

# **BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG PLANNING BOARD**

**TRACEE SCHAEFER, CHAIRWOMAN**

**Regular Meeting  
April 16, 2019**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
Adopted May 21, 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; Ms. Marcia Shiffman, PP, Mr. Mark Healey, PP and Theresa Snyder, Board Clerk. There were 3 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 Mr. Desnoyers, seconded by Ms. Spingler, the Regular Meeting minutes for March 19, 2019 were accepted and carried on voice votes.

On motion by Ms. Spingler, seconded by Mr. Speeney, the Special Meeting minutes for April 2, 2019 were accepted and carried on voice votes with Ms. Pennett, Ms. Joren and Mr. Pote abstaining.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

HEFSP

HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN

Presented by Marcia Shiffman

Mr. Linnus stated that the notice for the public hearing was sufficient giving the Board jurisdiction to act.

Ms. Shiffman entered her appearance as an expert in planning and landscape architecture from Maser Consulting and was sworn in to give testimony.

Ms. Shiffman gave a brief introduction of the participation of the Borough of Watchung in the process of providing affordable housing. The Borough filed a Declaratory Judgment in 2015 and has since then been working with Court Master Frank Banisch and the Fair Share Housing Center to address the obligations of the Borough's needs. The municipality has a three-part obligation: Rehabilitation Obligation, Any remaining Prior Round Obligation that has not been constructed and Third Round Obligation

Ms. Shiffman gave a brief summary of the Housing Plan which includes the housing stock and demographics of the community. Ms. Shiffman presented the following charts:<sup>1</sup>

Watchung HEFSP – Prior Round Obligation Credits	
<b>Prior Cycle Obligation (1987 – 1999)</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Realistic Development Potential (RDP)</b>	<b>169</b>
Enable Inc. (a.k.a. Life Skills Resource Center) Group Home	3
Lakeside Villas at Watchung (a.k.a. Villa Dominico) Age-Restricted Apartments	8
Regional Contribution Agreement to Phillipsburg	57
The Point at Watchung (a.k.a. Avalon at Watchung, Kings Crossing, Crystal Ridge Club) Rental Family Apartments	40
TomTom Realty (Berlant/Somerset Street) Rental Family Apartments	3
Accessory Apartment Program	10
Bonnie Burn Road Redevelopment Area Family Rental Apartments	5
Rental Bonus	43

<sup>1</sup> Borough of Watchung, Housing Element & Fair Share Plan, January 2019, Prepared by Marcia Shiffman, PP, AICP, LLA

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>UNMET NEED (1987-1999)</b>	<b>37</b>
<sup>2</sup> Watchung HEFSP – Third Round Obligation Credits	
Non-Adjusted Third Round Obligation	396
<b>Realistic Development Potential (RDP)</b>	<b>53</b>
Brandywine at Mountain Ridge Assisted Living Medicaid Beds	2
Watchung Associates, LLC Family Rental Apartments	4
Bonnie Burn Road Redevelopment Area Family Rental Apartments	41
Rental Bonus	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>SURPLUS CREDITS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>UNMET NEED</b>	<b>335</b>

Ms. Shiffman opined that there were other mechanisms for the Borough to reach its obligations. One way was to have overlay zones on Route 22 in the front portion of Mount Saint Marys and Liccardi Ford. There are no development plans for these properties at this time. The current zoning remains. Another way to provide for Affordable Housing is the passing of the Mandatory Affordable Housing Ordinance which requires future developments to have a percentage of their dwelling units as affordable.

Ms. Shiffman also opined that the Spending Plan was approved by the Mayor & Council. The supporting materials were in the Appendixes. The extensive information contained in the Appendixes will provide a record when the Borough enters its fourth round in 2025.

On question of Councilman Sopko, Ms. Shiffman said of the 53 units in the RDP, there can only be up to 25% of the units set aside as age restricted.

Ms. Shiffman recommended the Board take action on the Plan and provide a signed Resolution to the Borough Council. The Borough Council would then endorse the Plan and forward it to the Court.

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<sup>2</sup> Borough of Watchung, Housing Element & Fair Share Plan, January 2019, Prepared by Marcia Shiffman, PP, AICP, LLA

On question of Mayor Balla, Ms. Shiffman opined that more group homes would be great. The Spending Plan element can help start a group home. They can also buy down moderate income units to allow for lower income units. The Spending Plan can also help with down payments. The Borough's current Administrative Agent is very familiar with the process.

Mr. Desnoyers read Resolution PB 19-R5 into the record.

#### Resolution PB 19-R5

Resolution granting approval of the Borough of Watchung's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan of the Master Plan

On motion by Ms. Spingler, seconded by Mr. Pote, the Board adopted the resolution to grant approval of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan of the Master Plan based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:	Ayes:	Mr. Desnoyers, Mr. Ellis, Councilman Sopko, Ms. Pennett, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote and Chairwoman Schaefer
	Nays:	
	Not Eligible:	
	Abstain:	
	Absent:	

On question of Councilman Sopko, Mr. Healey gave a brief account of his attendance at the Somerset County Walk, Bike Hike Public Meeting. The County would like to draft a framework that would connect municipalities throughout the County. They want to improve bike and pedestrian paths and crossings along with trails and trail systems.

#### **ORDINANCE REVIEW**

Mr. Linnus explained that these two Ordinances were reviewed in November. The Borough Council took the recommendations of the Planning Board and inserted them into these two Ordinances. They are still consistent with the Master Plan.

Ordinance 19/04 an Ordinance to Amend Ordinance OR:18/19, amending and supplementing Chapter XXVIII, entitled "Land Development Regulations of the Borough of Watchung" to Establish Mandatory Affordable Housing Set-Aside.

On motion by Mr. Pote, seconded by Councilman Sopko, the Board directed Ms. Snyder to draft a letter to notify the Borough Council that there were no inconsistencies with the Master Plan based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:     Ayes:                      Mr. Desnoyers, Mr. Ellis, Councilman Sopko,  
   Ms. Pennett, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney,  
   Mr. Pote, Ms. Spingler and Chairwoman Schaefer  
                         Nays:  
                         Not Eligible:  
                         Abstain:  
                         Absent:

Ordinance 19/05 an Ordinance to amend Ordinance OR:18/20, adopting a "Redevelopment Plan" for a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment consisting of Block 7402, Lots 19.01 and 19.02 and Block 7403, Lots 5 and 10 and further identified as the "Bonnie Burn Road Redevelopment Area".

On motion by Mr. Desnoyers, seconded by Ms. Spingler, the Board directed Ms. Snyder to draft a letter to notify the Borough Council that there were no inconsistencies with the Master Plan based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:     Ayes:                      Mr. Desnoyers, Mr. Ellis, Councilman Sopko,  
   Ms. Pennett, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney,  
   Mr. Pote, Ms. Spingler and Chairwoman Schaefer  
                         Nays:  
                         Not Eligible:  
                         Abstain:  
                         Absent:

#### **DISCUSSION**

The Board announced that Cinemark had invited them to a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, April 17, 2019.

#### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

With there being no comments from the public, the public portion was closed.

#### **ADJOURN**

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Theresa Snyder*

Theresa Snyder  
Board Clerk