

MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP

SPECIAL MEETING

Prepetition – Centers Designation/Nodes

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 10:00 am

This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Present: J. Roy Oliver, Mayor
Ken Whildin, Deputy Mayor
Bill Ashton, Committeeman
Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Oliver at 10:00 am and the pledge of allegiance followed.

Roll Call: Mr. Oliver – Present
Mr. Whildin – Present
Mr. Ashton – Present

Attendees: Tiffany CuvIELlo, Township Planner *
Ben Stowman, Land Use Board Chair
Bob Brewer, Cumberland County Planning
Donna Rendeiro, NJOPA *
Meghan Wren, NJOPA
Susan Weber, NJDOT
Rick Brown, NJDEP *
Liz Semple, NJDEP *

(Asterisk * denotes attendance by teleconference)

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss prepetition for Centers Designation/Nodes.

Discussion

1. Prepetition Centers Designation/Nodes.

Donna Rendeiro, Director of NJOPA asked the township to share their goals regarding this Plan Endorsement. Mayor Oliver explained the importance of having the proper Centers Designation and/or node in place due to proposed marine related businesses in the area of River Road. Mayor Oliver explained that Mr. Risko, NorthStar, is looking to facilitate support to the wind industry. The Centers Designation and/or Node is necessary for him to proceed.

Mayor Oliver further explained that presently 58% of Maurice River Township is owned by tax exempt entities which is disability to the township. Mr. Oliver expressed the importance of center designation or node in the area to supplement the tax base of the township and to support the expansion of existing marine industry or building of those that are proposed. It was expressed that there is no intention to allow new homes in the working waterfront but to support and expand the working waterfront which has been a staple of the township for centuries.

Donna Rendeiro, Director NJOPA, provided an overview of the Plan Endorsement process and explained the state is committed to reducing time and effort needed to complete the Plan Endorsement. Further the State Planning Commission recently adopted a shorter version of guidelines for the Municipal Self Assessment. The Municipal Self Assessment will be the next

step for the township in this process; resiliency will need to be addressed. An Action Plan will be needed and contains those items that can be executed quickly; the Plan Implementation Agreement will contain items that take longer to complete and will be done after the Plan Endorsement is achieved. Director Rendeiro added that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Maurice River Township and NJOPA would temporarily extend the centers designation and could potentially be reached if mapping (revision of Center/Node boundaries) is agreed upon and good faith effort is shown to complete the Plan Endorsement process.

Director Rendeiro expressed her support for the working waterfronts within NJ and expressed the need for resiliency planning as part of the endorsement process. Dialogue between the township and state is crucial to the process.

Susan Weber, NJDOT, expressed two concerns: one being a 'circulation element' in the Master Plan and the other being a 'Complete Streets Policy'. Ms. Weber stated that MRT Master Plan mentions most of the elements needed for the circulation element and deficiencies should be reasonably easy to attain. These elements are roadways, vehicular traffic, transit, bike, walking, parking, water born transportation, railways, trucking and goods/freight movement (this is important with significant increase in ecommerce fulfillment). Ms. Weber stated that the MRT Master Plan (2000 & 2006) plus the Reexam (2012/13) need to be brought up to reflect 2020 standards. A packet on "Complete Streets" was provided. It was mentioned that "Complete Streets" requires a 'buy-in' by residents and can be done as part of the plan and implementation process.

Ben Stowman expressed that there have been no 'new' roads in Maurice River Township since 2008 and that the plan is basically the same. Ms. Cuvillo explained that she is not sure 'how' the Complete Streets would fit into Maurice River Township. Concern was expressed for the need to elevate critical evacuation routes.

Ms. Weber explained that an endorsed plan does provide an advantage to a municipality in the grant review process for NJDOT Local Aid.

Mr. Oliver questioned the proposal to dredge the Maurice River which inevitably will benefit existing waterfront industry and would allow for expansion. Ms. Rendeiro suggested to add this to the 'Self-Assessment'.

Other topics discussed included: Fair Share Housing Plan and the need for Maurice River to include this moving forward in the MSA; Ms. Cuvillo commented that COAH recommendation is 200 units and she is prepared to address this topic.

Pinelands was not available for this meeting and it was commented that the 'working waterfront' area in question is not located in Pinelands.

Mr. Brewer, Cumberland Co. Planning, stated that the county will be following the township's lead in this effort.

Rick Brown, NJDEP stated he is confident that they will be able to work with the Township Planner to get this done. Mr. Brown further explained that the site proposed for offshore wind support is mostly high ground and he does not believe there are any significant Threatened and Endangered habitat issues in the area. Mr. Brown stated that the consultant for the site will be submitting a wetland delineation that will clarify the extent of wetlands property. Mr. Brown added that the goal should be for the township to get the Action Plan done as soon as possible. Mr. Brown stated that 'green jobs' are of particular interest to the state and resiliency due to sea level rise must be taken into account.

Liz Semple, NJDEP added that resiliency must be considered in the MSA; this would include describing the status of risk assessment, identifying vulnerable populations and planning for resiliency. Further the NJDEP would like to see the Plan Endorsement communities adopt resolutions on wellhead protection, riparian zone and water conservation.

It was discussed that a CAFRA permit application will be submitted by the proposed offshore wind project very soon.

Meghan Wren, NJOPA, was identified to be the ‘point person’ for Maurice River Township moving forward with the Municipal Self-Assessment and Plan Endorsement process.

Ms. Rendeiro thanked the Township Committee for making this meeting a “Public Meeting” and added that this adheres to the public involvement aspect of the Plan Endorsement process. Ms. Rendeiro suggested alternative avenues be looked at for public participation due to the Corona Virus pandemic social distancing guidelines. These could be ‘survey’, Zoom, etc. Mr. Stowman commented that the working waterfront project, prepetition and centers designation nodes have been topics of discussion at several township meetings in the past. It was advised that these could be taken into consideration as part of the required public participation.

Public Comment

Mr. Whildin made a motion to open the public comment session at 10:48 am; seconded by Mr. Ashton.

Roll Call: Ayes – Whildin, Ashton, Oliver Nays – None

There being no public comment, Mr. Whildin made a motion to close the public comment at 10:49 am; seconded by Mr. Ashton.

Roll Call: Ayes – Whildin, Ashton, Oliver Nays – None.

Mr. Oliver questioned straightening the “S” curve on River Road; would this be a short-term or long-term goal. Ms. Rendeiro suggested that is be placed in the Self-Assessment and if needed it can be moved to long-term. Mr. Brown added that permission will be needed from the property owner to move the roadway and a CAFRA permit would be required.

Adjournment

Mr. Whildin made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Ashton.

Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk