

September 16, 2010

A regular meeting of the Allendale Planning Board was held in the Municipal Building on September 16, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Chairman Quinn, who announced that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act were met by the required posting and notice to publications.

The following members answered roll call: Mr. Quinn, Mr. Bernstein, Mr. Fliegel, Mr. Sasso, Mr. Sirico, Mr. Walters and Mr. Zambrotta. Mr. Barra, Ms. Sheehan and Mr. Yevchak were absent. Also present was Mr. Dunn, Board Attorney and Mr. Snieckus, Borough Planner.

Mr. Sirico moved, seconded by Mr. Zambrotta to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2010 meeting. On roll call, Mr. Quinn and Mr. Bernstein abstained. Mr. Sasso, Mr. Sirico and Mr. Zambrotta voted in favor.

Mr. Quinn announced that the first item on the agenda is the public hearing on the Open Space and Recreation Element and the Sustainability Element of the Master Plan. He said these are two new elements that had not been in prior master plans. He said the Board plans to review the full master plan before the end of the year. Mr. Snieckus will make his presentation on the two elements and at the conclusion there will be questions from the Board and the public. He said under the current law, the master plan is completely under the purview of the Planning Board in all municipalities in the State of N.J. The Borough Engineer, John Yakimik is also present in case there are any engineering questions.

Mr. Snieckus said a copy of both the Open Space and Recreation Element and the Sustainability Element were sent to Bergen County as required. Mr. Dunn said notice was sent to adjacent municipalities and newspaper publication was made as required.

Mr. Snieckus said he has prepared a power point presentation of some of the details of the open space and recreation element and highlighted some specific items of importance. He said there are several requirements of an open space and recreation plan. First, it is considered an optional element of the master plan, but the requirements are identified within the Municipal Land Use Law as to the minimum components. Goals and objectives are one of the primary components in that they provide the overall guideline for open space and recreation improvements throughout the Borough. The plan identifies open space and the role it plays in defining the character of the community and also the goals and policies for managing growth and its effect on open space and recreation resources. A component of this is a recreation plan which includes an inventory of existing facilities and public sites for recreation and the needs and existing deficiencies are identified. Certain components of a conservation plan are included in this document.

Mr. Snieckus said the State Green Acres program has specific requirements in their funding mechanisms that are available to municipalities that outline the minimum components that should be in the open space and recreation plan. He has used those components as an outline in putting together the Borough's plan. The State provides funding to preserve lands that are identified in such a plan. Planning incentive grants are only in place for municipalities that do have adopted and updated plans. To qualify the Borough must have a local open space tax and

Green Acres approved open space and recreation plan. Should the Board approve such a plan it will be forwarded to DEP Green Acres Department for their review and approval. The awards are reduced up to 25% if the municipality does not have both of the required items. The Green Acres funding provides for acquisition for recreation and conservation purposes, development of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes, also maintenance of such lands, the preservation of historic properties including the acquisition of such properties. It can also include the payment of debt services for certain debts that may be associated with open space or open space development. The Green Acres Open Space guidelines include the need to provide an executive summary of the goals and policies, an inventory of existing resources within the community, a resource assessment of existing natural resources within the community, a needs analysis from the standpoint of open space and recreation, an open space systems map, parcel data requirements relative to the open spaces that are identified, and public participation such as the meeting this evening for soliciting public input and subsequently a Planning Board adoption of such a document.

A few of goals and objectives of the document are to maintain and enhance the existing public open spaces that contribute to the preservation and character of the community, preserve and where possible to increase open space to protect critical environmental resources with parcels that the Borough has obtained through various mechanisms in order to preserve the critical environmental resources that are on those properties and to reduce their impacts to wetlands and streams within the community and also to add to the inventory of the recreational land within the community. In addition:

- To provide recreational uses for all segments of the Borough's population including young children, families and the elderly.
- To serve as a facilitator and source of funding in coordination with the land purchases among all levels of government and to seek funding for the enhancement of recreation facilities and creation of new facilities.
- To promote improvements that encourage access to open space areas.
- To preserve open space and preservation of historic and scenic buildings and places that add to the character of the community.
- To promote greenways and pathways for pedestrian and bicycle recreation and to protect and preserve water resources and watershed lands for purposes of drinking water supply.
- To upgrade existing recreation facilities with new equipment and replacement of older equipment.

