

**PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF APRIL 4, 2018**

The Planning Board Meeting of Sparta Township was held in the Sparta Township Municipal Building and was called to order by Chairman George Zacsek at 7:30 PM with announcement that adequate notice of this meeting has been given to the public and the press under provisions of the "Open Public Meeting Act", N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 et seq.

Members Present: Mr. Prol, Mrs. Quinn, Dr. Parker, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Curcio, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Gall, Mr. Kollar and Ch. Zacsek

Members Absent: Mrs. Gabay and Mr. Maldonado

Others Present: Thomas Collins, Esq.  
David Manhardt, P.P.

**MINUTES APPROVED:**

Dr. Parker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 21, 2018 and Subcommittee meetings of March 6, and March 26, 2018. Mr. Henderson seconded the motion and the roll was as follows:

Mr. Prol	Yes	Mrs. Quinn	Yes
Mr. Gall	Yes	Mr. Curcio	Yes
Dr. Parker	Yes	Mr. Henderson	Yes
Mr. Gibbs	Yes	Ch. Zacsek	Yes

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT DISCUSSION  
PLANNED COMMERCIAL ECONOMIC ZONE**

Chairman Zacsek stated that the Board has been working on the amendment for some time and the purpose of this hearing is to obtain public feedback on the proposed amendment. No action will be taken this evening.

Mr. Manhardt explained the Master Plan Amendment for the PCED Zone which includes properties in both the PCD and ED Zones on Route 15 between the railroad at Houses Corner Road and Wilson Drive. The properties include the old Sandford Farm tract, the Pizza restaurant, print shop and medical offices. The plan is to incentivize the use of the traffic lights at Wilson Drive and North Village Boulevard to limit left hand turns and minimize cross traffic. The amendment will provide redevelopment opportunities by adding new permitted uses and will bring some of the existing, non-conforming uses into conformance with the zoning ordinances.

Mr. Zacsek stated that there are several issues to address with traffic being the biggest issue and the limit of left hand turns will help the traffic. The other is protection of the aquifer and the wetlands which can limit development potential.

Mr. Manhardt referred to page 2 of the draft amendment which is the wellhead protection map and described the different tiers which measure the time it would take for a contaminant to travel to the wells. To address this they have limited some uses and prohibited any gas stations or uses that utilize hazardous materials. The goal is to connect the access to Wilson Drive with the internal road which will provide two traffic lights to control the traffic and left hand turns.

The Board discussed this and Mrs. Quinn stated that the access road is critical to the plan.

Mr. Curcio asked if the internal road will make the existing lots substandard?

Mr. Collins replied no, the incentive is a benefit to the property owners by providing additional uses such as retail and restaurant uses that are currently not permitted.

Mr. Gibbs asked what types of buildings will be permitted?

Mr. Manhardt described the single story buildings with a maximum height of 35 feet unless it is a hotel which can be higher. The façade requirements include a base of stone or similar material, sidings, pitched roofs and architectural standards like the Planned Village Core Zone that will break up the mass of the structure.

Mr. Gibbs asked if the property owners and the public are aware of the proposed amendment and why there cannot be a two story business?

Mr. Manhardt explained the intent is to restrict strip malls and multi-tenanted retail.

The Board discussed this further and agreed that they could remove the “multi-tenanted buildings” from the Prohibited uses and allow professional office on the second floor or a single user retail of two floors.

Mr. Collins explained that the notice to individual property owners is not required for a Master Plan Amendment but notice could be provided when the hearing is scheduled.

Ch. Zacek referred to the language regarding Town Center on page one of the Master Plan Amendment in the “Purpose” section and recommended it be removed.

Mrs. Quinn suggested a fence requirement be added for any outdoor dining adjacent to the railroad.

The hearing was opened to the public for comments.

Eric Wilson P.E. of Mt. Arlington came forward and explained his family owns the large piece of property that is included in the zone change. His grandparents purchased the property in 1955 and his grandfather Bill Wilson developed the Commerce Park development. Their goal is to work collaboratively with the Board and the public to develop the property. He has also spoken to the other property owners including Mrs.

