

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
 PLANNING BOARD
 TRACEE SCHAEFER, CHAIRWOMAN
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 21st, 2024

Adopted On: July 16th, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: Chairwoman Tracee Schaefer called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:30 pm. and 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 and proper notice has been given.

She then led the group in saluting the American flag in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Tracee Schaefer, Chairwoman	Ms. Jackie Bodnar
Mr. Donald Speeney, Vice Chairman	Mr. Troy Sims
Mr. Ronald Jubin, Mayor	Ms. Jackie Bodnar
Mr. Robert Gibbs, Councilman (Absent)	Mr. Francis P. Linnus, Esq.
Ms. Ellen Spingler, Secretary	Mr. Mark Healey, PP
Ms. Jennifer Kobliska	Mr. Richard Calbi Jr., Board Engineer (Absent)
Ms. Karen Pennett	Mr. John Jahr, Board Traffic Engineer (Absent)
Mr. Stephen Pote	Ms. Catherine Furlan Board Clerk
Mr. Dustin Antonio	

MINUTES

A quorum was present for the meeting and the chairwoman opened by welcoming the new Board Clerk, Catherine Furlan. Next, the Chairwoman asked for a motion to waive the reading of the previous minutes from January 24th, 2024, which was moved by Ms. Spingler and carried on voice vote. Next the Chairwoman asked for a motion to waive the reading of the previous minutes from the April 2nd, 2024 meeting. On motion by Ms. Spingler and seconded by Mayor Jubin the minutes were approved and carried by voice vote. It was opened to discussion by the Chair. Mr. Pote noted that he was present for the April meeting and to have the minutes corrected to reflect his attendance.

PRESENTATION BY MARK HEALY

Mr. Healy the Board’s Planner approached the podium and distributed a two-page handout regarding Affordable Housing updates for the State of New Jersey. His presentation outlined Bill A4/S50 which abolished COAH and created the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program.

Chairwoman Schaefer asked a question about how they will assess the amount of vacant land Watchung currently possess. Mr. Healy said the state would utilize Land Use Land Cover Data

from DEP, American Community Survey, Mod 4 Property Tax and Construction Permit Data. Chairwoman Schaefer asked Jennifer Kobliska to provide her background to the Board. Ms. Kobliska detailed her experience of 18 years in government administration, tax collecting, zoning, planning, and CFO positions which would make her a great resource to the Board.

Mr. Speeney brought up prior commitments of affordable housing and how they will be addressed with the new bill. Mr. Healy mentioned prior affordable housing sites would have to be addressed, such as Bonnie Burn. If there are surpluses they could be applied to the following year.

Madam Chair questioned what would happen if we don't have sites for affordable housing. Mr. Healy said the Board will explore the vacant land adjustment data and create additional units.

Mr. Speeney recommended the Board get a jump on the data as far as where the town stands now, what have we met, etc., to formulate a new plan. Mayor Jubin inquired about the bill regarding accessory dwelling units. Mr. Healy said he was aware of the bill and that it was one possible avenue to explore.

Mr. Speeney questioned Mr. Healy about Cross-acceptance in regards to the plan. He also stressed the importance of committees to be formed and involved to be the voice for the borough. Ms. Bodnar pointed out the different committees that already exists like Environmental and Land Preservation etc. at the state level.

Mr. Speeney brought up a topic from the NJ Planner Journal from the first quarter regarding cannabis consumption lounges. The article discusses how the community is limited in where they can consume cannabis, specifically at home if they are renters. Chairwoman Shaefer confirmed it is up to the landlord to limit specific behavior in the lease agreement. Mr. Linnus Esq. pointed out the differences in federal and state law and much like Affordable Housing and Cross-acceptance it is up to the courts to interpret.

Mr. Linnus Esq. addressed the Board on their responsibilities in regard to Municipal Land Use and Affordable Housing.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. No one from the public was present so public comment was closed.

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting. The next Regular Meeting will be June 18, 2024 at 7:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



Catherine Furlan

Board Clerk