

THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
Planning Board
Regular Meeting
March 15, 2022

OFFICIAL MINUTES
Adopted: 5/17/22

Chairwoman Tracee Schaefer called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

Ms. Tracee Schaefer, Chairwoman	Mr. Steve Pote
Mr. Donald Speeney, Vice Chairman	Mr. Paul Fiorilla
Mr. Keith Balla, Mayor	Mr. Troy Sims
Mr. Pietro Martino, Councilman	Ms. Yvette Nora
Ms. Ellen Spingler, Secretary (absent)	Mr. Francis P. Linnus, Esq.
Mr. Al Ellis (arrived at 7:33 pm)	Ms. Theresa Snyder, Board Clerk
Ms. Karen Pennett	

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.

MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Pote, seconded by Ms. Pennett, the regular meeting minutes from February 15, 2022, were accepted and carried on voice vote.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Speaking to recommendation one of the Board of Adjustment annual report concerning downhill flooding, Councilman Martino responded he did not sit on the Green Brook Flood Control Commission, and he expressed his efforts in getting a representative to join the meeting to discuss their position on the flood controls established within the Borough.

Mr. Speeney, in response to a newspaper article published four weeks earlier, wanted the board to be aware of what the flood commission had planned for Watchung and thought it advantageous that a representative of the commission should make comments.

The Mayor offered to communicate with the flood commission and report back to the Board with his findings. He wanted the commission to put in writing their intentions.

Addressing the second recommendation of the Board of Adjustment concerning the tree ordinance, Councilman Martino informed the board that the law and ordinance committee spent a year completing three ordinances, and they had it on their radar to consider changes to the tree ordinance. In connection with the tree ordinance, the committee would also consider such items as invasive species and encroachment concerns as it relates to the location of new plantings.

Ms. Pennett gave a brief description of the procedure residents follow to remove trees from their property. In response from questions of board members regarding the number of tree removal application which were denied, Ms. Pennett responded that very few are denied.

On comment by Mr. Linnus concerning new legislation for EV charging stations, Councilman Martino responded the Council was exploring the issue.

Mr. Speeney opined the issue of downhill flooding and the tree ordinance were interrelated and recommended there be a plan to address these issues.

The Board directed Ms. Snyder to draft a letter to the Mayor and Council addressing the comments of the board.

In response to Mr. Speeney's comments concerning the Master Plan Reexamination Report which made recommendations for the inclusion of a Green Development Checklist, Mayor Balla apprised the Board of Councilwoman Wendy Robinson's efforts in the advancement of the green checklist. Further, the Mayor informed the Board that the Borough had received another award for their efforts in green development.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution PB 22-R7

Weldon Materials, Inc. v. Planning Board of the Borough of Watchung and Bonnie Burn Redevelopers Urban Renewal, LLC- Docket No. SOM-L-001567-21

The Board entered Executive Session. At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board closed the closed portion of the meeting, and opened the open portion of the meeting. All Board members were present.

ADJOURN

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,



Theresa Snyder
Board Clerk