

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
April 6, 2016**

The Township of West Orange Planning Board held a regular meeting on April 6, 2016 at 7:30 P.M. in the Council Chamber, 66 Main Street, West Orange, New Jersey.

Chairman Weston called the meeting to order at approximately 7:41 P.M. He announced that notification of the meeting was given to the Township Clerk, and posted on the Township Bulletin Board, sent to the West Orange Chronicle and the Star Ledger, and posted on the Township's website calendar. This meeting has been properly noticed to the public in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. No new matters will start after 10:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Jerome Eben, Tekeste Ghebremicael, Gerald Gurland, Jason Lester, Councilwoman Susan McCartney, Chairman Ron Weston

ABSENT: Vice Chairman Robert Bagoff, Joanne Carlucci, Lee Klein, Gary B. Wegner, William Wilkes II

ALSO PRESENT: Patrick J. Dwyer, Esq., Board Attorney, Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner, Robin Miller, Board Secretary, Harvey Grossman, Esq., Public Advocate

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Weston requested all persons stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Vice Chairman Robert Bagoff, Joanne Carlucci, Jerome Eben, Tekeste Ghebremicael, Gerald Gurland, Lee Klein, Jason Lester, Council President Susan McCartney, Gary Wegner, Chairman Ron Weston, William Wilkes II

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Planning Board regular meeting will be May 4, 2016 in the Council Chamber at 7:30 P.M.

Chairman Weston acknowledged the first phase of the Downtown Redevelopment had started. An article regarding the project had recently appeared in the New York Times.

Chairman Weston announced that due to the lack of a Board transcriber, it would be necessary to conduct a more formal meeting. The Chairman would acknowledge each person speaking; the new format would assist a stenographer in composing a written transcript of the meeting.

SWEARING IN

Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planner.

ADOPT MINUTES

The minutes of the January 6, 2016 and March 2, 2016 regular meetings were unanimously adopted.

DISCUSSION

Master Plan Amendment: Complete Streets

Mr. Grygiel said that in addition to the Board's recent discussions to incorporate the Complete Street policy in to the Township's Master Plan, he had been participating in the new Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board, which was very interested in the implementation of the policy. He stated that in 2013 the Board adopted a Complete Streets Policy and sent a recommendation to the Council; however, the Council did not act on the recommendation. He gave a brief recapitulation of the policy; he opined it was essentially a philosophy that all streets should be safe and accessible to all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular drivers of all ages and ability levels. The policy standards would be incorporated in to all land development design elements. He recommended the next step would be to amend the Circulation Element of the Master Plan to incorporate the Complete Streets Policy and principles. The amendment would ensure entities such as the County and developers knew that the Township had formally adopted a plan, and should consider same when presenting applications. Once (the policy) was incorporated, the Board could send a new recommendation to the Council for their consideration. The Township could then amend the Streets and Sidewalks ordinance and then possibility a more thorough plan drafted by the Board to be incorporated in to the zoning ordinance chapter. A more detailed plan might incorporate certain elements of the Rutgers Study (Complete Streets Concept Plan, 2015).

Mr. Grygiel stated the first step would be (the Board) to have a public hearing to amend the Master Plan; he described the process that included public noticing to surrounding municipalities, and formal notice to the Public.

Chairman Weston stated there was a full re-examination of the Master Plan in 2010. He questioned if a more detailed recommendation could be made to Council. Mr. Grygiel opined the proposed amendment was a good start; the Rutgers Study was good; a lot of its elements and examples could be considered. Chairman Weston agreed it was important to first have the tenets of the plan in place, and then create a time-lime to have additional elements in place before the next re-examination was adopted.

Councilwoman McCartney questioned if the Zoning Board incorporated the Complete Street policy when deliberating their applications. Chairman Weston stated the policy was not law; not a formal regulation. She stated many of the recommendations of the Rutgers Study were for County roads within the Township. She said the County had its own Complete Streets Plan; how would the County consider Township recommendations. Mr. Grygiel said the County has a Complete Street Policy and Transportation Plan that they were required to follow. He opined the County could be reminded of same when appearing before the Board for courtesy review hearings. He said that for the consistency of the Township's Master Plan, the County should appear before the Board for all projects, such as those to widen roads in the Township.

Mr. Eben stated that after the Board approved the (Nautical-themed) playground for the County, the County installed meandering sidewalks from the zoo along Northfield Avenue to the playground, but when renovating the playground area parking lot, the County did not follow the minimum design standards. There were no complete streets, no sidewalks or storm sewers. Pedestrians were unable to walk from one end of the reservation to the other. Additionally, the sidewalk the County installed on Walker Road from Turtle Back Rock to Northfield Avenue was not maintained. Chairman Weston stated the Planning Board did not have jurisdiction regarding those

issues. Mr. Eben suggested that after amending the Master Plan, the Board consider making a presentation to the Mayor and Council regarding the changes, as well as the safety initiatives the Board had considered on behalf of the Township.

Mr. Dwyer advised it would be a good idea to make sure the proposed amendment complimented the existing County policy.

Comments from the Public:

Roz Moskovitz Bielski, 11 Wedgewood Drive, opined the Complete Streets Policy brought a community together. She stated that since the Township no longer had a full-time planner to review plans and advise applicants, the policy would be a tool to help guide future development. Pedestrians travelled the many Township roads without sidewalks. She opined that although the County had done successful projects, the projects lacked connectivity to all areas. She urged everyone to read the Rutgers Study. She stated she wholly supported strengthening the Township's Complete Streets amendment. She thanked Mr. Grygiel for his efforts.

Lori Kapferer, 65 Fitzrandolph Road, stated the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board had applied for a Complete Streets grant from the New Jersey Department of Health. The grant was for \$3,000 to be used to promote community-walking policies. She requested the Board members submit letters of support for the grant; she acknowledged Chairman Weston had submitted a letter. Mr. Eben said he had recently completed an architectural project on Undercliff Terrace South; there were no sidewalks; the homeowner was not required to install them as part of the project. Councilwoman McCartney said she would not be comfortable imposing homeowners must install sidewalks retroactively; she asked if the amendment would require a change to the application checklist. Mr. Grygiel said the Policy could be incorporated into a checklist similar to the recently adopted Sustainability checklist.

Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Grygiel and the Board discussed the draft amendment; it was decided to remove Item #11 in its entirety.

Chairman Weston requested the Board professionals proceed with scheduling for May the Public Hearing to amend the Master Plan. He requested Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Grygiel investigate other ordinance recommendations that would make the Township safer.

MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 8:28 P.M.

Minutes adopted May 4, 2016.



Robin Miller, Secretary
Township of West Orange Planning Board

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD WILL BE
WEDNESDAY JUNE 1, 2016 AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.**