

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
April 17, 2024

The Regular meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 6:33 pm by Chairman Karp in Meeting Room A in the Municipal Building.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, location, and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the township bulletin board, and filed with the Municipal Clerk on April 4, 2024.

ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Michael Karp, Chairman, Class IV
Curtis Hoberman, Vice-Chairman, Class IV
Hemant Marathe, Mayor, Class I
Martin Whitfield, Councilman, Class III
Anis Baig, Class IV
Simon Pankove, Class IV
Pankaj Patel, Alt. #2

ABSENT: Jyotika Bahree, Class II
Sue Appelget, Class IV
Allen Schectel, Class IV
Robert Loverro, Alt. #1

TOWNSHIP CONSULTANT STAFF PRESENT

Martina Baillie, Esq., Attorney, Muller & Baillie, P.C
David Novak, PP, Planner, Burgis & Associates
Sam Surtees, Land Use Manager and Zoning Officer

LIAISON REPORTS

Environmental Commission -- Mr. Baig stated he had nothing to report at this time.

Affordable Housing Committee – Ms. Bahree was not present.

MINUTES:

December 13, 2023

Mr. Pankove made a motion to approve the December 13, 2023 minutes, as amended; seconded by Mayor Marathe.
Approved by voice vote. Abstention(s) by: Baig, Whitfield

March 6, 2024

Mayor Marathe made a motion to approve the March 6, 2024 minutes; seconded by Vice-Chair Hoberman. Approved by voice vote. Abstention(s) by: Pankove, Baig

The minutes will be amended by the Recording Secretary and the final version will be forwarded to the Administrative Secretary.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Karp opened the meeting for public comment on non-agenda and non-pending application items.

ANDREA MANDEL, 46 Ellsworth Drive: Ms. Mandel acknowledged and commended Dan Dobromilsky who recently retired from West Windsor Township. He has been a consultant since 1986, and was hired by the Township as the Landscape Architect in 1998. He will be present at Arbor Day and there will be a card for everyone to sign. Ms. Mandel invited the Planning Board members to attend.

There were no further comments from the public.

RESOLUTION:

PB22-02 ER/UDC West Windsor, LLC

Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan, Subdivision & Sign Waiver – Phase I (Quick Chek)
Preliminary Site Plan – Phase 2 (Drive-thru Restaurant)
332-340 Princeton-Hightstown Road
Block 47, Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

Attorney Baillie explained that this resolution was being postponed. The applicant asked for more time to review the resolution and will hopefully be on the next agenda for adoption by the Board.

MASTER PLAN WORK SESSION – Draft Berrien City Planning & Zoning Study Presentation – Dated April 17, 2024.

Planning Board Planner Novak was sworn-in by Attorney Baillie. He introduced himself and explained that tonight's presentation will be to give an introductory and receive feedback from the residents. He explained what the Master Plan is and its purpose. He reviewed the power point presentation of the Study which included maps of the area, background, description, zoning, and impact.

The Planning Board members made comments/asked questions. Floor area ratio, impervious surface, and preserving the character of the area was discussed.

Chairman Karp opened the meeting for public comment on the Draft Berrien City Planning & Zoning Study Presentation.

SUSAN ABBEY, 5 Scott Avenue: Ms. Abbey, Chairman of the West Windsor Township Zoning Board for 15 years, stated she was speaking as a resident of Berrien City. She provided information on certain properties. She said there was an applicant who went to the Zoning Board who was not denied but encouraged by the Board to better fit into the character of the neighborhood. She talked about the height of the homes there and additions (which are mostly in the rear of the home). She suggested creating a minimum lot size for a new subdivision. She thinks there is a real need for neighborhoods with smaller/starter homes. Ms. Abbey commented on the (minimal) side yard setbacks and fencing. She would like to see the area designated single-family residential. The State will be adopting legislation regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). If these are approved in this area, the old water and sewer pipes will not be able to handle it.

STACEY FOX, 29 Berrien Avenue: Ms. Fox said she would like to see a permanent denial of combining lots, and said fences are a good thing. Regarding ADUs, there is a huge housing shortage, and there are more multi-generational home situations to be considered in the future.

KEVIN RANALLO, 106 Harris Road: Mr. Ranallo commented on an architecturally non-conforming home on 114 Harris Road that recently received an addition. It does not fit the character of the neighborhood and was not required to get a variance. Some of the properties in his neighborhood can look right into their neighbor's windows.

