

**WARREN TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
7:30 P.M. – Susie B. Boyce Meeting Room – 44 Mountain Boulevard
May 12, 2014
APPROVED**

CALL TO ORDER Meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR TROOPS

***Statement by Presiding Officer:** Adequate notice of this meeting was posted on January 14, 2014 on the Township bulletin board and sent to the Township Clerk, Echoes Sentinel and Courier News 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.*

ROLL CALL

Mayor DiNardo (excused)
Committeeman Marion
Mr. Toth (absent)
Mr. Kaufmann
Mr. Lindner (absent)
Mr. Malanga (absent)

Mrs. Smith (excused)
Mr. DiBianca
Mr. Freijomil
Mr. Gallic (excused)
Mr. Villani

■ **Announcements:**
None

■ **PROFESSIONAL STAFF REPORTS:**

**Alan Siegel, Esq., Planning Board Attorney
John T. Chadwick, IV, P.P., Professional Planner
Christian Kastrud, P.E., Professional Engineer
Maryellen Vautin, Clerk**

No Reports

■ **CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

■ **MASTER PLAN DISCUSSION**

Mr. Chadwick discussed that the Master Plan must be reexamined every ten years per statute. The last plan was adopted in 2005 with Master Plan amendments in 2006, which also contained a reexamination element. So it is needed to be in place by June or July 2015. He indicated that it will take time

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and that the COAH rules are changing and will take time to interpret. It will be cut back to ten units from one of out of five units for credit. The rules have been discontinued and new rules will be established and are complicated. Warren had about 50 substandard housing in town 20 years ago. Mr. Chadwick feels that is an underestimate because it took into account the household income and Warren has about 100 houses that make less than \$10,000 a year although, family members may be supporting some of those individuals. Now there are 78 units that are substandard units in Warren. The town has repaired and given grants out to about 50 families in town through a program for low and moderate income with certain problems such as windows, furnace; and they get an estimate and they may receive a loan for approximately 10 years.

Mr. Chadwick believes that if there is an incomplete kitchen that is a non-standard so they may have counted units in Chelsea as part of the substandard.

Mr. Chadwick feels the COAH issues will not play into the reexamination of the Master Plan and formulating the changes to it. A reexamination is a report to address land use items and assess if the objectives and goals from 10 years previous are still relevant, and if they are, is there progress towards those goals. A report includes the basic facts and figures supporting the conclusions of the report. The land use law states if you haven't completed the reexamination with a sound process than your zoning may not be valid if challenged. The reexamination report will spell out what has changed. It will highlight shifts in policy, such as Open Space acquisition over the last ten years. The report doesn't address quality of life issues, signs, banners, property maintenance, commercial in residential zones, the animals; pigs, chickens in residential zones. Mr. Chadwick spoke about a map given the board members that showed the amount of land that exists that is not fully developed, such as the property across from the old Citi Group property, on Mountain Ave and King George that is zoned Office but there is a single family home on it. The Planning Board will look at the land that is left to be developed and the zoning of it. Mt. Bethel Road/King George Road has changed through the years with more commercial on it. There has been some interest in developing properties with the second floor as residential which should be investigated.

The reexamination report leads into the Master Plan. The reexamination report has all the figures and background information on the state of the town. Mr. Chadwick wants participation in this process. Mr. Chadwick will meet with committees, such as Environmental, Recreation, Board of Health.

Some of the vacant land cannot be used due to regulations or physical properties of the land that make it difficult to develop, such as too steep, wet.

Mr. Siegel asked how the public is involved.

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All of the town has zoning now. Mr. Kaufmann asked if they have to change zones or can they maintain. Mr. Chadwick stated there is no mandate that you change anything but the plan has to be able to be defended. The Planning Board decides on the Master Plan. The reexamination report requires no public hearings but the Master Plan does require public hearing.

Mr. DiBianca spoke about the latest amendment, Historic Elements Zone, and that it states there are 113 historic sites and asked if it is the board's job to look at those sites. Mr. Chadwick said not necessarily, that the board can decide. In 2000, the historic sites needed to be updated. Mr. Chadwick suggested that certain areas in town may need to be evaluated with unique buildings and sites. The zoning can establish condition on any restorations that might take place and all of the commercial zones have architectural requirements other than Office Research. It is the Town Center architectural requirements or standards.

For any changes there will need to be general support. Such as the property across from the King George Rd complex, which used to be City Group. That property is zoned purely for office which is acceptable along interstate. There was discussion of having just a pure office district.

Mr. Chadwick brought up the objective that is almost achieved with public property along the Dead and Passaic River, which is all six acre zoning. Most of it is wet.

Mr. Chadwick has started putting data together and in about three months should be able to enough information to start with the reexamination initiation.

Open space has been a goal and there is open space funding, and residents are interested in recreation property.

Mr. Freijomil asked if they could get a timeline and a guide to the order of sections to look at. Mr. Chadwick feels the discussion portion is the most difficult and the reexamination report and master plan should be reconciled, and the zoning ordinances that follow. Mr. Freijomil was still looking at timing to go forward. Mr. DiBianca spoke about the county and state strategic plans and how the process took years and there are three new elements to those plans, and asked if there will be an impact on Warren. Mr. Chadwick feels most of them have had outreach to the towns and have focused on the least able towns to help themselves. So Warren will not be largely affected. Mr. DiBianca feels those new elements and the strategic plans are infringing on local government. How will Warren keep its economy. Mr. Chadwick states that there will be statements on those plans and and discussed earlier plans concerning economic developments.

Mr. Chadwick stated the Master Plan is a difficult document and it must stay focused and simple.

Mr. Villani wants to focus where we are in the town and the areas, locations of concern that may be considered for change. But when discussing changes in

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one area you need to consider the ramifications to the surrounding areas and that the Board of Adjustment is effective in dealing with changes in small areas. It is difficult to know what may succeed in a particular location, the investor's may not agree, and the board should be realistic.

During the last Master Plan work groups, committees and boards were invited in to the process. They were written a letter and asked to comment on the pertinent information. Mr. Chadwick feels that they should at least have their input, come to a meeting or send a letter.

There was discussion about the medical buildings and development and that medical offices want to go Mount Bethel east only. So that is a reality for medical use. There are three hospitals that overlap for location in that area (in order to be a resident at that hospital).

There was discussion about commercial development and small businesses that will always be in town, but that retail sales are conducted on the internet very often also. There was discussion on the state of Washington Valley Rd.

Mr. Chadwick hopes to get authorization and have information by Fall. There will be the data presented, and then the board will work towards a reexamination report.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Villani, seconded by Mr. Freijomil. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:30.