

Frenchtown Planning Board
Regular Meeting
December 8, 2021
7:30 P.M.

Chairman Randi Eckel called the Regular Meeting to Order at 7:30 P.M. and stated that all the requirements of the “Open Public Meeting Law” have been met. The meeting has been advertised, the Agenda has been posted in the Borough Hall and on the website and copies distributed to the designated newspapers with the teleconferencing information to join the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present:	Absent:
Cooke	Dragt
Dougherty	DenBleyker
Eckel	Myhre
Ferree	Tomko
Herb	
Reino	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting – November 10, 2021

Jeanne Herb moved to accept the minutes of the November 10, 2021 Regular meeting and John Dougherty seconded the motion. The minutes of the November 10, 2021 Regular meeting were approved by favorable roll call vote with Gordon Maggie Cooke and Jeanne Herb abstaining.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Randi Eckel announced that before we start the public comment section, comments are welcomed on matters not listed on the agenda. Comments related to agenda items should be held until that specific item comes up on the agenda. Chairman Eckel opened the floor for public comments. Chairman Eckel stated that if you wish to make a comment, raise your hand and she will call on you. Having no comments, Chairman Eckel closed the public comment session.

SITE PLAN WAIVER/VARIANCE APPLICATION – BLOCK 4 LOT 1, 1110 HARRISON STREET – FORZA 13 HOLDINGS, LLC. (COMPLETENESS REVIEW)

Chairman Eckel noted that the Board will review this application for completeness this evening. Engineer Robert O’Brien is filling in for Engineer Clerico this evening. Chairman Eckel added that there is a memo from Engineer Clerico, dated 12/2/21, addressing the completeness. He also filled in the checklist items.

Attorney Erica Edwards noted that Tony Has, engineer and planner for the applicant is present this evening to respond.

Engineer O’Brien noted that he has a resolution from the previous application as to Item O, and it is now deemed complete instead of the temporary waiver recommendation. So waivers can be granted for items D, V, W, X, 17, 18, 19, 26 and items 14, 15 and O. A permanent waiver can be granted for item 9 and a temporary waiver can be granted for item 6. Responding to Attorney Hirsch, Engineer O’Brien confirmed that granting the requested waiver for 9 and Item O is a permanent waiver.

The applicant's engineer Hajjar requested a waiver for item 0, and asked that items 4 and 6 be a condition of any approval so that the applicant does not have to resubmit for signatures. We now comply with items 14 and 15 as to the net and gross areas. There are no right of ways proposed and the property lines do not go to the center line of the road and there are no dedications as part of the application. They are requesting permanent waivers. Engineer O'Brien confirmed that these will be permanent waivers. There is a conditions approval for item 6, (temporary waiver). He had a conversation with Mr. Hajjar and is recommending permanent waivers and deeming Item O completes.

On motion by John Dougherty, seconded by Jeanne Herb and carried by unanimous favorable roll call vote, the Planning Board deemed the site plan waiver and variance application complete, granting permanent waivers for Items D, V, W, X, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 26 and 9, temporary waiver for 6 to be a condition of any approval.

**MINOR SUBDIVISION/LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT AND VARIANCE APPLICATION–
BLOCK 43 LOTS 3.01, 4 & 6 – MAPLE AVENUE – MEGAN BYRNE (PUBLIC
HEARING)**

Chairman Eckel noted that this application was deemed complete and if all the notices have been completed as required it can go to public hearing. Attorney Hirsch noted that she has reviewed the affidavit of service and all is in order and the Board has jurisdiction and can proceed to public hearing. The applicant will be sworn in.

Megan Byrne Stephen Byrne, and Engineer and Planner Wayne Ingram were sworn in by Board Attorney Hirsch.

Chairman Eckel requested that the applicant get started with the public hearing.

Applicant Megan Byrne stated that the application is for a lot line adjustment. The house lot is in the middle. She got the house a year ago and there was no heat, no ac, and a tarp on the roof when she moved in. She wants to adjust the lot line so there are lots that eventually could be built on. She loves the town and her neighbors, one cuts the grass, one plows snow and she loves being here. She want to be able to build on the lots and make the neighborhood a better place. Responding to Board Attorney Guliet Hirsh as to ownership of the other two lots, Megan Byrne stated that she owns all the lots and they are buildable as they are now Jeanne Herb asked if the intent was to build on the other two lots. Megan responded in the affirmative.

