

Planning Board
May 8, 2024

Meeting called to order by Board Attorney Brian Schwartz at 7:07pm.

Frank Kreder, Cheryl McKeever, and Michael Haggerty sworn in as Board members by Mayor La Ronde.

Statement of compliance read by Brian Schwartz.

Roll Call

Present:

Dave Hollod
Aimee Corzo
Tom Fagan
Cheryl McKeever
David Branan
Frank Kreder
Michael Giordano
Michael Haggerty
Madeleine Olivo Reinoso
Mayor Lawrence La Ronde

Absent:

Andre Mitchell

Also present is Board Attorney Brian Schwartz and Borough Engineer Dave Testa.

Madeleine Olivo Reinoso sworn in as a Board member by Mayor La Ronde.

Pledge of allegiance.

Reorganization

Tom Fagan stated no longer wants to be Chair. He nominated Michael Giordano for Chair. Seconded by Aimee Corzo.

Mayor La Ronde made a motion to close nominations for Chair. Seconded by Frank Kreder.

All in favor.

All in favor of Mr. Giordano being the Chair of the Planning Board.

None opposed.

No abstentions.

Mr. Giordano thanked the Board and Tom Fagan.

Tom Fagan nominated Frank Kreder for Vice Chair. Seconded by David Branan.

All in favor of Mr. Kreder being Vice Chair of the Planning Board.

None opposed.
No abstentions.

Mayor La Ronde nominated Dawn Gaebel for Board Secretary. Seconded by Tom Fagan.

All in favor of Dawn Gaebel being Board Secretary.
None opposed.
No abstentions.

Tom Fagan nominated Jen Bartholomew for Recording Secretary. Seconded by Aimee Corzo.

All in favor of Jen Bartholomew being Recording Secretary.
None opposed.
No abstentions.

Brian Schwartz submitted a letter for Board Attorney for the Planning Board.

Chairman Giordano nominated Brian Schwartz for Board Attorney. Seconded by Mayor La Ronde.

All in favor of Brian Schwartz being Board Attorney.
None opposed.
No abstentions.

Chairman Giordano will sign the Resolution and will forward to Dawn Gaebel.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the October 11, 2023 minutes were tabled until the next meeting because they were not available.

Resolution

Memorialize the hiring resolution of Brian Schwartz as the Board Attorney.

Roll Call Vote:

Dave Hollod – yes
Aimee Corzo – yes
Tom Fagan – yes
Cheryl McKeever – yes
David Branan – yes
Frank Kreder – yes
Chairman Giordano – yes
Mike Haggerty – yes
Madeleine Reinoso – yes
Mayor La Ronde - yes

Work Session

The Board had a work session to discuss updating the 2014 Master Plan and the Villa Maria property.

Mayor La Ronde stated they have hired Paul Grygiel's firm to come in. The Master Plan is 10 years old. Mr. Grygiel will look over the Master Plan and make recommendations. He will be sitting with the Planning Board, the Borough Administration, the Borough Council, and residents. He will come back to the Planning Board with his recommendations. They are hoping they only need to do a small portion at this time but he believes they may have to overhaul the whole plan. They need to get a portion or two done to be in compliance with the Master Plan. Because the Master Plan is outdated, anything that comes in front of property maintenance or construction can be challenged if it is not updated. A meeting will be scheduled with Paul Grygiel to go over his recommendations. The Historic section of the Master Plan was updated a few years ago and that's the last time an update was done. Traffic and Safety is especially important to the Mayor and Council. The Board will have to meet more often to stay on top of this. Copies of the 2014 Master Plan were provided to the Board members to go over.

Brian Schwartz stated this will be a reexamination which is what is required.

Mayor La Ronde stated right now it is a reexamination but if Mr. Grygiel or the Planning Board decide more needs to be done they will do that afterwards. The reexam will get them back into good standing under the State Statute.

Dave Hollod stated the reexamination is \$12,000. The Master Plan could be \$50,000+.

Mayor La Ronde stated they may be able to stretch it out over 3-4 years.

Brian Schwartz stated the reexamination will put them in compliance and the Master Plan can be done over time.

Aimee Corzo stated the Master Plan was discussed a lot with the Council and they feel they may have to do more than a reexamination. It is up to the Planning Board to recommend that. North Plainfield has changed quite a bit since the last Master Plan. They are ready to expand it and expand the money for it because they think it is needed. Their biggest concern is traffic and parking and anything related to that.

The Council wanted her to relate that doing the Master Plan is the probably the most important thing the Planning Board can do. It has to be done thoroughly and thoughtfully. It is not to be done and put to the side. The Council would like periodic reports from the Planning Board as to how we're doing as well as from the Administration at least once a year. There was an instance in the Council where money was requested for a traffic study when it was already in the Master Plan. We have to go back to the Master Plan and report on it. The Planning Board needs to meet and make sure the Master Plan is being followed, not just when there is an application.

David Branan asked if the study will include looking at things in the Plan that were never done, the ideas coming through the Council, or new things that will be done. Mayor La Ronde stated all three will be looked at. He and Dave Hollod have already started going through it and they

will have recommendations. The main issue right now is getting something done to get back into compliance.

Mr. Haggerty asked if the same company that did the 2014 Plan is doing this Plan. Mayor La Ronde stated there is a new gentleman doing it and he was not involved back in 2014. He did do the Historic Review.

Tom Fagan asked if the Master Plan is in digital form. It is on the Borough website.

Chairman Giordano is glad the traffic study is being looked into because it is a big problem. Mayor La Ronde stated they got a letter from the County approving a traffic light for Mountain and Leland. It is scheduled for 2025 if they have the money. Aimee Corzo stated it was in the Master Plan 10 years ago. David Branan stated he had an argument with the planners back then about putting one on Westervelt as well to cut down on speeding on Mountain Avenue. Mayor La Ronde stated the traffic study hasn't warranted one for that intersection yet. If the accidents keep happening, it may happen.

Chairman Giordano stated he knows someone on the Planning Board for the County so he can ask for help if needed.

Mayor La Ronde stated the application for the Villa Maria is coming to the Board on May 22nd and requested the Board look at maps and surveys carefully. Dave Testa stated if anyone wants hard copies of the plans, talk to Dawn. He believes they are also posted on the website.

Chairman Giordano stated the section of low income housing will be on the Grove Street side of the property and there will be 32 units. The applicant is ready. Dave Hollod stated this fulfills the obligation for low income housing for COAH for this round. They will exceed what is required right now and they will be able to bank a few more.

Mayor La Ronde asked the Board if they would like to continue meeting in person or via zoom. Chairman Giordano would like to keep meeting in person. Mr. Fagan stated it would be better to meet in person to go over the plans. Mayor La Ronde is hoping to get the technology done to share information on the screens.

Brian Schwartz stated he believes there is a requirement for Board members to take educational courses. Chairman Giordano stated Dawn will send out an email regarding the seminar. Mayor La Ronde stated the new members will have to fill out the financial disclosure. Dave Hollod stated any new member that comes on a committee has a certain period of time to file.

Mayor La Ronde made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Frank Kreder seconded the motion.

All in favor.

None opposed.

No abstentions.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.