

**TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2012

The January meeting of the Hopewell Township Zoning Board of Adjustment was held in the Municipal Building on the above date.

The Agenda Meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment was held at 7:05 p.m.

It was noted for the record that Mr. Cane and Mr. van Raalte had been administered the Oath of Office at the Township Committee Reorganization meeting on January 5, 2012.

REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting of the ZBOA was called to order by Secretary Moore at 7:42 p.m. in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, noting that proper notice of said meeting was forwarded to the Hopewell Valley News and The Times and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Cacciabauda, Cane, Connolly, Moser, Schoelwer, van Raalte
ABSENT: Klapinski

Also Present: Attorney Van Hise, Zoning Officer Miller

SELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Following the Roll Call of the 2012 Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Secretary called for nominations for Zoning Board Chairman for 2012.

Mr. Schoelwer nominated William Connolly to serve as Zoning Board of Adjustment Chairman for the year 2012. Mr. Cane seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations and, by unanimous voice vote, Mr. Connolly was elected Chairman.

Chairman Connolly called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Zoning Board of Adjustment for 2012. Mr. Cane nominated Frank Klapinski to serve as Vice-Chairman for the year 2012. Ms. Moser seconded the nomination. There were no further nominations and, by unanimous voice vote, Mr. Klapinski was elected Vice-Chairman.

RESOLUTIONS OF APPOINTMENT FOR 2012

MOTION by Moser, seconded by Cane to reappoint Kevin Van Hise as Zoning Board of Adjustment Attorney for 2012.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

MOTION by cane, seconded by Moser to reappoint Robert J. Miller as Zoning Board of Adjustment Secretary for 2012.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

MOTION by van Raalte, seconded by Schoelwer to reappoint Anne B. Moore as Zoning Board of Adjustment Recording Secretary for 2012.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Cane, seconded by Moser to approve the Minutes of the December 7, 2011 Regular Meeting as submitted.

MOTION CARRIED

ABSTAIN: Schoelwer

CASE 2012-1 – STONY BROOK-MILLSTONE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION, 31 Titus Mill Road, Pennington, NJ 08534 has applied for use variance, and preliminary and final site plan approval for property located at the same address (Block 37, Lots 26 and 42 on the Township Tax Map) in the VRC zone. Applicant seeks to construct new environmental center complex.

Mr. Cacciabauda recused himself from hearing this application.

Attorney Lionel J. Frank appeared before the Board on behalf of the applicant. He indicated a preference to present testimony that evening despite the lack of seven board members. Mr. Van Hise advised that the notification requirements had been met and the Board has jurisdiction. Mr. Frank explained that the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association (SBMWA) wishes to increase the size of its Buttinger Nature Center by approximately 10,000 square feet. Insofar as the use is not specified in the permitted uses for the VRC zoning district, a use variance is required. The applicant is also seeking preliminary and final site plan approval at this time. Mr. Frank stated that the project will be designed to LEED standards and consistent with the goals of the township's Master Plan. The following witnesses for the applicant were sworn in by Mr. Van Hise: SBMWA Executive Director Jim Waltman; Planner James Kyle; Architect Michael Farewell; Hydrologist Stephen Souza; SBMWA Conservation Director Bay Weber; Civil Engineer and Surveyor William Buzby; and Traffic Engineer Henry Ney.

Mr. Waltman noted that the SBMWA, founded in 1949, serves approximately 10,000 adults and children annually on its 800+ acre property. He described SBMWA activities that promote the philosophy of land conservation and environmental education. He indicated that the goal of the expansion project is two-fold: 1) to improve education by increasing the number of classrooms, laboratories and interactive exhibits; and 2) to become a physical exemplar of the environmental principles embraced by the Association. The facility provides scheduled programs and is open to the public typically during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mr. Waltman reviewed 2002 ZBOA approvals and indicated that any incomplete items including a picnic pavilion and 10 paved parking spaces would be withdrawn.

Michael Farewell, FAIA, of Farewell Architects, LLC, displayed a topographic survey (Exhibit A1); a new construction plan (Exhibit A2); an aerial photo (Exhibit A3); and a floor plan of the proposed expansion (Exhibit A4). He described the converted and new interior space of the Buttinger Center that would include staff offices, classrooms, meeting rooms, exhibition room and laboratories. He explained the relocation or removal of certain existing outbuildings including the butterfly house and pool house. Office space in the building known as the Drake Farm House would be converted to an apartment for visiting lecturers or seasonal staff. Added to an existing apartment in the house and one in the two-story barn, the project proposes three separate dwelling units. Mr. Farewell displayed an architectural rendering of the exterior of the building from various aspects (Exhibit A5) and a colored rendering of the proposed building (Exhibit A6). He noted the removal of a sidewalk and driveway loop between the farmhouse and the Buttinger Center.