Engineer Wayne J. Ingram noted that he will provide testimony on the variances being requested as part of the application but first will provider his qualifications as an expert witness. Engineer Ingram stated that he is a licensed engineer, planner and a licensed surveyor in the State of New Jersey. He has been licensed as an engineer for about 12 years, as a surveyor for 7 years and as a planner for about 10 years. He has appeared before almost ever municipality in Hunterdon County and this is his first for Frenchtown. His licenses are current and valid. The Board excepted Mr. Ingram as an expert witness.

Chairman Eckel asked Mr. Ingram to go through the requested variances and address items brought up in Board Planner Green's memo.

Mr. Ingram pulled up the existing plot showing the subject property in 3 existing lots and noted that these lots were originally plotted in 1963. Some of these lots were merged creating

configuration of what you see today. Initially, there were 6 to 7 lots. Lot 3.01, to the west, is .443 acres, lot 4, in the middle, is 1.566 acres and lot 6, to the east and on the corner is .918. Lot 4 has the current existing residential structure on Maple Avenue as you heard by Megan Byrne.

Mr. Ingram noted that there is a Power and Light Easement from North to South which takes up a portion of Lots 4 and 6. The proposal is to adjust the lot lines to make the lots as conforming as we can make them to the current zoning and improve their buildability to comply with the zoning standards. The result of deducting the easement is that Lot 4, is now .76 acres and lot 6 is .9 acres. The lot line adjust would create more reasonable building lots. Responding to Attorney Hirsh as to the exact dimensions of the lots, Mr. Ingram responded that Lot 3.01 is .759, Lot 4 is .919 and lot 6 is 1.072. The plan was designated to decrease the size of Lot 4, the residential lot, and provide a lot increase to lots 3.01 and 6.

Responding to the Board Engineer's one requirement, Mr. Ingram stated that we have provided right of way road dedications on Maple Avenue and Ridge Road which creates new variances. It creates setback issues with the current residential structure. That is not changing and we have provided the right-of-way dedication at the Borough's request. Mr. Ingram continued noting that Lot 3, to the west, is not constrained by things such as steep slopes and is easily developable. There are no power line easements through that lot. Lot 4, except for the setback deficiency because of the road dedication, will remain as a residential lot with the land as noted currently utilized for the residents. As to Lot 6, we acknowledge the steep slopes and power easement and note that the lot is now longer than was previously which was developable but we are improving what is currently there. The steep slopes exist, and the powerline area exist but there still is a sizable area that is suitable for development for a home. The area outside the easements in the building envelope is 150 feet x 25 feet to 35 feet because of the angle. It is a sizable area for a home. We believe it is a sufficient area. This was a lot that was previously 2 lots and was merged and was smaller than our current proposal. Responding to John Dougherty, Mr. Ingram stated that his reference to lot 3 refers to lot 3.01.

Mr. Ingram noted that these lots are soon to receive sewer services so the idea is to not use septic but to hook up to sewer. The current home will remain on septic until sewer is available.

Engineer Ingram spoke with the Board Planner today and reviewed the her memo and variances for these lots and concurs. Lot 3.01 would have lot depth of 182.69 feet and lot width of 102.69 feet which was reduced due to the right-of-way dedication. Lot 4 would have a lot depth of 182.01 feet also being further constrained by the road way dedication. And, Lot 6 would have a lot depth of 182.01 feet which is the shortest lot depth. The front yard setback for the current home on Lot 4 is 57 feet which is being reduced because of the right-of-way dedication. The house is in the required 60 foot set back. It is the front stoop that is located in the front yard setback area.

As a lot area for Lot 6, corner lot due to a requirement to reduce the lot area due to any easement that needs to be deducted from the area reduces the lot area that is buildable. The lot itself is much longer with this proposal. The area is being reduced to 26,832 square feet and the ordinance requires 33,000. That is the largest lot on the plan. As a whole, it is larger but becomes smaller when removing the easement area. Lot 4 is reduced but is still conforming and Lot 3.01 is unencumbered by that easement.

Multiple existing non-conformity conditions apply to the application which are lot width, lot depth and lot area which are being improved by this lot line adjustment proposal.

