

**WASHINGTON BOROUGH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
May 11, 2009**

The regular meeting of the Washington Borough Planning Board was called to order by Chair VanDeursen at 8:00 P.M. in the second floor Court Room/Council Chambers of the Borough Hall. Chair VanDeursen read the following statement into the record: "The requirements of the "Open Public Meetings Law", P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, have been satisfied in that adequate notice of this meeting has been published in the Star Gazette and posted on the Bulletin Board of the Borough Hall stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting as required by law." Chair VanDeursen led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present:	Post, Aron, Truman, Jewell, VanDeursen
Absent:	Valentine, McDonald, Fitting, Phelan
Also Present:	Jerome Baucom, Attorney William Gleba, Board Engineer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Meeting of March 9, 2009: No comments on the minutes. Therefore it was moved by Truman, seconded by Post to approve as presented.

ROLL CALL: Post, Aron, Truman,
Jewell, VanDeursen
Ayes: 4; Nays: 0; Abstentions: 1
Motion carried.

RESOLUTION: None

APPLICATIONS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Abandoned Properties Ordinance: No discussion. Copy to be obtained from Municipal Clerk for discussion at next meeting.

Creation of Land Use Board (combining Planning/Zoning):

Chair VanDeursen asked for clarification of Section 3 on Page 1. Attorney Baucom stated that the Manager, Mayor and Council Representative would not vote due to the fact that appeals go to Council. Class members are defined as follows: Class 2 – employee; Class 1 – mayor; Class 3 – council rep; class 4 – community member. Alternates would participate but not vote unless needed as a member.

Tina Truman asked if the zoning board would be dissolved. Marianne stated that both boards would be dissolved and a new one would be created. Attorney Baucom stated that Council would make the decision on members. A few reasons to not combine boards would be 1) more community involvement with 2 boards; 2) amount of activity; 3) not big cost factor. A few advantages would be 1) handle all development; 2) know what is going on

Jerome Baucom stated that in his experience, serving for other municipalities, there are more reasons not to merge. He felt that by not merging the boards, the Borough continues to support more community involvement; you have more people in the community who are actively involved. He also warned that occasionally you have very active Boards with a lot of development going on or a lot of business going on, even though with the current economy we are not seeing much happening. From his perspective, the cost savings is De minimis, if at all. Jerome also noted that the professionals would not be affected. The same projects will be heard whether it's Planning Board or Board of Adjustment. You are going to have the same people involved for the same time; there will be no cost savings to the Borough. He also warned that some applicants may not even be reached in a night. They have an attorney or another professional sitting out there with the clock running. *Note: The Borough's time clock begins running as soon as a site plan application is deemed complete and hearings begin. The law dictates the dated time lines the municipality must adhere to for completion and approval/disapproval of the application.*

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Marianne Van Deursen's concern focused on what happens when you are in a situation where you do have development and/or redevelopment. Knowing that the Board of Adjustment meetings can go pretty lengthy if there are multiple variance applications, the combined land use board meeting agendas could become quite overloaded if there is a major site plan application added to all that. Take, for example, if an applicant comes back before the Board with proposals for major site plans to develop the large tracts that have historically taken up much Board time (Serelis or Baker). Anticipating a renewed economy, within the next few years, what happens when downtown redevelopment begins? Those on the combined Land Use Board are never going to get away with just one meeting per month. You are not going to be able to hear a whole site plan application for Planning Board and hear all of the Board of Adjustment applications. Whoever agrees to be on the combined Land Use Board has got to go into it understanding they would potentially no longer be serving once a month, but rather twice per month on occasion. In her past experience, it has been difficult to find volunteers to come out to serve (and consistently show up) once per month, let alone twice per month. She sincerely hoped this would not discourage volunteers.

Bill Gleba emphasized that when it gets busy and you have to have people come out two times a month, the biggest issue you will face is getting a quorum, especially in the summertime. People take vacations and you are asking for two weeks out of the month that they would have to commit to staying in town. He warned us to remember that they are volunteers.

Tina Truman questioned the cost benefit. She advised that the Board of Adjustment already considered and evaluated this, by looking carefully at the budget and discovering that it was a negligible amount. Another point that she emphasized, a very good point, is that there are people that sit at both meetings; the engineer, the attorney and herself. That was the point of her coming on to be a liaison to both boards and she feels this is not only important and significant, but it covers the bases. She finds little advantage to a merge and also felt it would be a shame to dissolve the Board of Adjustment; losing members with 25-30 years of experience would be a sin.

Justin Jewell pointed out that we are providing a service to our community for what we do and feels the Borough has decreased a lot of our services over the years. He was concerned that this would effectively be another decrease in service to the community.

Dan Aron is a newer member to the Planning Board who enthusiastically admitted he came here to volunteer to do stuff, but was concerned about how busy will it be if there is a merge. He was disappointed that as a newly inspired community volunteer, he may not even be appointed to the new board.

Motion by Truman, seconded by Post to **not** support a merge and keep two separate boards.

ROLL CALL: Post, Aron, Truman,
Jewell, VanDeursen
Ayes: 5; Nays: 0; Abstentions: 0
Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Permitted Business Uses:

Justin asked what the difference is between a massage therapist and a parlor. It was noted that a therapist would hold a license. Attorney Baucom stated that one typo needs correcting (the word "to" needs to be added in section I, VIII.) Therefore, it was moved by Post, seconded by Truman to recommend adoption of ordinance with revisions.

ROLL CALL: Post, Aron, Truman,
Jewell, VanDeursen
Ayes: 5; Nays: 0; Abstentions: 0
Motion carried.

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REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES: None

UNAGENDIZED STATEMENTS:

Dan Aron asked about the committees as selected at the reorganization meeting in January. Marianne stated that the committees would meet as needed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Sinkbeil correspondence – no comments

NJ Planner – no comments

Final Copy of Redevelopment Plan – no comments

NJPO membership cards were handed out.

Chuck Latini left Heyer, Gruel & Associates to go to NJ Transit. Heather Zielula may be taking his place. If available, maybe she can attend June meeting to meet with Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Patricia L. Titus, Planning Board Clerk

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