In response to a question concerning the number of participants and parking for evening events, Mr. Farewell pointed out two existing lots, the visitor lot and the employee lot with a total of 77 spaces. He stated that both lots may be used for a large capacity event.

William R. Buzby, Jr., PE/PLS of Carroll Engineering described the topography of the property and noted that there are no wetlands within 150' of the area of disturbance. He described the stormwater management plan that utilized waterscapes and gardens to disperse rainwater throughout the grounds.

Stephen Souza, PhD, of Princeton Hydro, LLC, described the natural, innovative wastewater management system that consisted of a solid waste tank that will be pumped periodically and an infiltration system that provides for the eventual percolation of a filtered, clean effluent into the ground. The new system will service all the improvements on the property, replacing older, individual septic systems. Existing wells on the site will continue to provide potable water.

Traffic circulation for a large night time event was questioned. Mr. Waltman explained past protocol that included parking on lawns and fields and extra staff to direct traffic. A question was raised concerning the ability for buses to access the site and parking for the maximum of occupancy of the new building. Mr. Buzby pointed out a drop off area for buses at the northern end of the visitor lot. Mr. Farewell noted that a portion of the building is dedicated to offices and exhibits, lowering the number of parking spaces required based on square footage. He indicated that the Center is comparable to a library use in terms of parking requirements.

Mr. Buzby described the exterior lighting plan (Exhibit A7) consisting of LED, full cutoff, dark sky compliant fixtures. He stated that the plan is the same lighting plan approved in 2002. Although measuring "0" lumens at certain points in the parking lot, Mr. Buzby expressed his opinion that the area would be lit sufficiently for pedestrian traffic. Mr. Frank suggested that the matter be left to the discretion of the Township Engineer, and that the applicant would increase the lighting to meet code requirements if the current plan is insufficient. Mr. Waltman stated that the exterior lights are operated on timers and are on from dusk to dawn. Mr. Buzby commented on the calculations to determine the number of parking spaces and he noted that there are two handicap spaces at the northern end of both lots.

Henry J. Ney, PE, of H. Ney Associates, LLC, related the conclusions of his traffic impact study that the increase in size of the Watershed facility will not have a significant impact on local traffic. A brief discussion was held as to the need for a turn around area at the northern end of the employee lot.

At 9:20 P.M., Chairman Connolly called a recess.

At 9:30 p.m. the meeting reconvened.

Discussion focused on the existing and proposed living areas on the property. Mr. Van Hise advised that the three units should be included in the use variance as additional principle uses. A reference was made to a memo from the township's Historic Preservation Commission and the possibility of listing the Drake Farm House on the Local Historic Register. Mr. Waltman stated that the SBMWA Board of Directors had not yet reached a decision with respect to accepting the designation; however, there are no planned modifications to the exterior of the building. A letter from Fire Chief Matt Martin and access for emergency vehicles was discussed. The applicant indicated a meeting with Chief Martin will be scheduled and recommendations for fire safety will be performed as a condition of site plan approval.

James Kyle, PP/ACIP, of Kyle Planning and Design, enumerated the positive criteria to support the proposed uses on this property and expressed his opinion that there are no negative impacts on the neighboring properties or the zone plan.

In response to a question from the Board as to the imposition of a deed restriction against rental any of the three proposed living units, the applicant agreed to such a restriction.

Chairman Connolly solicited public comment. There were no comments from the public.

Chairman Connolly asked if the Board had any further comments. The Board indicated a willingness to move forward with a vote on the use variance at this time.

MOTION by Moser, seconded by Cane to approve a use variance to expand a prior non-conforming use on Block 37, Lots 26 and 42.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Cane, Moser, Schoelwer, van Raalte, Chairman Connolly

NOES: None

ABSENT: Cacciabauda, Klapinski

Additional discussion was held with respect to lighting and fire safety. Mr. Buzby indicated that the applicant will provide sufficient lighting in the parking and pedestrian areas to meet the minimum foot candle requirements of the township's ordinance. It was suggested that the revised lighting plan be reviewed for conformity by the Township Engineer as a condition of approval, and the applicant concurred. The Board reiterated that as a condition of approval, fire safety will be address as recommended by the local fire officials. The applicant must return to the ZBOA if agreement cannot be reached by both parties.

MOTION by van Raalte, seconded by Moser to grant preliminary and final site plan approval with conditions as noted above.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Cane, Moser, Schoelwer, van Raalte, Chairman Connolly

NOES: None

ABSENT: Cacciabauda, Klapinski

RESOLUTIONS/MEMORIALIZATION

**CASE 2010-17 AMENDMENT - WORD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH**

MOTION by Moser, seconded by Cane

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

At 10:03 p.m. **MOTION** by Moser, seconded by van Raalte to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED


Anne B. Moore, Secretary