

**WARREN TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
7:30 P.M. – Susie B. Boyce Meeting Room – 44 Mountain Boulevard
July 10 2023
APPROVED**

CALL TO ORDER

FLAG SALUTE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR TROOPS

ROLL CALL

Mayor DiNardo
Committeeman Lazo
Mr. Gallic
Mr. Toth
Mr. Lindner
Mr. DiBianca
Mr. Argiro

Mr. Scuderi
Mr. Esposito
Mr. Lippitt
Mr. Dwyer

***Statement by Presiding Officer:** Adequate notice of this meeting was posted on January 11, 2023, the Township bulletin board and sent to the Township Clerk, Echo Sentinel, and Courier Newser per the Open Public Meetings Act. All Board members are duly appointed volunteers working for the good and welfare of Warren Township. We plan to adjourn no later than 10:00 p.m.*

■ **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

June 26, 2023

Motion was made by Mr. DiBianca, seconded by Mr. Argiro to approve the minutes

ROLL CALL

For: Mr. Argiro, Mr. DiBianca, Mr. Scuderi, Mr. Dwyer, Mayor DiNardo, and Mr. Gallic

Against: None.

■ **Reports:**

Steve Warner, Esq.
John T. Chadwick, IV, P.P., Professional Planner
Christian Kastrud, P.E., Professional Engineer
Maryellen Vautin, Clerk

■ **CITIZENS HEARING non-agenda items**

Shelly Molnar came forward from 3 Stoningham Drive and asked about the Master Plan and that the town has allocated \$125,000 for a reexamination.

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Mr. Gallic stated that the Master Plan is just starting and it can go for several months and/or several years. It requires a lot of work and a lot of communication with the public. And there are new requirements, such as global warning element and more stormwater.

Ms. Molnar spoke of the scope of services that Mr. Chadwick put together and went over some of the items, and asked about the previous reexamination. The last reexamination was 2017, it was Amended and Restated Reexamination.

Ms. Molnar feels the website with the Master Plan is confusing and there are a lot of older reports and documents.

The upcoming Master Plan should be all in one document and the amendments will be incorporated, along with the new elements, all items will be updated.

Ms. Molnar would like the workshops similar to the Downtown ReDesign. Mr. Gallic said the Master Plan is more of a structured process and requires notices for any hearing. Ms. Molnar mentioned the social media person is doing a good job getting information out on the social events, but would like more on important items.

Mr. Gallic asked if anyone had further non-agenda items to discuss. Seeing no one come forward this portion of the meeting was closed.

■ **CORRESPONDENCE**

■ **RESOLUTIONS**

PB19-06 Konrad Wnek

Request for extension of approval of Minor Subdivision

Block 107 lots 4 and 5

43 and 45 Roseland Avenue (letter submitted from Mr. Jay Bohn

Mr. Gallic reminded all that the Planning Board approvals are contingent on outside agency approvals including Sewer approval. Wnek was waiting for Sewer approval and now there is capacity.

Mr. Gallic asked if any board members had questions. Mr. Steve Warner, the board attorney, mentioned the resolution for four months.

A motion was made by Mr. Toth, seconded by Mr. DiBianca to approve the extension.

ROLL CALL

For: Mr. Toth, Mr. Argiro, Mr. DiBianca, Mr. Scuderi, Mr. Esposito, Mr. Lippitt, Mr. Dwyer, Mayor DiNardo, Committeeman Lazo, Mr. Lindner and Mr. Gallic.

Against: None.

■ **HEARING/agenda items**

PB23-05 Chase Partners Preliminary and Final Site
284 King George Road, LLC
Block 85.01 , lot 1.03 Hotel

Mr. Keith Davis came forward as attorney for the applicant and they were in Warren in 2020. The property next to this property received approval for the townhouses and the apartment building currently under construction.

Lot 1.02 was created at that time and it was agreed that a hotel would be on that tract. They were present for that approval of a 123 room hotel, a Marriott Residence Inn. There are no variances for this application, it complies with the AH-4 housing district. Mr. Davis said there are two witnesses for the evening. The Briad Group, Mr. Jim Talerico, on behalf of the developer. The civil engineer for the applicant is Mr. Ron Kennedy.

The witnesses were sworn in, including the Township professionals, Mr. John Chadwick the Township Planner, and Mr. Christian Kastrud, the Township Engineer.

Mr. Warner told the board he had reviewed the notice for this hearing and it is sufficient and was timely served and published.

Mr. Gallic reminded the public that they can come forward to look at any exhibits.

Mr. Talerico came forward and went over his position of Senior Director at Briad Group. He has worked there for over 17 years and has over seen over 22 hotels of Marriott product constructed. The Marriott Residence Inn is an extended stay product so all rooms have kitchen efficiencies, including ranges, refrigerators, and microwaves. The average length of stay is 3 to 5 nights. The amenities that are associated with the hotel are a lounge area, a continental breakfast that is served daily only to guests, a private pool, a fitness center, an outdoor patio with grills and a firepit, a sports court that is used for either pickleball or basketball. There is a small meeting room that seats about 30 people only available to guests that are staying at the hotel.

