

# **BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG PLANNING BOARD**

**TRACEE SCHAEFER, CHAIRWOMAN**

**Regular Meeting  
March 19, 2019**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
Adopted April 16, 2019**

Chairwoman Schaefer called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Board members present were Mr. Desnoyers, Mr. Ellis, Councilman Sopko, Ms. Pennett, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote, Ms. Spingler and Ms. Joren. Also present were Frank Linnus, Esq., Board Attorney and Theresa Snyder, Board Clerk. There were 4 members from the public present.

Chairwomen Schaefer indicated that there was a quorum to conduct business and stated that this meeting was being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 of the Open Public Meetings Act and proper notification of this meeting had been made. She then led the flag salute to the American flag, and the Board members identified themselves for the record.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On motion by Ms. Spingler, seconded by Ms. Pennett, the Regular Meeting minutes for February 19, 2019 were accepted and carried on voice votes with Mr. Speeney abstaining.

## **IMPROVEMENT REVIEW**

Bayberry School Playground  
Watchung Board of Education

Mr. Linnus advised the Board that they had jurisdiction to review capital improvements plans and make recommendations. The Board has 45 days to review these plans and make recommendations.

Mr. Lee Titus, PE, 618 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, NJ and Mr. Nick Naturile, Watchung Board of Education Building & Grounds Supervisor, 964 North Shore Drive, Basking Ridge, NJ, were sworn in to give testimony.

Mr. Titus said that he represented Mr. Bisignano who donated \$500,000 to this playground because of a concern that there was not a usable play area for the children. Upon questions by Mr. Linnus and Chairwoman Schaefer, Mr. Naturile articulated that the majority of the funds would be from Mr. Bisignano's donation; however, the Board of Education had agreed to pay for the architectural fees. The Chair requested written verification that public funds would be expended. Mr. Naturile agreed.

Mr. Titus opined that they were trying to create a dry play area. The project would include three playground areas with the addition of a sports court for the older children. The location of this would be behind the existing building. They created a flat spot. The drainage would direct the water away from the playground. The runoff would go into the woods which is the same place as now. The surface of the playground areas would be pervious. There would be an installation of a concrete sidewalk and sports court. The proposed drainage would be sufficient for day to day storms. Mr. Titus informed the Board of the tight timeline for the project. Mr. Bisignano wants the project done by the end of spring break, April 15<sup>th</sup> – April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Upon question of the Board, Mr. Naturile stated that he was in a meeting with the Business Administrator of the Board of Education, and they said they would assume responsibility for the architect fees. The Chair reiterated that the Board would like to see written verification of the fees expended by the Board of Education in relation to this project. Mr. Naturile continued that the playground area gets minimal use following rain. That is the rush. The children have to wait days to use the playground. The students meet in the school building during recess. The Principal planned a recess schedule to avoid too many children on the playground at one time. Mr. Naturile would be responsible for the maintenance of the drains.

Mr. Herits sent his comments and recommendations to both Mr. Titus and Ms. Schaefer in advance of the meeting. He did not have an issue with the plans.

It was the consensus of the Board to hold a special meeting on April 2, 2019 to devote to the Bayberry School playground project. The site plan committee would visit the site, and the Board engineer would submit an official statement. They requested that the Board of Education provide an attorney for the special meeting, and they wanted more testimony on the public funds being spent.

## **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT 2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Planning Board reviewed the 2018 Board of Adjustment Annual Report made the following Recommendations to the Governing Body:

1. In reference to the Board of Adjustment's recommendation for outdoor dining especially in the Route 22 corridor, the Planning Board with a very close vote, recommends this remain status quo.
2. In reference to the Board of Adjustment's recommendation for changes to the Tree Ordinance, the Planning Board recommends that no tree is removed without a permit; the Borough should enforce tree replacement; there should be penalties for clear cutting parcels; and after the lake is dredged and the bank re-built, trees should be re-planted.
3. In reference to the Board of Adjustment's recommendation for solid, 6 foot fencing, the Planning Board already considered changes to this at a prior time; therefore, they recommend no changes. The Borough should remain rural and open.
4. In reference to the Board of Adjustment's recommendation for a re-evaluation of the steep slope calculations, the Planning Board already considered this item at a prior time; therefore, they recommend there be no change.

At this meeting, the Planning Board directed Theresa Snyder to transmit to the governing body a copy of the report.

### **DISCUSSION**

Chairwoman Schaefer read Mr. Herits' notes in his absence. He informed the Board that Weldon Quarry is starting to move on the berm. They will add hundreds of trees. Mr. Herits will remain in contact with them.

She also informed the Board that the attorney's office for BNE had contacted the Borough, and are looking to submit an application in the near future.

### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Ms. Patricia Dunham, 131 Johnston Drive, expressed her appreciation to the Board for holding a special meeting on the matter of the playground. She gave history of the playground and explained that the parents have had issue with the playground for quite awhile with no action taken. Movement on the project began with the new Superintendent of the School. The parents want the project done right.

**ADJOURN**

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Theresa Snyder*

Theresa Snyder  
Board Clerk