimously by the Board.

IV. Chairman's Remarks

None

V. Acting Commissioner's Remarks

Ms. Mildenberger discussed the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee MS4 Stormwater Permit meeting, saying that due to many concerns expressed by the County and municipalities the permit is delayed; however, the state will continue to use the current permitting process.

The East of Hudson Water Quality Investment Program funds have been approved by the Board of Legislators. Funding for projects, including vacuum trucks for several municipalities, is being implemented.

Ms. Mildenberger informed members of the pending retirement of Commissioner Lauro. He was praised for his service and responded that his 10 years on the Planning Board had been very enjoyable and that it has been an honor for him to serve.

VI. Referrals

- A. Ratification of actions by staff in response to planning and zoning actions referred to the County Planning Board January 16, 2017 to February 15, 2017.

Mr. Douglas asked the Board if there were any questions or comments about the Report of County Planning Board Referrals. In response to a question concerning plans for the new White Plains Mall, Mr. Herbert said that at this point the plans have very little detail. If the proposed two towers are built they would not exceed the height of others in the City. He acknowledged that spot re-zoning was being used.

Mr. Herbert was asked about the new PepsiCo building proposed for the PepsiCo Research & Development Campus in Mount Pleasant and whether the drainage would go into the water supply. Mr. Herbert replied that the drainage divide goes through the site and this portion drains to the Bronx River, not into the water supply. The site has a Master Plan and this building was already in the Plan, which was approved some time ago. Members commented that that the traffic impacts to this area could be severe and expressed dismay that with all the empty buildings already in existence in the area that another building will be erected. They also recommended putting in more sidewalks.

Members also inquired about the Port Chester United Hospital redevelopment and Mr. Herbert said that it has not changed, has gone through the SEQR process and is now obtaining the required zoning approvals.

Mr. Herbert told members that the proposed new Wegmans grocery on Westchester Avenue in Harrison should have a connection between Corporate Park Drive and Manhattanville Road so that trucks and buses, as well as pedestrians, can access the store more easily.

Mr. Starr asked about the rules regarding parking spaces per unit for new buildings in New Rochelle. Mr. Herbert said the developer is meeting the requirements and is in fact exceeding them, but that the area could become congested nevertheless. Mr. Starr asked for a wider view of the surrounding area in order to see the potential for overcrowding. The rezoning of the area was reviewed in a GEIS as part of New Rochelle's efforts to make the New Rochelle competitive with New York City by streamlining the approvals process and allow building to proceed in a timely fashion. Mr. Douglas requested a map showing the areas in New Rochelle under discussion, as well as around both Wegmans and PepsiCo, so members could envision the areas. Mr. Herbert will do a presentation for the Board if the timing works out.

Mr. Starr made a motion to ratify the referral letters which was seconded by Commissioner Lauro and approved.

VI.I Matters for Board Discussion

A. Update on the Housing Settlement

Ms. Drummond said that all the major milestones were met by the end of December, 2016, as mandated. Seven hundred-fifty units with financing were required and 800 were in place. Seven hundred fifty units with building permits were required and 792 are in place. There is the possibility that 6 units will fall out. In total 1,117 properties were evaluated which include vacant lots, condos, single and multiple family homes and even three churches. A number of Certificates of Occupancy are still needed but the County is working to meet this requirement.

She said that there is great demand for rental units and that there is a variety of choices of units that the County is making available from studio through 5 bedrooms. There are also 176 units for seniors. The County has been working with its marketing consultant, the Housing Action Council, on affirmative fair housing marketing plans in order to reach as diverse a group as possible in a nine-county area. There are now over 10,000 registered households on the County's website Homeseeker. This program gives the County information on who is looking for affordable housing and where, as well as household characteristics. Outreach is also going on at home buying events, expos and festivals. Ms. Drummond said that 25 percent of home seekers want to live in southern Westchester, mostly Yonkers and Mount Vernon. There is a lottery system used to determine who occupies the units. She said that as of the present time 400 units are completed and occupied.

