

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING
Thursday December 6, 2018

Present:

Vice Chairman Critchley

Ms. Jessica Pearson

Mr. Steven Neale

Mr. Greg Mascera, Planning Board Attorney

Councilman Roman

Mayor Ryan

Mr. Al DeOld

Ashley Neale, Planning Board Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:37 P.M. by Vice Chairman Critchley

Pledge of Allegiance:

Vice Chairman Critchley reads Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

Public Hearing: Eileen Spano- 24 Afterglow, states she is concerned about the Spectrum 360 Plan. She asks if there is a plan that has been approved that the site can hold 300 units. Mr. Mascera notes that there has been nothing in front of the board. Anything on the site would still require Site Plan approval by the board. A Site Plan would have to adhere to the terms of the settlement made with Fair Share Housing, then a developer would have to come in front of the Planning Board for approval. Mayor Ryan states that the Council has a conceptual agreement with Spectrum that has a total number of units and the amount that would have to be affordable. Ms. Spano states that she is not again affordable housing, just the sheer number of units. She states it is unimaginable to put 300 units on that site. Mr. Mascera states that once a settlement agreement is met it would need to be signed by the Council, Board of Adjustment and Planning Board. After the plans would have to abide by the settlement agreement.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairman Critchley asks for a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Planning Board meeting on September 27, 2018. Councilman Roman makes the motion. Ms. Pearson Seconds. Mayor Ryan abstains. All in Favor. Aye.

Presentation from The Land Conservancy of New Jersey on The Environmental Resource Inventory

Mr. Neale introduces Barbara Davis from the Land Conservancy of New Jersey to give a brief overview of the Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) that they have been working on since the beginning of the year. He states that it was sent to the boards for review and comments and that it will eventually need to be incorporated into the Master Plan.

Ms. Davis opens by giving an overview of the Land Conservancy stating they are a nonprofit organization based in Montville and Morris County. She states that they work with municipalities to better understand and enhance their open space lands. She explains Verona hired the Land Conservancy to update their 1999 ERI, and data changes and should be updated about every 10 years. She states Verona is in the Sustainable Jersey program, they received Bronze Certification in 2016 and will be applying for Silver Certification in 2019. She adds that having the ERI as part of the Master Plan earns 20 point as part of the application.

She adds that the ERI is a report and not a plan, it only says how things stand, and includes natural and built environment. She commends Verona on the Historic Sites inventory they had done in 2017, and says it was used as part of the ERI. She adds that the Historic Preservation Committee were, "top notch."

She continues by going through multiple maps that can be found in the report. She comments on a topographic map stating Hilltop is close to 700 feet in elevation and that the Peckman River is 300 feet in elevation. She notes that the ERI includes an extensive section on soils and that surprisingly Verona has farmland soils in Verona Park and upstream of the Peckman River. Ms. Davis states that 97 percent of the municipality is in the Lower Passaic/Saddle River water shed. In addition, that most of Verona's land use is urban land with forest in the park areas.

She asks if Verona has done a tree inventory. Mr. Neale states that the Township is currently in the process of doing one. Ms. Davis responds by saying the inventory is great to have. She adds that the Landscape Project done by the Environmental Protection Agency identifies habitats suitable for threatened and endangered species. She notes that parts of Verona can support three threatened species, such as the barred owl, the osprey, and the wood turtle. She also includes that the Verona Environmental Commission has sited eastern box turtle and bald eagles that will be included in the ERI. She acknowledges the importance of reporting these threatened species to the Department of Environmental Protection for updating data. Ms. Davis continues by noting that Verona FEMA flood zones are centered on the Peckman River. She shows the board a map of the 16 known contaminated sites.

Ms. Davis concludes that the ERI is supposed to provide guidance to municipalities as land use decisions are made, and hopes it will be beneficial to the board in the future.

Vice Chairman Critchley asks if anyone on the board has any questions. Ms. Pearson comments that the report was great and that she felt like the report was very personal, like Ms. Davis could have lived in Verona. Mr. Neale thanks Ms. Davis and the Land Conservancy for all their hard work on the report

Adjourn

After a motion made by Vice Chairman Critchley and seconded by Mr. Roman, there was a unanimous vote to adjourn at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Neale
Planning Board Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: Meeting minutes are a summation of the hearing. If you are interested in a verbatim transcript from this or any proceeding, please contact the Planning Board office at 973-857-4805.