Negri who owns the pizza restaurant property and they would appreciate receiving notice of the Amendment. Their intentions are not to build a strip mall or a gas station, but for smaller business and retail tenants that would be conforming and attractive tenants similar to the shopping center where Anthony Franco is located near the Stop & Shop. He explained that multi-tenanted buildings allow for better utilization of the property and more flexibility by locating “drive by” uses rather than destination uses. The pass by traffic is not destination traffic but is traveling by the site and he agrees with restricting left hand turns since right in and out is more efficient. He referred to an aerial image of the property which was marked as Exhibit A-1 and indicated the proposed PCED Zone in the black lines. He recognizes the benefits of the connector road and there are two options. He reviewed the lots subject to the new zone including lots 18 and 19-21 which are owned by the Wilson family, Lot 17 is the Pizza restaurant and house, Lot 16 is the Print shop and Lot 15 is the medical building. Lots 14 and 15 already have access to the traffic light at Wilson Drive so only lots 16, 17 & 18 would benefit from the new road, however due to the location of three septic systems, two utility poles and one utility vault, these would all need to be relocated to install the new road. The medical facility would lose a portion of their parking lot and the traffic would be forced next to the building which does not help lot 15 at all. The other alternative is to connect through the Water Utility lot which is more viable from an engineering perspective, but it is for emergency access only. He asked if the proposed Master Plan Amendment would prohibit any development if the new road is not built and does the new road need to meet Township road standards and be accepted by the Township?

Mr. Manhardt explained that the large piece including lots 19-21 has access to the new traffic light at North Village Boulevard, and the intent of the new road is to allow the existing properties who want to redevelop and change the uses to a new permitted use, would need access to the traffic light. The road does not have to be the exact design in the amendment if there is a better alternative and does not need to be accepted as a Township road.

Mr. Wilson referred to a plan entitled, “Connector Road Exhibit” which was marked as Exhibit A-2 and explained that the front yard setback of 150 feet and the 150 foot buffer requirement would further limit the developable areas which is only 16 acres out of the 37 acres due to the wetlands and buffers. After the setbacks are applied it leaves less than 8 acres for buildings and the development since the connector road is much larger than just an access drive or private road. The removal of the 150 foot buffer would help and some of the setbacks that were carried over from the old zones should be re-examined. In addition to the modification of language for the “multi-tenanted” buildings, allowing uses similar to Commerce Park such as warehouse, storage and light manufacturing would benefit the lot in the rear that does not have frontage on Route 15 and would not be desirable for a retail use.

Mr. Collins stated a common driveway would meet the intent of the ordinance for a connector road. He asked if the Utility Director was consulted regarding using their property on Gail Court.

Mr. Wilson stated that he has not personally, but understood from the Township it was not a desirable option.

The Board discussed this further and Mr. Manhardt suggested the ordinance be re-worded to allow the ED uses on the back piece that have a minimum of 300 feet from Route 15 with no frontage, and to take out the 150 foot buffer.

Ch. Zacek recommended the Board review the ordinance further in regards to the “multi-tenanted” buildings and the front yard setbacks.

Mrs. Quinn asked what the intent of a multi-tenant plan would be?

Mr. Wilson replied two to four smaller tenants in a row, not any large buildings or strip malls.

Mr. Manhardt will further revise the amendment and ordinance for the Board’s review at the May meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Ch. Zacek referred to the County Economic Study that Mr. Curcio forwarded to the members and suggested the Board discuss this at the next meeting. In addition, the old 1984 Master Plan should be updated and a vision created that looks forward to enhance the Township and the Town Center area that would allow for multi-family housing, apartments and others uses to improve the quality of life. He suggested a Sub-committee be formed to investigate the potential for an Economic Study in Sparta.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen R. Donnelly  
Land Use Administrator