Mr. Ingram noted that he spoke with Planner Green today on the steep slope matter and Ms. Green was okay with us supplying the Borough with a map of the steep slopes. He suggested that we do not apply the subdivision standard on steep slopes which determined how many lots can exist. That was in his opinion meant for new lots being created and would not apply to existing lots. Instead, hold the standard to how much of the steep slopes can be developed. We do not know what that would be because we are not developing those lots. We are suggesting that we use the same standards used to develop a vacant lot in Frenchtown. Responding to Attorney Hirsh, Mr. Ingram agreed that at the same time these lots would apply for a building permit, compliance to the ordinance would be determined and if the lot does not comply, a variance would be required. That is in regard with amount of disturbance. There is another section of the ordinance that talks about the density that would be applied. Because we already have the three lots, we are suggesting that it would not make sense to apply it. We are happy to supply a map where the steep slopes are. We did an analysis and lot 6 is the only lot with steep slope issues. Lot 3.01 does not have any steep slopes, just moderate slopes and Lot 4 has some steep slopes but is pre-developable. There were no steep slopes at that time. Lot 3.01 has steep slopes but there are ways to develop the lot that would comply.

Jeanne Herb stated that she is looking at this proposal that is not for development but development in the future. She is concerned that there will be pressure point that will have to be addressed by the Board at some point in the future for development. She does not understand the logic of only looking at dividing the lots and putting this Board in a difficult position regardless of prior steep slopes or not.

Mr. Ingram noted that he was getting to that in his testimony and spoke with Planner Green about it. If we decided not to adjust these lot lines and the owner sold lot 4, you would have a situation where someone could develop the lot and propose development on a more deficient and nonconforming lot and if a variance was not granted, there could be a taking which would have its own negative result.

Jeanne Herb state that this is predicated on an argument that there is a benefit to developing these properties. She is not sure that that case has been made. She is not sure what the benefit to the community is.

Mr. Ingram stated that he is getting to that in his testimony. Allowing to subdivide the properties and making them much more conforming does not create more lots than what you have today but to develop in a conforming fashion. If they cannot, they would have to come before this Board. They have a more suitable lot than exists today. A subdivision application does not require a development plan. We do not know what will be developed. That is a risk that the developer takes. Jeanne Herb commented that it is that risk we do not want.

Chairman Eckel asked Attorney Hirsch to provide the Board with guidance.

Jeanne Herb wanted to confirm that sometimes the Board hears the benefits to the community. Attorney Hirsh noted that she understands Jeanne Herb's concern but what we are dealing with is a lot line adjustment and she agrees with Mr. Ingram. In that, if he was not doing this application, these lots would be available for development subject to compliance with the ordinance standards. What they are doing is making the lots more compatible with the current zoning ordinance standards in some cases elimination the variances and sometimes making a variance lesser for some of the lots. We are protecting ourselves in terms of future development

of the vacant lots by proposing appropriate conditions which she believes Mr. Ingram is alluding to. She sees in the applicant's attorney's letter, they are acknowledging that these are appropriate so if someone comes in for a building permit for one of the lots, they will look at the resolution and see that these conditions are in the resolution and that the Board is not approving future development but that the Board is indicating that any non-compliance of the zoning standards would have to be reviewed. Any development permit would be reviewed by the zoning officer and if there is not compliance, it would have to come to the Board. That is how we protect ourselves.

Jeanne Herb stated that she is thinking about this as granting a variance when there is a benefit to the community and she is not sure that she has heard the benefits. Attorney Hirsch responded that Mr. Ingram can do the work of the applicant's attorney as far as the variances are concerned. The variances are C-1 Hardship Variances and C-2 Planning Variances. Mr. Ingram will provide the negative and positive criteria and the benefits that you are looking for. Attorney Hirsch added that hardship variances, in this case, would be the right of way dedication. That is unique to the situation. It is not something they are creating. It is something they are required to do and we can allow Mr. Ingram to go through the testimony of the negative and positive criteria that is required for variances. If you do not hear what you are looking for then please ask.

Responding to Kandy Ferree, Chairman Eckel noted that we have a planner this evening representing the Board in place of Planner Green who could not attend this evening but first she would like Mr. Ingram to finish his testimony which may answer some of our questions and speak to the issues Board members may have.

Mr. Ingram noted that the steep slope variance can be granted according to your ordinance due to certain conditions. Hardship to achieve compensatory net environmental benefit or to promote general public health, safety and welfare. Applying the hardship conditional of the ordinance, would affect the ability to have 3 lots otherwise already existing and could be developed as is today. It can also contribute to the general welfare. You will have lots that are now conforming which is a benefit to the community because having more conforming lots is more in line with the zoning ordinance and a benefit. Whether someone develops them is a separate issue at the end of the day. The lots will look like the other lots in the neighborhood which is the intention of the zoning. That is a benefit. The other benefit is that we are dedicating a right-of-way which otherwise would not be taken by the Borough to improve the streets. They are benefits. They may not be huge benefits but benefits are what you want. The justification for the other variance we believe are similar to the other one. By making the lots more conforming, it improves lot standards meeting the general welfare standards and promotes item (c) light and air and open space by providing larger lots with larger areas and buildings would have much more space. It also supports item (e) establishing appropriate population densities. We are making lots more consistent with the sizes and desensitizes and finally, it promotes item (i), a desirable visual environment. You do not want to see that you are left with small lots. This will provide a desirable visual environment. In addition, if lot 4 is sold, you end up with something that is not as conforming to the ordinance or a taking by the town.