There is a bar available only to guests staying at the hotel; there is no restaurant.

Exhibit A-1 (which is sheet A-201 of the submitted plans) was brought in. It is the elevation of the hotel. Mr. Talerico said this is the newest generation of the Marriott. They come out with new versions every so often. This is about two years out. There are a couple of differences in this plan. This has a Mansard roof from left to right (a south elevation); the latest revision date is June 29, 2023.

Mr. DiBianca asked about the buildings and if they had a little better display. It is hard to even find the entrance. They brought up sheet A-203 (Exhibit A-2) and

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last revised June 29, 2023. There are three different perspectives. They went over them and one is from Route 78, a Mountain Avenue perspective, and a King George Road perspective.

The entrance is interior to the development. It is not shown from the Mount Bethel side or Mountain Avenue. Mr. DiBianca does not care for the style and look of the building and it does not fit in with the surrounding properties.

Mr. Lindner mentioned a report from Jeffrey Beer, architect for the Township. Mr. Beer was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Davis stated they had just received that report before the meeting. They had two workshop meetings and they did not have any reports from the township. They were asked to clarify and modify the colors presented. Mr. Davis said there are no architecture review standards within the AH-4 zone so there are no guidelines that can be followed.

Mr. Chadwick said there are architectural review standards in Chapter 15. They relate to all the commercial zones. This zone was part of a settlement for affordable housing. Hotels have been permitted on the site for a few years and those standards did apply. There was further discussion on standards. Mr. Gallic asked if the applicant's stance was the Planning Board has no purview over architectural elements. Mr. Davis said the AH-4 has no standards. Mr. Gallic suggested that the board attorney investigate that for the board.

Then Mr. Davis asked to go forward with the application and the site plan. This hotel is part of the affordable housing settlement. Mr. Gallic reminded all that they did go over architecture during the housing portion of this site and they made changes to the eastern section that face the roadway. There was good feedback then.

They will need to review the settlement. They will focus on the site plan for the evening.

Mr. Argiro asked about a finished Residence Inn project. There is one under construction in New Brunswick and others that are different generations and constructed at different times. The closest version is New Brunswick and it looks way more modern than this said Mr. Talerico.

Mayor DiNardo said that design is very modern with the flat roof and suggested to soften the look with perhaps some fake dormers. There was no hotel brand specified in the settlement agreement.

Mr. Davis asked about the floor plan and went to page A-101 latest revision June 29, 2023 and marked Exhibit A-3. The first floor has the amenities and the check in/reception. There are also 24 rooms on that floor. The second, third, and fourth floor has 34 rooms each. There are 22 1-bedroom kings (separate bedrooms), 47 double queen rooms, 24 studio kings (smaller room not separated bedroom), and 30 connector kings. A connector king adjoins double queen rooms.

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The approximate size of the first floor is 27,422Sf, the second, third and fourth is 21,145SF for a total of 90,907SF.

They went over the identification signage. There is a sign on the King George side (the south side), another sign that faces on the north, at the main gate house. Sheet A-202 dated June 29, 2023 and is Exhibit A-4.

The sign is internally luminated signs, with channel letters. There is a sign on the plans. The total sign size is 60.52SF per sign.

There is a shed on the property proposed. It is a typical pre-fabricated shed that would be matched with the color of the building and is utilized for winter equipment.

Mr. DiBianca mentioned there are 220 apartments, 115 townhouses, and this will be 123 rooms here. Are there any shared services for the three complexes. Only the common roadways will be shared.

There is only one sign on King George Road side on the facade. There is one on the interior side of the hotel above the main entrance also.

Mr. Charles Schreckenberger, the architect, came forward and spoke about the materials being used are showing the variations of color in the color chart.

Mr. Gallic talked about Residence Inns that he has visited all over the country and especially, the Seattle area. They are much different looking than the ones in D.C. and this site. Marriott dictates what their brand should be. The witness indicated there is not a lot flexibility on the overall architecture.

Mr. Chadwick feels the drawings don't really show the color schemes correctly. One of the sidings is a fairly dark green. It was lightened up. The applicant offered to bring the material boards. Mr. Gallic feels it is the architecture itself that the board has issue with.

Mr. Lindner discussed a building in Asbury Park he is consulting on architecturally. The renderings did not give enough detail. They paid \$2000 to have a quality rendering done. They are very good and can show how the lighting will be.

Mr. Gallic asked Mr. Warner if Marriott was specified as the exclusive hotel. It was not called out as a Marriott.

