

MAURICE RIVER TOWNSHIP
Special Meeting

Wednesday, October 3, 2018 – 5:30 pm

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

Present: Patricia Gross, Mayor
J. Roy Oliver, Deputy Mayor
Ken Whildin, Committeeman
Tiffany CuvIELLO-Morrissey, Township Planner
Ben Stowman, Land Use Board Chair
Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Gross at 5:30 pm and the pledge of allegiance followed..

Roll Call: Mrs. Gross, present
Mr. Oliver, present
Mr. Whildin, present

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss redevelopment planning for Maurice River Township.

Discussion:

1. Redevelopment Planning for Maurice River Township

Mayor Gross presented that the Township Committee previously adopted Resolution No. 88-2018 which designated the Township of Maurice River as an area in need of rehabilitation. Mrs. Gross explained that recently she has been approached by the owners of the 'old' Port-O-Call Restaurant property asking for advice and/or assistance regarding the use of this property. The new owner has been approached by a prospective buyer but the interest in the property would not create a ratable for the township. It was discussed that due to its positioning this property holds economic growth potential and is within the corridor area that the township previously determined holds the greatest expectation for economic development.

Ms. Morrissey explained the positive side of adopting a redevelopment ordinance which can be designed for a corridor or a specific property. The redevelopment ordinance could be developed to address all areas of concern and need for the township. It was further discussed that properties where redevelopment plans have already been adopted are the Ackley Garage and Sapello Foundry sites. The Whibco Redevelopment is still in process. These three properties fall under a potential 25-30 year tax abatement.

Under the redevelopment plan the abatement of taxes would be the local taxes would be paid, no school tax would be paid and the county tax would be decreased

Under the redevelopment plan the township would essentially act as a developer and could not enforce eminent domain. No 25 year abatements would be permitted; only up to 5 year abatements. The township also would not be able to float a municipal bond but would be able to request proposals for work. A redevelopment agreement could address whether 'deed restriction' could be placed on the property(s).

Ms. Morrissey suggested that at this time the Township adopted a 'basic' township wide redevelopment plan which would involve the adoption of an ordinance. The ordinance could be presented for introduction at the October meeting, referred to the Land Use Board for their November meeting and adopted in November by the Township Committee. Advertising would be the same as any other ordinance.

The ordinance would allow the Township Committee to enter into discussions with individual property owners and to adopt 5 year tax abatement ordinance. The 5 year tax abatement would encourage home rehabilitation; the abatement scale would be set in the ordinance and a CAP could be set.

Ms. Morrissey stated that a copy of the redevelopment ordinance would be sent to the Pinelands.

It was discussed that being pro-active is the best way to move the township forward and encourage economic development. The marine properties also hold potential should the land swap take place. The incentive for potential businesses to work with the township would be the tax abatement (ie: cost to install/update a septic could be offset by the abated taxes).

Ms. Morrissey stated that the township can also purchase properties and either resell with a development plan or rehabilitate and sell. Ms. Morrissey suggested looking for grant opportunities to help fund rehabilitation.

Mrs. Gross questioned how to explain this process to the current owner of the 'old' Port-O-Call property. Ms. Morrissey suggested explaining the redevelopment plan, the redevelopment agreement and the possible option of selling to the township if they are interested. The Township Committee must also decide the route of action best for the township.

It was also discussed that a wetlands delineation will need to be done on this property; the septic field will need to be increased which may present problems. The building is not a problem.

Ms. Morrissey suggested to adopt the ordinance with a basic redevelopment plan. Possibly executive sessions could take place to talk to property owners regarding 'negotiations'; this should be verified by Frank DiDomenico, Township Solicitor. After the ordinance and redevelopment plan are complete, the township could look for grant opportunities.

Mr. Oliver made a motion to authorize the ordinance be presented for introduction at the October 18th meeting, then referred to the Land Use Board and adoption of the ordinance scheduled for the November meeting; seconded by Mr. Whildin.

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

Mrs. Gross stated that the marina land swap is pending NJDEP appraisal of the properties; redevelopment of this area is ideal if it is acquired by the township.

Mr. Oliver questioned sending a letter to the Nature Conservancy to see if they are interested in acquiring the Cheli property which has a substantial Municipal Lien on it. Essentially the property holds no economic opportunity for the township and is land locked by property already owned by the Nature Conservancy. Mr. Oliver offered that the municipal lien could be purchased at a reduced rate with the ability to foreclosure expediently. Also since the township has undertaken the initial steps of assessment with funds acquired through USEPA and HDSRF funds; the Nature Conservancy would be able to continue the work by seeking USEPA Cleanup funding. The Township Committee consensus was to proceed with sending the letter.

Ms. Morrissey pointed out that the recycling center location is a viable economic development area if the township can relocate the recycling center.

Ms. Gross announced that Dunkin Donuts is moving forward and the owner's engineer is designing a septic system that exceeds the expectations of the Pineland's requirements.

Adjournment

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

Denise L. Peterson, Municipal Clerk