Mr. Ingram added that he does not see negative impacts. There are improvements to the current conditions. There are no impairments to the zone plan, master plan or zoning ordinance. There are more deficiencies as it is now. All the deficiencies were created years ago. We are making what exists now more conforming. We cannot get more depth and area and it is a hardship and deducting the right of way dedications is a benefit to the Borough. There is no benefit to have two (2) substandard lots. The proposal for 3.01 is conforming than now. Lot 6 is more

constrained. We are not creating lots that did not exist. They are non-conforming existing lots. We are making them more conforming.

Mr. Hirsch asked for more information on the lots when they were created in 1963 and assumes Ms. Byrne was not the owner of the lots in 1963. Mr. Ingram responded that Lot 3.01 was the same in 1963 as it is today. Lot 4 was 3 lots and Lot 5 was 2 lots. At some point the lots were merged to create Lot 4 as it is now and the same for lot 6 as it is now. Megan Byrne did not create those lots or owned them at the time. Attorney Hirsch noted that if this was a situation where Megan Byrne created these lot and the non-conformities, that would be relative to if they could build on those lots. Megan Byrne did not create the lots. Megan Byrne is the new owner and not responsible for creating the non-conformity. It does not mean that she could not develop the lot or ask for variances. The Board has to look at the variances as it would with any other variance. Did the applicant satisfy the positive and negative criteria. It is a unique situation because the 3 lots already exist. If you deny the variance, you are sending the applicant back with the 3 lots as it is now and they could develop them in a way that is less conforming. They are proposing a lot line adjust trying to bring it into more conformity with the ordinance.

Mr. Ingram noted that what is interesting is that if someone wanted to develop on the lot lots right now, they would have to contact the adjacent owners to see if they could obtain additional area if the lot area was non-conforming and they would have to provide those proofs. We are saving that step and can provide the additional area. Chairman Eckel stated that the applicant is trying to make the lots more conforming to the zoning ordinance and the Borough will get the right of way dedication. Mr. Ingram added that another scenario is that if we did not have the residential lot in the middle, we could have made two lots instead of three.

Responding to Jeanne Herb's comment, Mike Reino stated that there would be smaller houses on smaller lots. The proposal would allow larger houses on larger lots and more tax revenue for the Borough. This proposal is making it more conforming and uniform in size similar to the existing neighborhood. Jeanne Herb responded that it is coming from a perspective that benefit equals development. She does not see a benefit for that. To be better than what is there now is not a standard the Borough wants. Chairman Eckel noted that the Planning Board encourages building something that looks like Frenchtown. Buildings might be more attractive on larger lots.

Planning Austin, representing the Planning Board, agrees with Mr. Ingram and Attorney Hirsch. Make three larger lots so that the houses of similar size as the neighborhood could be built. By not allowing larger lots, the lots would be more constrained and any house built would not be as consistent with the surrounding area and not have the same curb appeal.

Planner Austin noted that Mr. Ingram did clarify items in Planner Green's letter dated 11/2/21.

As to Item 2, 3, 4, and 7, heard testimony clarifying those discrepancies and would be provided on the revised plans as a condition of approval.

As to Items 5, 6, 10 & 11, her heard testimony and the questions were answered and this would not be a plan revision.

As to Item 8, he asked if the applicant had any idea what the front yard would be for lot 6. Mr. Ingram replied that more than likely, the front yard would run on Maple Avenue because you have a longer area. It will not affect development either way.

Planner Austin had no further comments.

Chairman Eckel asked if the Board had any further comments or questions on this application.

Jeanne Herb commented that the Board is not only acting as a Planning Board but as a Board of adjustment, not just looking at the master plan but looking at how individual applications adjust to our vision. My comments are compelling in terms of what we want this part of our community to be.

