

**UPPER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

The meeting of the Upper Township Planning Board was held at Township Hall at 2100 Tuckahoe Road, Petersburg. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

SUNSHINE ANNOUNCEMENT

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

Member	Attendance
Matthew Davidson, Class IV	Present
Gary DeMarzo, Class II	Absent
Brooke Handley Alt	Present
Joseph Harney, Class IV	Present
Kimberly Hayes, Class III	Present
Ted Kingston, Class IV	Present

Member	Attendance
Chris McGuire, Chairman	Present
Colby Meloy Alt	Present
Jay Newman, Class I	Absent
Gary Riordan, Vice Chair	Present
Sean Whelan, Class IV	Absent

Also, in attendance were Jeffrey Barnes, Board Solicitor and Liz Oaks, Board Secretary and Zoning Officer.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 17, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Harney and seconded by Mr. Riordan.

In favor: Harney, Hayes, Riordan, McGuire

Abstain: Davidson, Handley, Kingston, Meloy

NEW BUSINESS

None

DISCUSSION

Dark Sky Lighting Ordinance

Mr. McGuire provided an update. There had been a sub-committee appointed to discuss an ordinance pertaining to lighting in the township. After a few meetings there had been some drafts and we had been waiting for the final. Due to the previous engineer's untimely departure, we do not have a final draft. We have three different versions that have similar wording. He and the Deputy Mayor have discussed and agreed to review each and come up with a final version. Once complete we will forward a copy to the board secretary for distribution to the board members for review. He expects this will be presented at the November meeting.

Board Engineer Position

Mr. McGuire – There has been a lot of back and forth on the topic of board engineer. We have reached out to a handful of local engineers derived from suggestions from some board members. He would like to schedule some interviews. To date we have only had one response. We have a date and time to meet with this person. After consulting with Mr. Barnes, he has confirmed that no more than three members of the board can partake in that, so we do not have a quorum. He suggested himself, the Deputy Mayor and Mr. Kingston be the three involved. Given a level playing field with the applicant's qualifications, he hopes to find someone with good communication, accessibility, and generally a good fit with the planning board.

Mr. Barnes added the importance to accessibility for the applicant. Many towns have third party engineers, and it can be very difficult for the applicant which can stall the application process. He suggested that the engineer have a day a week or some type of schedule that they can be in the township offices so that they are available to the applicant.

Deputy Mayor Hayes believes what Mr. Barnes is pointing out is that we are preparing to conduct interviews for a position we have no idea what we are expecting them to do. She suggested the sub-committee come together and have a conversation about what they feel the needs of the planning board are and what the position entails before we start bringing people in and interviewing them. It is inevitable that questions will be missed. From the Municipal Engineer side they are experiencing growing pains. Things are a little different, not necessarily bad, just different. We need a firm grasp on what we expect from the engineer.

Mr. McGuire stated he would come up with a draft of what would be required.

Mr. Kingston inquired about the municipal engineer and are they in daily.

Deputy Mayor Hayes explained that the conflict engineer has stepped in, in the interim. They are in on a regular, but not daily basis. They also have Mr. Dietrich's township cell phone.

Mr. Kingston expressed concern that the Planning Board Engineer represent the Planning Board rather than the applicant. He wants someone to support the zoning ordinance and is likely to support a separate engineer for the planning board.

Mr. Harney added that he highly recommends that the firm have a professional licensed planner certified by the State of New Jersey. Mr. Dietrich had that and an engineering degree. We essentially lost two rather than one. He concurs with Mr. Barnes that we find someone with availability.

Mr. Barnes – Whether it is a couple hours every week or every two weeks. This will prevent them from coming to a meeting without being familiar with the applications. He also suggests each applicant supply a sample report of what to expect from them.

Mr. Riordan expressed concern whether the fee schedule will be adequate.

There was a brief discussion regarding the process of billing, escrow, and application fees. It was suggested to research what other municipalities fees are.

RESOLUTIONS

D.V. TOWER, LLC – BLOCK 565.03 LOTS 55.02, 56, AND 57 – PB 06-2023

A motion was made to approve the resolution by Mr. Riordan, seconded by Ms. Handley

In favor: Harney, Hayes, Riordan, McGuire

Abstain: Davidson, Handley, Kingston, Meloy

PUBLIC PORTION

The meeting was open to the public.

Janice Connell, 1808 Commonwealth Avenue, was sworn. Ms. Connell stated she and Jason Lombardi worked on developing a draft with the sub-committee for the dark sky lighting ordinance and offers assistance if needed as they move forward. She added that she believes a well defined position description for the engineer is key to finding a successful candidate. She also agrees the engineer should work for the board and not the applicant.

Hearing and seeing no one else, this portion was closed.

BILLS

A motion was made by Mr. Harney seconded by Mr. Meloy to pay the bills, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Harney and seconded by Mr. Riordan to adjourn the meeting, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Submitted by,

Liz Oaks