

Florence, New Jersey 08518-2323  
May 25, 2021

The regular meeting of the Florence Township Planning Board was held remotely on the above date via Zoom. Chairman Montgomery called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Board Clerk Federico 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:

Emma Cartier	Councilman Bruce Garganio
Newell Kehr	Ray Montgomery
Tara Sandusky	Mayor Craig Wilkie

ABSENT: Carl Mattson, John Pagano

ALSO PRESENT: Solicitor David Frank  
Planner Barbara Fegley  
Engineer Anthony LaRosa was excused

#### RESOLUTIONS

There were no resolutions.

#### MINUTES

It was the Motion of Councilman Garganio, seconded by Ms. Cartier to adopt the minutes of the Regular meeting of April 27, 2021 as submitted. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

- A. 04/23/21: Letter from Burl. Co. Planning Board regarding IPT Florence Turnpike West
- B. 05/14/21: Conformance Review #2 from Planner Fegley and Engineer Darji regarding Prologis-270 Daniels Way
- C. 05/20/21: Letter from Conflict Twp. Engineer Dougherty regarding Lennar monument sign

It was the Motion of Mr. Kehr, seconded by Councilman Garganio to receive and file Correspondence A and C. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

#### APPLICATIONS

There were no applications.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- A. Florence Township Council Resolution No. 2021-97 directing the Planning Board to develop a redevelopment plan for the Property (the “Proposed Redevelopment Plan”) for review and recommendation in accordance of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7(e); specifically Block 121, Lots 4.02.

21.

Planner Fegley stated the agenda has a typo in the resolution number and also does not include one of the Lots involved in this Redevelopment Plan.

Solicitor Frank suggested a Motion be made to amend the agenda for tonight's meeting to reflect the correct resolution number of 2021-97 and to include Lot 9 along with Lot 4.02.

Motion was made by Mr. Cartier, seconded by Mr. Kehr to amend the agenda as noted above. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

Solicitor Frank stated typically we are referred a Redevelopment Plan for Master Plan consistency and then refer is back to the governing body to adopt. This time Council has asked us to do the Redevelopment Plan and send it back to them. The resolution in this case would be slightly different because we prepared the Redevelopment Plan as a body, approved it and are sending it back to the governing body.

Planner Fegley stated this area in need of redevelopment goes back to 1999 and is included in the area of the Roebbling Steel Mill site. The property is located at 2135 Route 130 and Hornberger Avenue, Block 121, Lot 4.02 and a sliver of Lot 9. The property fronts on Hornberger Avenue and there is a gas station on the corner of the property which is not part of this plan. The Redevelopment Plan is for Project Freedom to provide affordable housing. This is part of the township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. This project will allow for 72 housing units, which will provide 78 units of housing credits. The extra credits are because some of the units will be counted as bedrooms and not as units.

Planner Fegley explained a site has to be declared as an area in need of redevelopment through a preliminary investigation before a redevelopment plan can be prepared. And a property in need of redevelopment has to have a redevelopment plan in order for it to be developed. As far as the relationship to local objectives, this site is consistent with the township Master Plan, in particular the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan dated 2018. The proposed permitted use is no less than 72 multi-family affordable rental housing units. The accessory uses could be a clubhouse with patio and recreation areas with a tot lot and a gazebo as well as a maintenance building, trash and recycling area. The project will start with clearing the site, grading it and stormwater management. The property is in the HC Zone (Highway Commercial), but because it is going to be redeveloped for residential uses there are zoning changes, or bulk standards, that had to be accommodated in order to deal with the site. She explained the site does have constraints with freshwater wetlands and a freshwater wetlands buffer.

Project Freedom will grant a 15-foot-wide access easement from Hornberger Avenue into the property. This will provide for a means of a secondary access even though the primary access is a boulevard that will be adequate; however, the Fire Official requests there be another access to the site. Signage will include a monument sign and building numbers plus directional signs. The site is owned by Florence Township and is currently vacant, so there are no provisions for anything to be relocated. This plan is also consistent with the County and State plans.

The affordable housing provision for this project is for 72 units, 6 of which will be 2-bedroom DDD (Division of Developmental Disabilities) supported housing units.

Planner Fegley explained the last section of the plan on page 13 talks about Table 1. She recommends to delete the reference to Table 1, the reference to the details of Table 1 and Table 1

on page 14. One reason is if the information is very detailed and something ends up being a little bit different, the redeveloper would have to come back to the Board. Also, she found out today that by having a different mix of very low or low units that Project Freedom could qualify for additional funding. She did talk with our Affordable Housing Consultant, Mary Beth Lonergan and she is the one who suggested to remove Table 1 and the references to Table 1 from the Redevelopment Plan. It doesn't change anything. It will still be the 72 units and the 78 credits. The bedroom mix would stay the same and the parking requirements would not change. The only thing that might change is the amount of very low and low units.

Chairman Montgomery stated he was under the impression the township would get 2 credits for each rental unit (2 for 1). Mayor Wilkie stated we do; however, we are only able to get 2 for 1 up to a certain amount. He stated after the Weiss Development approval, there are only 6 units left we can get 2 for 1. Planner Fegley stated 25% of our affordable housing units can be under the 2 for 1 classification. Chairman Montgomery asked how close are we to our total obligation after Project Freedom. Mayor Wilkie stated we will be within 10 new COAH units of our total obligation. It is very important to meet our obligation or an objector could come in if we don't have this plan in place. He stated the township's goal is to have someone manage the creation of the additional 10 units needed by buying vacant houses, fixing them up and making them affordable.