Attorney Hirsch stated that it is time to talk about the law. Talking about Planning Board or Board of Adjustment is not a concern. What is a concern is the criteria that you have to judge against. In this case, it is are C variances which is a variance from bulk, lot area, a C1 or C2 variances. You have negative and positive criteria. The criteria has to fit under the Municipal Land Use Law. A C1 is a hardship variance by way of topographics, and extraordinary situation. The point is that these three lots, each may be non-conforming and steep slopes, wetlands are standard situations that create a hardship. With a C2 variance, the benefits have to outweigh the detriments. More room is a benefit and a positive criteria. As to the negative criteria, relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the to the public good. The public good deals with what impact it has on the neighborhood and neighbors. It is not just being better to have larger lots but think about the size of the lots around this property. The applicant is proposing something that would bring lots into better harmony to the lots around it. Is it a substantial detriment to the zone plan or zoning ordinance, When you are dealing with lots that are non-conforming and the applicant will make those non-conformities better and in harmony with the zoning, that is what you want.

Attorney Hirsch noted that all the variances that are required are in Darlene Green's memo. She asked if Mr. Ingram agreed. Mr. Ingram agree with Darlene Green's listing of variances. Subtracting the easements made the lot areas more difficult. Both arguments could apply. The lots become more conforming and the front yard setback with the existing structure was a function of the right of way reduction in the lot depth and front yard setback variances making it also a hardship. The lots were deficient to begin with and we are not exasperating the conditions.

Responding to John Dougherty, Attorney Hirsch stated that there was a letter submitted by the applicant's attorney. They are requesting variances that they had not previously requested. Board members noted they did not see the letter. Attorney Hirsch read the letter and noted that it can be inserted into the minutes of the meeting as part of the record. This is what happened when documents are submitted at the last minute. Attorney Hirsch added that the applicant published for all variances, including those that may come up during the hearing.

Chairman Eckel opened the public hearing on the application. Having no comments from the public, Chairman Eckel closed the public hearing on this application.

Chairman Eckel asked for any additional comments or questions from the Bord.

Responding to John Dougherty as to the septic and well, Mr. Ingram stated that the septic is in the front of the house and does meet the setback. John Dougherty asked if the existing well and

septic will be put on the plan. Mr. Ingram confirmed that it will. It will be a condition of approval.

Having no other questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Eckel asked for action from the Board.

On motion by Joh Dougherty, seconded by Mike Reino and carried by favorable roll call vote, the Planning Board approved the lot line adjustment application/subdivision for block 43 Lots 3.01, 4 and 6 and the variances as set for in Planner Green's letter, dated 11/4/21 subject to the following all conditions captured in Planner Green's letter and subject to all the standard conditions such as taxes and escrow must be kept current.

Vote on the Motion:

Ayes; Cooke, Dougherty, Ferree, Reino and Eckel

Nays: Herb

Abstentions: None

Attorney Hirsch stated that she will circulate the memorializing resolution so everyone can review it.

The Board took a break and resumed the meeting after 5 minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Escrow fee discussion

Chairman Eckel noted that she has gone through the fee ordinance from the 4 surrounding municipalities. In her spreadsheet she provided, she marked the cells orange that have fees higher than our fees. All the neighboring municipalities have fees that are higher than ours. It speaks to the problem that it is unfair to the applicants to think that an application will only cost them \$500.00 and then Brenda Shepherd has to go back to the applicant for more funds. We should change our escrow fees to higher fees. We also want to make sure the fees are not too high. People who want to age in place may want to put in a ramp or new bathroom and may need a variance. Do we want to take the information and come to a middle ground?

Responding to Jeanne Herb, Chairman Eckel noted that the escrow fees pay for the professionals' review and attendance at meetings. We want to make sure that our fees are more in line with what it cost to have the reviews done. A single hour of review from a few of our professionals will exceed \$500.00. She recommended using $\frac{3}{4}$ of the maximum fee of our neighboring municipalities. We need an approach and come up with proposed numbers. Responding to Kandy Ferree's concerns, Chairman Eckel noted that we provide guidance to our professionals that we want guidance on ordinance matters and to refrain from providing preferences. A letter was issued to all the Board professionals when that issue came up in the ArtYard application. Kandy Ferree commented that there were comments on applications on River Road and the Fourth Street variance application that were outside the professional's purview. Chairman Eckel responded that NJPO does not have guidance. Everything may not always be captured by ordinance. It will need to be separated in the memo. Applicant will need to do this to be in compliance. An opinion may be helpful to remediate something. For instance,

reducing impervious cover, the professional may make a suggestions for a creative solution. We do not want to run up fees unnecessarily and we are sensitive to that.