Mr. Snieckus said he also performed an inventory of existing open space and recreation facilities within the community and developed a plan within the document that identifies each parcel that offers some level of recreation or open space.

Mr. Snieckus said one of the most important parks in the community from an active recreation standpoint is Crestwood Park. It is 75 acres and has a 7 acre lake, 3 baseball fields, 3 soccer fields, 4 tennis courts, a barn, pavilion and concession facilities and winter ice skating as well. In addition to that there is Brookside Recreation Park which is approximately 12 acres and has 3 baseball fields, 1 softball field, 2 soccer fields, a pavilion and concession facilities. It is shared

with the Board of Education and their activities. It has some physical limitations with the Ramsey Brook which runs through the park. In addition to the municipal facilities, there is also the Board of Education properties which do provide some level of recreation for the residents. There are also some private use facilities. The Church of the Guardian Angel has one soccer field area from which the Borough does get some limited use. One of the gems within the community is the Celery Farm, a 105 acre nature preserve with numerous hiking trails including the Lake Appert section that attracts a host of wildlife. In addition there is Memorial Park and Orchard Common, a 2 acre passive park. There is a 20 acre parcel that was acquired through tax foreclosure. He said there are other pockets of land within the community that may be open space acquisition or transfer opportunities in the future such as the open space area of the Black Millwork property.

Mr. Snieckus said the needs analysis is an important part of the document. This looks at census information to determine the future needs of the population. Future open space and recreation needs were also studied. Municipalities should have 3% of their land as open space. Allendale has 300 acres of open space when all of the various lands are inventoried including the Celery Farm. The protection of the public's safety and welfare is also an important component that needs to be constantly monitored. He said one of the things he identifies in the document is the need for pocket type parks for non-school age children. The field facilities in the community have been identified. He said in Allendale a number of the fields have very high demand and usage characteristics resulting in overuse and therefore not getting sufficient rest or down time.

Mr. Snieckus said in summary the Borough either meets or exceeds standards for open space areas independent of recreation but there is emphasis on the acquisition of the remaining fragile open space systems. The key findings from the recreation needs analysis was the overuse of the athletic fields and that alternatives are needed to provide greater rest times for these fields. While the quantity meets the standards the quality of the fields need improvement in several areas. Indoor courts for basketball are significantly limited and indoor multi-purpose facilities are needed for winter recreation opportunities. At the end of the document several planning and funding action items have been identified. One is to adopt the Open Space and Recreation Plan as a component of the master plan so it can be sent to DEP Green Acres for approval in order to pursue future grants. He also recommends adoption of environmental protection ordinances to protect potential contaminations to aquifers and to promote acquisition of environmentally sensitive land and to use the report to assist with funding and planning efforts. There are a few action steps that are identified and one is updating the Borough's ROSI list (recreation and open space inventory), implementing an active recreation plan for improvements to fields, improving recreation activities for all age groups, planning and implementing pedestrian and bikeway corridors to improve access to mass transit as well as recreational opportunities within the community, implementing environmental protection measures and amending the land use plan to protect areas that we seek to preserve.

Mr. Quinn asked if this plan is consistent with these plans in other communities. Mr. Snieckus said it is and it follows the standard of Green Acres criteria.

The meeting was opened to Board members for questions. There being none, the meeting was opened to the public for questions or comments.