Mr. Ron Kennedy, the applicant's engineer, came forward and was accepted by the board. He is with Gladstone Design and the AH-4 zone is 49 acres in total. He brought in Exhibit A-5, an aerial of the site. The first two phases of this project are under construction with some completed and occupied. There are Pulte homes under construction on the King George side with one entrance into the

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development. There is an affordable housing building in this section, eight in total with one occupied already. He believes the rest of those will close by mid-August.

The second phase is the 220 unit apartment with mix of market and affordable units. There are two buildings and the center is the parking 4-story level and parking around the perimeter. The only access is at King George Road with a traffic light. They believe it will be about nine months until occupancy. Most of the site improvements have been put in, the pump station, water loops, parking lots, etc.

The third component of the AH-4 zone is the hotel site. There are environmental constraints that changed since the 2020 application and approval. Exhibit A-6, is the environmental constraints. There are regulated areas, flood plain, and mostly wetlands and riparian buffers. In 2020 the wetlands buffer was 50 ft. and when they renewed the LOI in 2022, it changed to 150 ft. buffer. The now proposed site has the 150 ft. This caused less flexibility around the perimeter of the hotel site and it is tighter. They have to do an averaging plan and go into part of the 150 ft area and give unrestricted areas restrictions. They are in that process with NJDEP currently.

The site plan was brought in as Exhibit A-7. It shows just the hotel and the intersection on King George Road and changes have been made to the traffic light already.

Mr. Kennedy spoke about the access and Aster Boulevard is the road. There are cross easements for access. The building is parallel to King George Road. There is one parking space per room required, 123. The main entrance where you check in is to the rear of King George Road, facing inward to the site. There is parking in the front and in the rear. The proposed shed is in the rear. There is also a trash enclosure. There are four EV charging stations as required. There are sidewalks that connect to the project.

There are entrance doors that can be used after check in around the building. Mr. Gallic mentioned that the nicer looking area is facing inward and it is unusual.

There is a fill pile that was taken from the site across from this site on King George from the 1990s during that construction. That pile is unconsolidated and it has different material that is regulated by DEP. There is an LSRP, a licensed professional that makes sure this soil is accounted for. It stays on site or it has to be treated as a significant waste and shipped out to Pennsylvania or Ohio, etc. The goal is to keep the soil on the property. They have gotten larger and smaller through the construction of the site and the LSRP ensures it has not been moved off the property. There will be some of the dirt under the parking lot, and under the building. Mr. Lindner asked about it being an environmental concern.

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These conditions have been present since the 1990s, the material could be removed but it is costly. It is mostly construction debris.

The building is 4-story and is just under 52 ft. The setback is 69.5 (where 50 ft. is required) from the property line and complies with the zoning. The parking setback is 15 ft. and they are 15.8 ft. The charging stations and small patios around the main entrance area for outdoor services. There is a generator proposed in the front. They don't know where the transformer will be yet. They show a hot box (for water) to have valves that have to be out of the ground. They researched further and a hot box will not be required. The valves can go inside the building and just need a meter pit outside near the road.

There is a ground mounted sign at the intersection of King George Road and it is 45 SF and is 8 ft high. There are two mounted signs. There have been increased requirements for stormwater and another new requirement pending. They have designed to the next requirement. The drainage is split to two different basins.

Sewers will be tied to the existing sewers now on the property that pump up to King George Road and go up to Deerfield.

There is landscaping on the plan and there were significant comments about landscaping. We received the memo from the Township landscape professional. They will work with the landscape and comply with the requests. There will be additional plantings added.

Mr. Lindner has concerns about a fire truck getting into the site from the King George Road side. They will model that to check it can make that turn. There was discussion on moving the entrance down to alleviate the issue. The applicant will investigate this.

Mr. DiBianca asked about the parking with 123 parking stalls and what about employee parking. Mr. Davis went over that they meet the parking standard.

The Briad representative came forward and went over the employee information. Between 7 to 3 they have 15 people on staff, predominantly the cleaning staff. Guests are gone mostly. Between 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. there are five employees. And overnight there is only two present. They will never use one parking space for every hotel room.

Mr. Lindner said that often his family needs separately vehicles due to schedules. Mr. Talerico also mentioned that people Uber or taxi from airports.

Mr. Chadwick asked about a more accurate picture of the colors. A high quality rendering had been discussed. The applicant had suggested they bring a material board.

Mr. Gallic asked why the back is the front, fronting King George Road. Mr. Kennedy stated they had looked at it very closely and if it is flipped it would

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eliminate many parking spaces. This is in the area that cuts into the Flood Hazard areas. The limits of disturbance are shown with white lines, which changed recently. They feel if flipped or changed they would not get 123 units and it would not be feasible.

