

**MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD
TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM
JULY 16, 2018**

Ms. Nicole Hagner called the Regular Meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:32 P.M.

Adequate notice of the meetings of the Planning Board of the Township of Chatham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice in the form of a Resolution setting forth the schedule of meetings for the year 2018, and January, 2019 was published in the *Chatham Courier* and the *Morris County Daily Record*, a copy filed with the Municipal Clerk and a copy placed on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building.

Roll Call

Answering present to the roll call were Ms. Hagner, Mr. Hurring, Mrs. Swartz, Mr. Brower, Mr. Franko, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Nevin. Mr. Ciccarone, Mr. Travisano and Mr. Tarasca were absent.

Also present were Township Planner Frank Banisch and Board Attorneys Steve Warner and Amanda Wolfe.

Mr. Brower made a motion to excuse the absences from this meeting. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Warner asked for the addition of a word on the fourth page of the May 21, 2018 minutes.

Mr. Nelson moved to approve the May 21, 2018 minutes as amended. Mr. Brower seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with abstentions by Mr. Hurring, Mrs. Swartz and Mr. Franko.

Discussion

Circulation Plan Element

Ms. Hagner said that the Circulation Plan Element had been discussed a few years ago, and tonight's informal discussion is on a streamlined draft prepared by Mr. Hurring. Mr. Hurring said that the subcommittee was tasked to update the 1999 plan, and the draft is ready for the Board to give comments on what might need to be added or further amended.

Mr. Banisch said that the 2014 draft was not adopted, partially because it was dramatically longer, and also because the extent to which the Planning Board wanted to commit policy in the direction of Complete Streets was debatable. Mr. Banisch asked that the Board consider if they want the general policy regarding bike and pedestrian improvements to favor expansion, maintenance or reduction. He also advised against having the Circulation Plan Element describe itself as a Complete Streets plan and then not include any of the aspects of Complete Streets.

Mr. Hurring said that the current proposed draft contains goals, and earlier drafts did not feature any goals. Mr. Banisch said that the Board will need to make sure that the goals are consistent with the policy objectives of the Planning Board. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Complete Streets objectives would be at odds with the proposed goals. Mr. Banisch noted that based on the National Complete Streets Coalition's definition of the term, not all roads in Chatham Township could become "complete streets."

Mr. Brower suggested that input be sought from residents in the different geographic segments of the Township. He also noted previous discussions before the Township Committee about sidewalk maintenance.

Mr. Hurring commented on the goal of improving traffic flow, and noted that it implies that there is a perceived problem with traffic flow or traffic studies have demonstrated a problem.

Mrs. Swartz commented that the goals should acknowledge that the Township is unique, and should avoid ideologies that do not fit the character of the Township.

Mr. Nevin asked if the Township would risk losing grant opportunities if there is not a Complete Streets policy in place. Ms. Hagner that the State used to recommend the Complete Streets philosophy, but Chatham Township had concerns about adopting such a policy. Mr. Sullivan said that as long as municipalities agree to try to include certain concepts, grants are still available. Mr. Nevin also said that there are certain roads in the Township where it is crazy to ride a bicycle, and he raised a concern about certain Complete Streets commitments.

Mr. Warner recommended that the goals include language to the effect of "to the extent reasonably practical."

Mr. Franko commented on highway structure, and that the plan does not indicate that there is a connection to Route 24.

Ms. Hagner asked if the section on Existing Roads System should include the High Gate at Chatham development as a new street. New roads in the Rose Valle development will be added. The reference to Hatch Mott MacDonald will be updated to refer to the Township Engineer's Office.

Ms. Hagner commented on proposed projects cited in the 1999 plan that are not going to be conducted, particularly the Heritage Greenway. She also noted that Morris County is working on updates to their plan.

The need to update the inventory of sidewalks was discussed. There was also discussion as to what differentiates a sidewalk from a walkway or a trail.

Mr. Sullivan said that the plan should include a statement that roads will not be narrowed in order to accommodate other forms of transportation. He cited the narrowing of Shunpike for the installation of sidewalks, and said that the narrowing has made that section of Shunpike more dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The parking section was briefly discussed, and it will remain in the circulation element.

Bikeways were discussed. The risks that bicyclists assume upon themselves were discussed, and the manner in which bicyclists impede traffic were noted.

Senior bussing was discussed, and Mrs. Swartz commented on the transportation services provided by the Senior Center of the Chathams.

The data in Table 6 in the Traffic Volumes section was noted as needing updating. Mr. Sullivan said that he will check with Lt. Miller and County officials to get updates. The topic of distracted driving due to cell phone use was discussed. Mr. Sullivan said that the line about snow-filled sidewalks should be removed.

The intersection of Shunpike Road and Loantaka Way was discussed, and the Board recommended that it still presents challenges despite the modifications made to the intersection by Morris County. The Board recommended that further study of the intersection be conducted.

Hickory Tree Circulation was discussed, and it was noted that the County is planning to make modifications to that stretch of Shunpike Road.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that the Township avoid overuse of signage. The appendices were also reviewed for potential updates.

Mr. Sullivan asked for an analysis of the potential impact of affordable housing development on circulation in the Township. He noted that surrounding towns will also need to have affordable housing development, which could potentially impact traffic in the Township.

Other Business

Mr. Brower asked if the Planning Board could address situations in which developers purchases houses and let them sit vacant for extended periods of time. He noted that such circumstances lend themselves to safety issues, as they become attractive nuisances. Mr. Warner said that it would fall under the Township Committee's purview under the Township's police powers, and offered to communicate the Board's concerns to the Township Attorney.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that the Township should require developers whose intent is to demolish a house to do so within a certain timeframe rather than having a vacant house sit boarded up for extended periods of time.

Mr. Nelson moved to adjourn at 9:39 PM. Mr. Franko seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gregory J. LaConte
Planning Board Recording Secretary