Council member Liz White was sworn. She said she is thrilled to see the Board tackle this major issue. She found out about this meeting via an email she received. She said the ASA Board met recently and she was shocked that they were not invited to attend this meeting to offer their input. She would have liked to see more outreach. Mr. Quinn said there was public notice of the meeting and the meetings are open to the public. She asked if the 10 acres at Hillside School includes the wetlands area. Mr. Snieckus said it includes the entire parcel. She asked if it is positive or negative to include that area. Mr. Snieckus it is really to identify the acreage of the exact facility that is there and not necessarily the level of developed acreage. The specifics are looked into more deeply in the document and the grants people understand there may be limitations. Ms. White asked if we should not point out that out of 10 acres there are 4 acres of wetlands. Mr. Snieckus said it is not necessary but it could be helpful. Ms. White said there is a lot of property that is wetlands that cannot be used for a playground or ball field and it would be helpful if that information was indicated in the document.

Ms. White said a comment was made that the quality of land on Powell Rd. be improved. Mr. Snieckus said what he was trying to say was that those properties were acquired by the Borough and now it is necessary to make sure that they get the proper level of maintenance or preservation into the future and to maintain those features for environmental reasons. Ms. White said she is concerned based upon the surrounding area and what is involved legally. She would prefer to see something along the lines of “improve to be sure we are able to preserve”.

Mr. White said the tennis courts are also used by the high school. She added that many residents have said they would like to see a dog park in the Borough. She said that most of the members of the ASA could not be here tonight but they would have liked to review the plans. Mr. Quinn said the Planning Bd. has had these meetings for almost a year all of which are open to the public. He added that this hearing was not held in July or August because people would be on vacation. Ms. White asked when the master plan will be completed and ready for a vote. Mr. Snieckus said this component will be completed as soon as possible. Mr. Quinn said the goal is to get the master plan completed by the end of the year.

Amy Wilczynski was sworn. She said she is a member of the Council and Chair of the Facilities, Parks and Recreation Committee. She has been a member of the ARC for about 9 years. She said Mr. Snieckus did approach her. They contacted Dan Davis who is in charge of the fields but there are some things that are not as accurate as she would like to see them for the purpose of obtaining grants in the future. On page 2 there is a sentence that says, “the recreation opportunities of Crestwood Park need to be better publicized to help support its programs with new memberships from inside and outside the Borough.” She said that has been done but they don’t intend to go outside the Borough any more. They are trying to help the park by doing more creative programs. They have the 4 sending districts and they are letting people in from Midland Park on a limited basis. At this point they do not intend on expanding that any more. Ms. Wilczynski said the Red Barn is for residents only but it is rented to outside companies. Mr. Quinn asked if it is the Borough’s view that they would prefer to keep it for residents. Ms. White said the Red Barn is a very difficult issue because right now it is only available to Allendale residents or businesses. It costs a lot of money for DPW employees to clean before and after its use. This year they have instituted a fee to cover DPW costs. Ms. Wilczynski said

they do not want to advertise its use to other towns to increase revenue. They are trying to increase revenue by other ways within the community.

Ms. Wilczynski said there is a lot of crossover with the different sports and she feels it is very important that it is very clear about the use of the various fields.

Bob Pasch, 76 Fairhaven Drive was sworn. He said he is President of ARC and is on the long term planning committee for the ASA. He is also a member of the American Soccer Board. Mr. Pasch said it is important to differentiate the use of the fields because League programs are so much different from Recreation programs. Ms. Wilczynski and Mr. Pasch explained and expanded on the uses of the different fields in order to identify them more accurately. They went into great detail on the uses of the various fields. Mr. Bernstein asked if this is a macro overview or is every field supposed to be precise and exact with regard to its use. Mr. Snieckus said being specific about the uses of the fields points out that these fields are used by a lot of activities. This will be helpful in obtaining grants.

Ms. Wilczynski continued to describe the various uses of the fields in detail. Mr. Pasch said with regard to Crestwood Park, each season they take one of the fields off line so it can be reseeded. It is usually taken off line for two seasons. They described the uses of the Northern Highlands field where the schedule is set by the Board of Education and similarly the schedule for basketball at Brookside Elementary is set by the school. Mr. Pasch said we rely on Upper Saddle River, and HoHoKus and Saddle River to help with our programs. Mr. Fliegel said only Allendale's inventory should be included in the document. Mr. Quinn pointed out that one of the conditions when the high school came before the Board with regard to the turf field was that they would open it up to the use of the sending districts on occasion.