Mr. Gallic asked about not having the front towards King George Road because you can't fit it and maximize the room number and he doesn't agree with that. There is an ordinance that the houses in town must face the roadway so it was consistent. Mr. Gallic suggests there is a solution in this somewhere, even with a faux door facing King George. The door that connects to the main lobby might be dressed up. They mentioned 40 Mountain where they asked for this.

The trash enclosure is in the front and they will go out the front to dispose trash and it is taken out often in the middle of the night.

Mr. Kastrud went over his memo dated July 6, 2023. There was discussion on the entrance to Aster Blvd and that the easement has been put in place.

Mr. Kastrud said they will ensure that the conservation easement is along the correct area. The identification signs will be added to the site plan. They will added details to the plan for the proposed multipurpose court. There will be safety netting around it that will be 10 ft. high. Mr. Chadwick asked if it could be 8 ft. Mr. Kastrud spoke about the generator and landscaping being added. They agreed and it should be added to the plans.

There was discussion on the access aisle and smoothing it out. The retaining wall Along King George Road has about 80% at two feet high and the grade drops off and then the wall is exposed and Mr. Kastrud said it is around 8.8 ft. It is a big mass along the road and it needs to be screened. Mr. Kastrud suggested lowering the wall. This should be discussed at the next meeting.

There was discussion on the stormwater and requirements of new rules. The new Operation and maintenance manual shall be filed in the Somerset County Clerk's office as part of the Detention Basin Easement on lot 1.03.

Mr. Lindner asked about the mound of dirt on the property currently. Some dirt comes in and some dirt goes out from the mound to different parts on the overall site.

The upper area of the mound is not regulated but the LSRP does monitor the dirt and any movement. Before 2020 dirt is regulated, since then with the townhouse construction dirt is not regulated.

Mr. Charles McCuster, the LSRP (Licensed Site Remediation Professional) , had been sworn in previously and he went over his role, acting on behalf of DEP. He has been doing this work since 1983. He is LSRP for all three areas on the site. There is one compound, Cobalt, that exceeds the regulation levels above residential. This changed in 2020 and it was not an issue before that. The dirt

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came from across the street. They tested and it is a background naturally occurring substance. If it goes offsite it would need to be handled as a regulated material. They have done many reports and issued an REO. There will be a final remediation report.

Mr. Gallic asked about the earlier comment that the material was contaminated with construction debris. There was some but that has not been included in reports but it would be in logs. Cobalt is in that area of Warren, naturally occurring.

Mr. Chadwick asked if the building could be dropped a little bit. It was not dropped but the retaining wall can be dropped a little bit. Mr. Kennedy went over the wall and how it will be 2 ft in some areas and 7 ft in other areas. They can reduce the 7 ft. somewhat.

Mr. Chadwick mentioned the architecture has been an issue since submittal. Landscaping is in progress, the configuration is in progress so Mr. Chadwick will not go over his report.

Mr. Gallic opened to the public for questions or comments.

Ms. Andrea Enabosi from 9 Stoningham Drive, came forward and suggested a 3-D digital model would help to clearly see the surrounding aspects.

Ms. Kristen Clapcich came forward from 6 Magnolia and asked about the hotel rooms and if they will have accessible balconies. There are no balconies proposed.

Ms. Enabosi came up and asked if stairs in the hotel that would prevent accessibility. There are stairwells and ADA accessibility through the elevator, they comply with ADA requirements.

Mr. Joe Farro from 3 Sage Drive came forward and asked about the retention basin on Mountain Avenue, which is part of the previous application. Mr. Kennedy showed where it is on the overall plan and they are roughed out and soils have been put in. Mr. Farro feels it is sort of a mess. They don't want to build it out until construction is complete. He asked about a sign on Mountain and none is proposed. No one else came forward and this portion of the meeting was closed.

Mr. Gallic said they will be able to be on in two weeks, on July 24. The hearing was carried to July 24, 2023 at 7:30 at the same address, 44 Mountain with no further notice. Mr. Chadwick suggests to get a better picture.

PB20-03 K. Hovnanian, The Hills at Warren
Request for extension of variance and start of construction
Letter from K. Hovnanian

The board discussed the extension and the necessity of it or not.

Motion was made by Mr. Lindner, seconded by Mr. Argiro to approval the extension

ROLL CALL

For: Mr. Toth, Mr. Argiro, Mr. DiBianca, Mr. Scuderi, Mr. Esposito, Mr. Lippitt, Mr. Dwyer, Mayor DiNardo, Mr. Lindner.

Abstain: Mr. Gallic

SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING

July 24, 2023

Pending applications

PB23-05 284 King George Road, LLC, Hotel Site Plan (possibly carry forward)

PB23-06, 30 Mountain Blvd Preliminary Site Plan with inclusionary housing

Paternostro, Minor Subdivision Morning Glory Road, received revised plans June 16, 2023

■ **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Mr. Argiro, seconded by Mr. DiBianca. Adjourned approximately 9:25