

## MINUTES

The July 20, 2009 meeting of the Planning Board of the Township of Chatham was called to order at approximately 7:30 p.m. by Chairperson Joel Jacobson. The Open Public Meetings Act Statement was read into the record. The agenda for the meeting included a courtesy review for a parking lot expansion of the Chatham High School and a continuation of the public hearing for the Walkway/Bikeway Plan.

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### Roll Call

Board members present included Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Brower, Mr. Browne, Mrs. Chambers, Mr. Ciccarone, Mr. Cohn, Ms. Hagner, Mr. Hurring and Mr. Sullivan. Board professionals present included attorney Bill Robertson, engineer John Ruschke and planner Frank Banisch.

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### Minutes

Ms. Hagner moved to approve the amended minutes from the June 15, 2009 meeting and Mrs. Chambers seconded, with all in favor.

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### Discussions

#### Chatham High School Parking Lot Expansion

Business Administrator Ralph Goodwin and Assistant Superintendent of Schools Anne Dudley were present on behalf of the School District of the Chathams to present a proposed plan to expand the parking lot at Chatham High School. A capital review is necessary for all capital improvements.

Mr. Goodwin stated there were complaints about parking in the areas around the school so the District was trying to find a way to address the parking concerns onsite.

According to Mr. Goodwin, at the end of the last fiscal year, there was money (\$200,000) discovered available and they were able to use the state contract and get a contractor to assist with the process of expanding the parking lot. This was not something in the long term plan, but came as a result of hearing concerns and the opportunity of the funds being made available.

Mr. Goodwin distributed a chart reflecting the enrollment growth (Exhibit A1) that is projected and stated that the parking issue is only going to get worse over time.

Mr. Robertson stated that any plan using public funds must be submitted to the Board for review and recommendation. The recommendation must be submitted within 45 days. Mr. Robertson said school facility projects are also required to be reviewed. A Resolution with recommendations would be developed by the Planning Board and sent to the State Board of Education.

Mr. Goodwin described the project and said the purpose was to extend an existing lot on the right hand side of the building in the shape of an "L", adding 57-63 parking spaces. Faculty parking would be concentrated in the back and therefore more spaces would be available up front for students.

Mr. Ciccarone asked if there was a deadline for spending the money proposed for this project; Mr. Goodwin said that it was last year's money and is encumbered so there is a 90 day window in which it needs to be paid.

Mrs. Chambers asked if the general public was aware of this project; Mr. Goodwin stated that it had only been discussed at the committee level of the Board of Education to date.

Mr. Brower asked if there was a public hearing; Mr. Robertson stated that it is not required and that the Planning Board hearing counts as a public hearing.

Mrs. Chambers stated as a taxpayer and a parent of two children who will attend Chatham High School, she had serious objections to the project and feels there is availability of parking at the Colony Pool lot and there was no need to add impervious coverage in this environmentally sensitive area.

Mrs. Chambers also stated that there have been cuts made each year to the school budget and she felt that if parents were polled, this is not how the parents as a whole would choose to spend the money. Mr. Goodwin stated that the restrictions on the funds make it so only equipment and capital expenses could be considered. Mrs. Chambers suggested the purchase of computers would be a better use of the funds. Mr. Ciccarone suggested the funds could be appropriated next year for other items; Mr. Goodwin stated that if it is not spent it is returned to either the fund balance or future year tax relief. Mr. Goodwin stated there is not a state contract that would allow for roof repair quickly, within the window.

Mr. Ruschke stated that a soil erosion and sediment control permit was needed from the county, which requires planning and professional expertise that would require more lead time than the window of time available. Mr. Ruschke expected the preparation time would be approximately two months. Mr. Goodwin commented that if the requirement from the county was accurate, it is unlikely the project would be possible.

Mr. Brower noted the plans indicated grading was to be raised and said this may impact the neighbors negatively, as runoff would be going on to neighboring properties.

Mr. Robertson stated the Planning Board did not have the authority to deny the project. The Planning Board's role is to review and make recommendations. Mr. Jacobson stated a Resolution could be made bringing in the issues of concern including necessity, impact on

neighbors, environmental impact and the engineer's concerns. Mr. Jacobson stated a letter would be prepared.

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#### Bikeway/Walkway Plan Hearing

Mr. Jacobson said that there were minor changes made to the Bikeway/Walkway Plan Element of the Master Plan and asked Mr. Banisch to review the changes.

One area that prompted concern was the extension of a bike path beyond the developed portion of Chatham Township and into the Swamp along the power line easement. Mr. Banisch commented that he feels that there is the possibility of working with the utility to gain access to the easements. There are some residents who have property on the easement and are not open to having the bike path in their yards. One resident, Mr. Bondurich, offered an alternate route that would not impact residents' private property. Mrs. Susan Hoag suggested that permission could be requested from residents and asked the Board to remember that this is a work in progress.

After discussion regarding the utility easement usage, Mr. Ciccarone suggested the text of the Bikeway Plan should remain, as it describes the goal of the project. The Township should continue to work with PSE&G and neighboring property owners, change Figure #3 to delete the proposed path along the PSE&G easement and perhaps come up with a new map that just identifies the easement. In the text on page 14 of the plan, Mr. Ciccarone suggested the new map be referenced.

Mr. Browne asked about sidewalks near the schools; Mr. Ciccarone reviewed the plans for sidewalks that were proposed. Mrs. Chambers said while there was a mention of it in the plan, it was more detailed in the implementation plan. There was also discussion of including a description of a path along the Passaic River and a path along the ridge.

Mr. Jacobson asked for comments from the public. There were none and the hearing was closed.

Mr. Jacobson stated the Board would vote on the Plan with the changes reflecting the goals of the Township working with PSE&G and neighboring property owners, but not putting the path on the map.

Mr. Brower made a motion to approve the Walkway/Bikeway Plan as amended; and it was seconded by Ms. Hagner. At roll call vote, all members voted “yes”.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the Resolution for the Board. Following the review, Mr. O’Connor suggested a statement should be included stating that the Plan furthers the goals of the Sustainable Jersey Program.

Ms. Hagner moved to approve the Resolution and Mr. Hurring seconded. At roll call vote, all members voted “yes” and the Resolution passed unanimously.

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There being no further business, the July 20, 2009 meeting of the Planning Board of the Township of Chatham was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine T. Hollerith  
Recording Secretary