JACOB DICK, 110 Harris Road: Mr. Dick said he loves the historical character of Berrien City, and architectural guidance should be considered. He said that homes are sold when family gets larger. They are considering an addition, and in this real estate market they couldn't stay in West Windsor if they were to buy elsewhere.

SUSAN CONLON, 98 Harris Road: Ms. Conlon also commented on the home at 114 Harris Road that was out of character. She agrees in the future establishing guidelines and more oversight would be beneficial. Ms. Conlon commented on investors purchasing and enlarging the home there for profit. She thanked the Township and Planning Board for holding this type of meeting and posting the Study on the website. Mayor Marathe added that a recording of the meeting will be posted on the Township's website. Mr. Surtees recommended that all comments be made to the Planning Board and Zoning Office and said there is no urgency on getting this done.

JOHN KORAN, 5 Scott Avenue: Mr. Koran suggested setting design parameters such as specific maximum percentage for FAR and height. He also commented on the peak style of the roofs. He also agreed with maintaining the character of the neighborhood.

AYLIN GREEN, Representing West Windsor Arts Council located in Berrien City: Ms. Green discussed the use of the Firehouse Building they currently reside in. She shared their desire to grow and expand into the remaining part of the building, but is not sure if the zoning is sufficient for parking they need. She wants people to know that their building isn't currently being used as a firehouse and that it is the Arts Building.

AYSE AKINCIGIL, 4 Berrien Avenue: Ms. Akincigil spoke in favor of keeping the Arts Center and how valuable it is to the neighborhood. She commented on how the owner of 114 Harris Road cut down a very old tree and if they were not permitted to remove the tree, the home may not have been built. Planner Novak commented on the Township and State's tree ordinance. Mayor Marathe stated that a new tree ordinance was just passed.

ANDREA MANDEL: Councilwoman Mandel explained the new tree ordinance and the N.J. DEPs requirements. There will be a hearing on this at the next council meeting.

DAVE KIMMEL, 11 Scott Avenue: Mr. Kimmel thanked the Township for the presentation. Mr. Kimmel inquired how the history of how and when the current zoning was enacted. Planner Novak responded that would require historic research. He also asked about changing the zoning bulk design standards. He agreed with Mayor Marathe that defining the current character of the neighborhood would help. He added that permitted uses for farming are also beneficial.

WILLIAM RUTLEDGE, 19 Scott Avenue: Mr. Rutledge suggested that if there was a combined lot, a resident could only build one home and the proposed home must be the average size of neighbors' homes.

DONIA SALEM, 8 Scott Avenue: Ms. Salem thanked the Planning Board and Township, and commended and thanked the Arts Council. She encourages the historical aspect of the community and growing her own food.

PAUL LIGETI, 2 Sleepy Hollow Lane, Vice-President of the Historical Society of West Windsor: Mr. Ligeti talked about the Historical Society and branding Berrien City as a historical area. He encouraged the Planning Board to help in any way.

TONYA LUDDY, 26 Scott Avenue: Ms. Luddy commended the Arts Council and would like to keep them in the neighborhood. She is very happy and would like to keep the character of the neighborhood and its history. Regarding ACUs, she encourages these for aging parents.

MARY KONDO, 6 Berrien Avenue: Ms. Kondo asked about the lot near her home and said that trees have been cleared. Mr. Surtees responded that the owners will be putting an addition on the home and it conforms to the zoning. He asked her to call his office for more information.

ISABEL KASDIN, 11 Scott Avenue: Ms. Kasdin reemphasized that it seems that the public is more concerned with the size than the design standards. She is more in favor of considering the bulk standards.

BOB BRANCHEK, 31 Berrien Avenue: Mr. Brancheck suggested that residents attend a variance meeting (other than their own) prior to the hearing on their own application. He said the Zoning Board overtime has done a very good job.

AYLIN GREEN, Representing West Windsor Arts Council: Ms. Green asked if comments and the Study will affect current projects. Planner Novak responded he does not know exactly when these changes will take effect and depends on the Planning Board.

SUSAN ABBEY, 5 Scott Avenue: In regard to 114 Harris, if there are no guidelines, a resident can do what they want.

Chairman Karp stated that Planner Novak will take all the comments tonight and incorporate them into the Study; there will be other opportunities to comment.

Chairman Karp closed the public comment portion of the meeting. Approved by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled May 15, 2024.

With no further business, Chairman Karp adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Dziura
RMC/CMR, Recording Secretary