Guliet Hirsch stated that by trying to set fees at $\frac{3}{4}$, she is concerned with having fee changes for informal review. You have a need for a legal review, the Borough can be flexible at how to help an applicant. She does not want to discourage you from what you are doing but if an applicant needs Planner Green's help, you would want her to help.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Brenda Shepherd, Board Secretary, presented the following vouchers for approval:

VOUCHER LIST 12/08/2021

GENERAL REPRESENTATION

Archer & Greiner, PC.	General Representation through 8/31/21	\$660.00
Archer & Greiner, PC.	General Representation through 11/30/21	\$40.00
Colliers Engineering	General Representation through 11/19/21	\$412.50

ESCROW ACCOUNT – Block 28 Lot 1 – Knight/Brown

Archer & Griner	Professional Services for 3 Fourth Street Through 8/31/21	\$220.00
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ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 43 LOT 4 13 Maple Avenue

Archer & Greiner, PC	Professional Services for 13 Maple Avenue Through 11/30/21	\$20.00
Colliers Engineering	Professional Services for 13 Maple Avenue Through 11/19/21	\$437.50
Van Cleef Engineering	Professional Services for 13 Maple Avenue Through 10/31/21	\$1,660.50

ESCROW ACCOUNT - BLOCK 12, LOT 5 – Milford Investments LLC

Colliers Engineering	Professional services for Milford Investments through 11/10/21	\$1 ,417.50
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ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 3 LOT 1, Country Classics - On Site Off Site Inspection

Colliers Engineering	Professional services for Country Classics through 9/14/21	\$2527.50
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ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 3, LOT 1, Country Classics Redevelopment

Albert Cruz	Professional services for Country Classics Through 4/30/21	\$32.00
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ESCROW ACCOUNT – Block 56 Lot 3, 48 Bridge Street LLC.

Colliers Engineering	Professional services for 48 Bridge Street through 10/22/21/21	\$1,556.25
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Colliers Engineering	Professional services for 48 Bridge Street through 11/19/21	\$912.50
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On motion by Jeanne Herb, seconded by John Dougherty and carried by unanimous favorable roll call vote, the Planning Board approved payment of the above bills list.

CORRESPONDENCE, COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE REPORT AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

Kandy Ferree reported that the codification of the Land Use Ordinance should be complete and should be received next week.

Kandy Ferree also reported that we are taking a look at how other municipalities organize their website and make information public. We have created a new account and David Cahill will continue to work on our website and we will review how we want to organize our public information. Chairman Eckel asked if the old graffitied picture of the ceramics plant can be removed. She added that we will need a planning Board liaison to provide planning board information.

Kandy Ferree stated that she will reach out to the Cannabis Committee to reconvene after the holidays. Everyone said they could not meet during the holidays.

Kandy Ferree noted that Frenchtown has been without a zoning officer since November. We were doing a shared service with Lambertville. We are currently using Darlene Green to serve as a temporary zoning officer at her current fee. Chairman Eckel noted that the zoning officer is the flood plain administrator also.

Kandy Ferree reported that the Borough has hired a new Deputy Clerk. Andrew Bernath took a job elsewhere.

Chairman Eckel noted that she spent part of one day at the League of Municipalities. She moderated one session and she will summarize her notes. There were 2 points discussed. There should be no cell phones used in a meeting. If you need to use the cell phone, you need to leave the meeting. Do not communicate with others by cell phone in the meeting. The other point was fully recusing yourself from the meeting. When you recuse yourself, you would be a member of the public.

Chairman Eckel noted that she also attended a Master plan session but it was over crowded and people were not wearing masks. She talked to the League representatives and they thought that people would act responsible.

Chairman Eckel noted that at the end of the meeting packet is the Planner publication. It talks about charging stations. It would be great to get charging stations in town.

Chairman Eckel noted that she will be soliciting proposals for Board professionals. If anyone has concerns with our current professionals, let her know. Our professionals' fees have stayed static. Some are less than half what the firm charges. She will make recommendations at the reorganization meeting.

As to the Master Plan review, Chairman Eckel noted that she would like to move forward on some of the top items listed. She would like to get information from Planner Green to create an ordinance for renewable energy and address solar since we have solar in town already. Jeanne Herb recommended that Chairman Eckel coordinate with Stacy Becker in reference to climate change issue.

ADJOURNMENT

Jeanne Herb moved adjournment at 9:50 pm and Mike Reino seconded. The motion passed on favorable voice vote.

Brenda S. Shepherd
Planning Board Secretary