Ms. Wilczynski said volleyball should be added as a sport. She said on page 50 there should be a footnote indicating that two of the fields cannot be used simultaneously. Mr. Quinn pointed out that the plan is a guideline. Mr. Pasch said lacrosse is probably the single largest program in town right now in terms of participation. Ms. Wilczynski said the report indicates there is not much activity for seniors. She said Crestwood Lake is underutilized in the winter. There was mention of an indoor recreation center in the report and she wondered if there should be an action plan. Mr. Pasch said the long term planning committee started a focus group and they will be taking field trips to three different facilities.

Mr. Bernstein said the fourth and fifth columns on page 50 contain information that is antiquated. He asked if it is needed. Mr. Pasch said Scott O'Donnell of the ARC would be a good indicator of the overall usage of the fields. Mr. Quinn said he is concerned about how the numbers were created. Mr. Snieckus said it is a way of measuring how Allendale stands up to typical standards. Mr. Fliegel asked if there is a standard that applies just to communities like Allendale that are heavily residential. Mr. Bernstein said he feels the chart is misleading and he feels it should be taken out. Mr. Snieckus said he could remove it from the study and see if there are other alternatives. Mr. Sirico said there is enough ammunition in previous charts. Mr. Quinn said the only thing we might lose by taking out the chart is the undersized soccer fields. The only benefit from the chart is that the existing fields are overused, are over-utilized and

undersized. Mr. Quinn suggested taking out the chart and building into it some of this evening's comments.

A Board member commented that there was some discussion about the mini park that is within Crestwood. It is actually pretty well used by younger tots so that should be noted. Ms. Wilczynski indicated that it is included. Mr. Quinn said there was mention that certain parts of the Borough do not have a park so it is those outlying areas that might be the place to put a tot park.

The meeting was opened to the public for comments.

John Dreyer, 6 Butternut Rd. said there was mention of a dog park. He asked if there has been any discussion with regard to skate boarding which is extremely popular. Ridgewood and Ramsey have a multipurpose facility that handles skating, roller blades and hockey. If a police car goes by and sees someone who is not wearing a helmet or padding they are subject to fines and that insures that these activities are occurring safely. Saddle River recently installed a clam shell for people who enjoy music and that might be a benefit to the community. He suggested looking into what other communities are doing to meet the need for other things that are not just for children such as theater programs and arts. If a child joins a recreation program they are going to experience a sport whether they are skilled in that sport or not. They are going to be part of a team and he is a strong recreation supporter because of that.

A Board member asked if there was any benefit to mentioning the age and condition or year built of a recreation facility. Mr. Snieckus felt that is getting into a little too much detail. Certain fields are in better shape because they may have had recent renovations. He said this document is an overall guideline and discussion of repairs would be more appropriate in a committee type of effort. He said there could be a statement that there needs to be an assessment of the longevity or future repair needs for certain facilities.

Mr. Sasso said page 48 of the document talks about overuse. He suggested adding something about the overuse of the athletic fields and related facilities so that if down the line the Red Barn or grandstand needs attention someone could say the master plan said these facilities were overused.

Mr. Quinn suggested that Mr. Snieckus come back with a revised open space plan and the Board can also review the sustainability plan at the same time.

Ms. White said she will refer the Open Space and Recreation Plan to the ASA Board and ask them to respond to the Board with their comments by October 1.

Mr. Quinn said his goal is to get to a vote by the next meeting so it is important to get the ASA feedback ahead of time. Ms. White said if she gets the ASA's comments by October 1 she will pass them along to Mr. Snieckus.

