

# BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

## PLANNING BOARD

TRACEE SCHAEFER, CHAIRWOMAN

**Special Meeting  
December 14, 2020**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
Adopted January 19, 2021**

Chairwoman Tracee Schaefer called the Special Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Board members present were Ms. Karen Pennetta, Councilman Pete Martino, Mayor Keith Balla, Mr. Donald Speeney, Ms. Ellen Spangler, Mr. Steve Pote, Mr. Paul Fiorella and Mr. Troy Sims. Also present were Francis P. Linnus, Esq., Board Attorney, Thomas J. Herits, Board Engineer, Mr. Mark Healey, Board Planner and Theresa Snyder, Board Clerk.

Chairwoman Schaefer read the statement indicating the meeting was being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 of the Open Public Meetings Act, the Municipal Land Use Law requirements, and the recording of the Minutes as required by law. She also stated that in order to comply with the executive orders signed by the governor, and in an effort to follow best practices recommended by the CDC, the meeting was being held virtually for all board members, board professionals, the applicant, the applicant's professionals, interested parties and members of the public. The Board members identified themselves for the record. She then led the flag salute to the American flag.

### **PUBLIC HEARING ON MASTER PLAN REPORT**

Mr. Mark Healey was sworn in to give testimony. He gave his credentials and began an overview of the report.

Mr. Healey explained that a draft copy of the Master Plan Reexamination Report was posted on the Borough website. He stated that the MLUL requires this review every ten years. He outlined four main objectives of the report. They are as follows

1. Identify the goals and objectives of the prior Master Plan Reexamination.
2. Address the extent to which the problems were achieved.
3. Consider any changes in policies or regulations on the part of the municipality, county or state.
4. Based on those changes, make recommendations.

Mr. Linnus stated that the report had been posted on the website and on file at Borough Hall. He explained that the sub-committee met a number of times and prepared a number of drafts. He affirmed that this was a Planning Board document.

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Mr. Healey continued his testimony by identifying changes. He stated that the Borough is essentially built out, and began to highlight the changes that were made to the draft copy.

Ms. Pennetta had a few grammatical changes she wanted to see made to the document.

Councilman Martino asked if the Planning Board could provide more guidance in the area of legalized cannabis. He expressed concern for the quality of life for the residents of Watchung, safety for the children and drug free zones.

Mr. Linnus responded that the Planning Board did not have the power to do that. This was a Borough Council decision. The Borough Council could authorize an Ad-Hoc committee to complete the study.

Mr. Pote asked if a clause could be added to #2 to state that a Master Plan sub-committee was established.

The meeting was open to the public. There were no comments from the public.

On motion by Mr. Speeney, seconded by Ms. Spangler, the Board approved the changes to the Master Plan Reexamination Report based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:

Ayes:

Ms. Spangler, Councilman Martino,  
Ms. Pennetta, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote  
Mr. Fiorella, Mr. Sims and Madam Chair

Nays:

Not Eligible:

Abstain:

Resolution PB 20-R16

Adoption of the Master Plan Reexamination Report

On motion by Mr. Speeney, seconded by Mr. Fiorella, the Board adopted the Master Plan Reexamination Report based on the following roll call vote:

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Roll Call:

Ayes: Ms. Spangler, Councilman Martino,  
Ms. Pennetta, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote  
Mr. Fiorella, Mr. Sims and Madam Chair

Nays:  
Not Eligible:  
Abstain:  
Absent:

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Spangler read the Resolution PB 20-R17 into the record.

On motion by Mr. Speeney, seconded by Ms. Pennetta, the Board entered executive session based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:

Ayes: Ms. Spangler, Councilman Martino,  
Ms. Pennetta, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote  
Mr. Fiorella, Mr. Sims and Madam Chair

Nays:  
Not Eligible:  
Abstain:  
Absent:

The Executive Session was closed, and upon entering open session, the Board called the roll.

### ORDINANCE REVIEW

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NOS. OR:19/015 and 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", AS SHOWN ON THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG TAX MAP IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7.

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Mr. Healey presented to the Board that the Ordinance was introduced by the Council. There were two minor amendments to the Redevelopment Ordinance. The two adjustments were to the section on steep slopes and a reduction of lot area.

He stated it to be consistent with the Master Plan and opined that it is a key component of the Affordable Housing requirements and Housing Element and Fair Share plan.

On motion by Ms. Spangler, seconded by Mr. Fiorella, the Board determined that the Ordinance was consistent with the Master Plan based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:

Ayes: Ms. Spangler, Mr. Ellis, Councilman Martino,  
Ms. Pennetta, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote  
Mr. Fiorella, Mr. Sims and Madam Chair

Nays:

Not Eligible:

Abstain:

Absent:

Resolution PB 20-R18

MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY REVIEW AND REPORT TO THE BOROUGH  
COUNCIL ON PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE BONNIE BURN REDEVELOPMENT  
ORDINANCES

On motion by Mr. Speeney, seconded by Ms. Spangler, the Board memorialized the Resolution based on the following roll call vote:

Roll Call:

Ayes: Ms. Spangler, Mr. Ellis, Councilman Martino,  
Ms. Pennetta, Mayor Balla, Mr. Speeney, Mr. Pote  
Mr. Fiorella, Mr. Sims and Madam Chair

Nays:

Not Eligible:

Abstain:

Absent:

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was open to the public. There were no comments from the public.

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG**  
**PLANNING BOARD**  
TRACEE SCHAEFER, CHAIRWOMAN

**ADJOURN**

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Theresa Snyder  
Board Clerk