Solicitor Frank wanted to highlight that we are getting credits based on the bedroom count, not on the unit count, which is powerful for us. The very low income population is the most difficult one to house, so a project that can assist us with meeting that obligation is great.

Mayor Wilkie stated that the township has been meeting its affordable housing obligation since the early 1990's. We have maxed out what we're allowed to have as senior housing and Roebing Arms provides housing for disabled. Project Freedom will help families and the disabled.

Councilman Garganio mentioned this is a really good project to be developed. If we were to do nothing, we could end up with a builder's remedy and could be court ordered to allow that builder to build. That builder could build up to 500 units. He and the Mayor explained that the township will be contributing \$1,000,000.00 to this project. New developers with new construction are required to pay COAH fees and some of the warehouses that have been developed in town have paid up to \$500,000.00 in COAH fees. The township will not have to bond out to contribute to Project Freedom. The township has the funds available specifically for this purpose.

Mr. Kehr asked if our township's obligated housing numbers ever end or max out. Mayor Wilkie stated that our current numbers are good through 2025 when the next round will happen. It is possible we will be required to provide more. If that happens, he stated after there is no more development, there will be no more COAH fees paid by the developers. It will eventually become a tax because the township will have to provide the funding.

Councilman Garganio stated that a major problem that Florence Township has is that we have affordable housing units that were built before the doctrine and we are not allowed to include them in our numbers. The State of New Jersey is not willing to deal with this.

Solicitor Frank stated we have a Redevelopment Plan before us that Planner Fegley has explained to us. Though it is not required, it is the Board's tradition to open for public comment.

23.

It was the Motion of Ms. Cartier, seconded by Councilman Garganio to open the meeting for public comment. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

The Zoom moderator confirmed that those attending virtually have not been muted by us.

Hearing no one wishing to speak, it was the Motion of Ms. Cartier, seconded by Mr. Kehr to close public comment. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

Chairman Montgomery stated we have a Redevelopment Plan that is looking for our approval, with Table 1 on page 14 being removed from the plan. Solicitor Frank added that should the Board find the plan acceptable, the Motion should include that the Board finds the proposed plan consistent with the Master Plan, approves the plan and recommends to the governing body to adopt the plan by ordinance.

It was the Motion of Ms. Cartier, seconded by Ms. Sandusky to find the proposed plan consistent with the Master Plan, approve the plan and recommend to the governing body to adopt the plan by ordinance.

Upon roll call, the Board voted as follows:

YEAS: Cartier, Sandusky, Kehr, Garganio, Wilkie, Montgomery

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried

Solicitor Frank mentioned he had distributed by email a resolution for the Redevelopment Plan, finding it consistent with the Master Plan, approving it and recommending the Governing Body adopt the Plan by ordinance. He reviewed Resolution PB-2021-07 with the Board.

It was the Motion of Councilman Garganio, seconded by Ms. Cartier to approve Resolution PB-2021-07.

Upon roll call, the Board voted as follows:

YEAS: Garganio, Cartier, Sandusky, Kehr, Wilkie, Montgomery

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried

#### OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business discussed.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

The Zoom moderator confirmed that those attending virtually have not been muted by us.

Hearing no one wishing to speak, it was the Motion of Ms. Cartier, seconded by Mr. Kehr to close public comment. Motion unanimously approved by all members present.

#### MASTER PLAN REVIEW/DISCUSSION

A. Introduction to the Master Plan (draft)

24.

Planner Fegley stated the Introduction to the Master Plan introduces what a Master Plan is and what elements are in the Master Plan. The only elements the township have chosen not to do at this time are the Transfer Plan Element and Green Buildings Element.

The Land Use Plan Element is still to be revisited and discussed. Page 5 of the Introduction lists the elements the township did decide to repair. The township has been consistent with their obligation of reexaminations, which used to have to be done every 6 years and is now every 10 years. The original Master Plan from 1976 had a lot of elements that were not done. This current Master Plan being worked on is the most comprehensive one ever done for the township.

#### B. Public Access Plan Element (draft)

Planner Fegley explained this element is an inventory of where all public access is in the township. This element is to protect tidal waters and public access and show current and any future facilities along the water. The element talks about public doctrine and that there's an inalienable right to have public access. Figure 14-1 shows the recreation open space inventory and she had added existing facilities, proposed facilities and township facilities. We have one access point that provides more than visual access; the boat ramp on Front Street has access to the river and includes a gazebo, a park setting and benches. Also shown is the potential Waterfront Zone at the Roebling Steel Mill Site that will connect with the Delaware River Heritage Trail. There is potential for a boat dock and marina at this location. There is also potential for water access to Craft's Creek at the end of Amboy and Railroad Avenues to have kayaks and paddleboats. The township has so many visual access points along the river.

The strategy for more access to the river is with the Waterfront District which would have residential and commercial, open space, waterfront attractions and restaurants. The implementation has not been fully developed, and the township is potentially looking for a redeveloper to make it all come to fruition.

Mayor Wilkie mentioned that there has been an administrative committee that has met with Planner Fegley to review the draft elements of the Master Plan.

#### ADJOURNMENT

It was the Motion of Ms. Cartier, seconded by Mr. Kehr to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. Motion unanimously approved by all those present.

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Carl Mattson, Secretary

CM/kf