Sustainability Element of the Master Plan

Ms. Wilczynski said the sustainability element of the master plan came from a program which the Borough is doing called Sustainable New Jersey. It involves a point system where it is necessary to go through a lot of different actions. One of them is to have a sustainable part of the master plan. One of the things they are now working on for energy efficiency is to do an energy audit. Another action they are doing under this program is retrofitting all of the lighting in the Borough-owned buildings and replacing all of the old AC units and boilers with energy efficient units. Ms. White added that this is all at no cost to the Borough.

Ms. Wilczynski said they are going to start a green purchase program whereby they will be purchasing recycled paper and also switching to environmentally friendly products for all of the cleaning facilities in the Borough. They have also formed a green team.

Mr. Quinn said the game plan for next month's meeting is to hold another public session and hopefully vote on these two elements. If possible they will also start discussion on the master plan as well.

Review and recommendation – Ordinance No. 10-19 – An Ordinance to Amend and Supplement Chapter 270 of the Code of the Borough of Allendale entitled “Revised Zoning Ordinance 1979

Mr. Quinn said this ordinance has to do with cell phone towers and to try to set standards for them. This is for the Board's review and recommendation and goes back to the Council for enactment.

Mr. Quinn said that the Borough is trying to put these towers in places where they make the most sense in terms of not having an impact on residential areas of the Borough.

Mr. Snieckus said he did review the ordinance. He said there were provisions in the ordinance such as the towers only being permitted on municipal properties and that has been deemed illegal by the courts so that has to be adjusted with specific zones recommended.

Mr. Walters asked what areas would be acceptable for a cell tower in our existing master plan. Mr. Snieckus said that would be established in this ordinance. The master plan is silent concerning such zones and it is silent on anything to do with cell towers.

Mr. Dunn said in this particular case, Federal law does permit these things and while the town is not able to prohibit them, it can have reasonable regulations with regard to location. He added that in his recent experience with negotiating leases, these companies can expect to get one every mile or so and the other companies are quick to seize upon that in order to make deals so they can get on the antenna as well.

Mr. Quinn said it seems that the Board would like more information.

Mr. Bernstein said the Council passed the ordinance at the last Council meeting and the Planning Board got it two days after it was passed. It went through the proper channels and it came to the Board on the 9th. Mr. Quinn said the Board has a 10 day notice period but it got on the agenda. The point is that no one is here to explain it. Mr. Bole is not here and the Mayor is not here.

A Board member said the broader question is that it isn't so much the date that it was received but he is sure the Council had some expert conversation about this. Mr. Bernstein said the Borough Attorney said this is what the Borough needs and this is what he suggested to address this need. Mr. Bernstein asked Mr. Dunn to explain the process and what the Planning Board is supposed to do when this comes up.

Mr. Dunn said he has heard that other communities have had experiences with these types of developments and after putting together the ordinance it is referred to the Planner and the Land Use Committee. It is essentially designed to be protective in nature. He said the Board members are not expected or empowered to evaluate it from the standpoint of worthiness for the Borough.

Mr. Fliegel said an expert in wireless communications would be necessary to explain the technical questions about the ordinance. With regard to any ordinance that is sent to the Board for review and recommendation, he asked what is the Board's job compared to what is in the current master plan and should some statement with regard to wireless communications be put in the revisions to the current master plan. Mr. Quinn said the Board will be affirming that it is not in conflict with the master plan by this resolution. Mr. Bernstein said the Board should feel free to carry this matter if it is not comfortable with moving on it. The consensus of the Board was to move forward and vote on the resolution as drafted.

The Resolution was read into the record by Mr. Dunn (See copy attached and made a part hereof.) Mr. Zambrotta moved, seconded by Mr. Fliegel, to adopt the resolution as submitted. On roll call, Mr. Sasso and Mr. Walters abstained. All other Board members present voted in favor.

Mr. Quinn announced that a letter of resignation was received from Chief Herndon dated August 30. Chief Herndon served as a member of the Board since December 11, 1986. Mr. Quinn extended his appreciation to him for his long standing service. He added that a retirement celebration will be held for him at the end of the month.

On a motion by Mr. Sirico, seconded by Mr. Zambrotta, the meeting adjourned at 11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Knapp