In discussing the funding Ms. Drummond said that BPL50 Fair and Affordable Housing funds totaled approximately \$61.5 million. In addition the County's New Homes Land Acquisition program is providing approximately \$13.4 million and the Housing Implementation Fund is almost \$5 million. There were also New York State funds and federal funds added to the mix. Ms. Drummond said that the County cost was approximately \$78.8 million and that \$172 million in other public subsidies was leveraged toward the costs of the 800 AFFH units. Mr. Sullivan asked about the amount of staff time devoted to the project and Ms. Drummond replied that staff has been working on this for seven years. The Department has lost a number of staff members but is continuing the work, which is not over yet. There is still ongoing work such as counseling, marketing, outreach and education. One item still to be completed is the acceptance of the County's Analysis of Impediments (AI) which has been rejected 9 times. The ninth attempt was

submitted by the County's independent consultants and rejected in late December, so a tenth submittal is currently underway with an April 10th deadline for approval by HUD. Ms. Drummond said the parameters of the AI have changed and the County needs new data collection. The firm, VHB, an independent consulting firm, is at work on the submittal. A new monitor has been appointed who has managed to get the annual salary cap restriction removed and is expected to charge the County \$1,000.00 per hour.

Board members expressed their thanks to Ms. Drummond for her efforts and those of the staff in meeting the goals in the housing agreement. Mr. Sullivan proposed a motion of admiration for Ms. Drummond and the Housing staff which was seconded by Mr. Douglas and approved with unanimous approval by the Board:

The Planning Board expresses our appreciation for the diligent, effective and graceful work of Norma Drummond and her staff in implementing the housing settlement between the County and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

VIII. Matters for Planning Board Action

A. Tree Removal Permit, Westchester Medical College – Parking Lots 12 & 13

Mr. Natarelli informed members of a tree removal request by the Westchester Medical Center at Parking Lots 12 and 13 near Beechwood and Maplewood halls on the mall at the Valhalla Campus at Grasslands. Donna Maiello, a Landscape Architect from Divney, Tung, Schwalbe, presented the request. Ms. Maiello said the Medical Center wants to expand and update its parking and provide LED lighting at two existing lots adjacent to Maplewood and Beechwood halls in order to provide staff parking for medical residents and other staff. This proposal would add 111 parking spots. Eleven trees would have to be removed, some of which are in good condition, but most are in poor condition or are diseased. Five trees which provide buffer qualities will be saved and 22 trees will be planted, as well as some shrubs, to improve the landscaping around the buildings. There will be re-striping and improved pedestrian circulation of the two lots.

Members asked about the subsurface utilities which comprise a tangled web of lines and were assured that there is an awareness of these and that care will be taken not to interfere with them. Mr. Natarelli noted that the Grasslands Master Plan, which was developed by the County Planning Department, discusses the wooded nature of the reservation and recommends preserving this feature as much as possible. The plan also recommends construction of a parking structure instead of using land up for parking lots, but in this instance the project will be an improvement. The motion regarding the Tree Removal Permit Resolution was made by Commissioner Lauro, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and approved.

B. Capital Budget Amendment BPL26 Flood Mitigation Avon Circle, Town of Rye

Mr. Kvinge discussed the project, the first to be recommended for funding by the Stormwater Advisory Board in the five years that it has been meeting. The area in question has been a chronic flood problem area for a long time. Mr. Kvinge said that the Blind Brook flows through culverts

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that are not working well and this project will provide funding assistance for professional engineering services to try and find a solution by developing and evaluating at least three alternatives. Not only will a solution alleviate flooding but it will also help to restore ballfields that serve as a flood detention area. The preliminary design is expected to cost \$95,000 and the County request is for \$70,000. Mr. Kvinge said that there are many requests for funding but this is the first and the Committee is working to finalize other proposals. Criteria for a successful design include a positive benefit to cost ratio and demonstration that the project will not create or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. Mr. Sullivan asked about the possibility of buyouts of flood-prone properties for any municipality and Mr. Kvinge said that the Army Corps is considering this approach as part of the Mamaroneck-Sheldrake study but needs to identify those that might be eligible. While this is a preferred solution for FEMA and State grants, the high cost associated with property in Westchester make it an unpopular one.

Mr. Arndt made a motion to approve the Capital Budget Amendment which was seconded by Ms. Hasbrouck and approved.

IX. Matters for Board Information

None

X. Other Business

None.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m. on a motion of Commissioner Lauro, seconded by Mr. Sullivan.