

**BLAIRSTOWN TOWNSHIP  
LAND USE BOARD  
September 18, 2017**

**MINUTES**

The Blairstown Township Land Use Board met in a regular session on Monday, September 18, 2017, at 7:30 pm at the Blairstown Municipal Building, 106 Route 94, Blairstown, New Jersey. The following members were present: Barbara Green, David Keller, Nick Mohr, Rosalie Murray, Joanne Van Valkenburg, Cynthia Dalton, Jim Sikkes, Debra Waldron, Dominic Daleo, Steven Sikkes, Anthony Iurato and Wickliffe Mott. The following member was absent: Mike Repasky. Also present were: Board Engineer, Ted Rodman, Board Attorney, Roger Thomas, and Board Secretary, Marion Spriggs,

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG:** was recited.

**THE SUNSHINE STATEMENT:** was read.

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Waldron who stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting of the Blairstown Township Land Use Board has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231.P.L. 1975)”.

**ROLL CALL:** was taken.

**LAND USE BOARD DEADLINE DATES:**

Chairwoman Waldron declared that submission of information supporting applications must arrive at Town Hall **10 calendar days prior to meetings**. She explained this is an effort to give the Board members enough time to review the documents and requested this notice be read at each meeting.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** (As distributed prior to the meeting date).

Minutes of the August 21, 2017 Regular Meeting of the Land Use Board were approved, as written.

**Action:** A motion was duly made by Mr. J. Sikkes, seconded by Mr. Keller, to approve the Minutes of the August 21, 2017 Regular Meeting of the Land Use Board, as written.  
Roll call vote: Green, Keller, Mohr, Murray, Van Valkenburg, J. Sikkes, Waldron, and Daleo – yes. Dalton – abstained.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**LB#02-17 Sprint Spectrum, LP**, Blk. 301, Lot 10.13, Mountain Terr., Min. Site Plan (Co-locate) **Dish – REVOTE**

Roger Thomas agreed to modify this Resolution to reflect “Minor Site Plan” not Variance. The memorialization date was changed to September 18, 2017.

**Action:** A motion duly made by Mr. J. Sikkes, seconded by Mr. Mohr, to approve the Resolution for **LB#02-17 Sprint Spectrum, LP**, Blk. 301, Lot 10.13, Mountain Terr., Min. Site Plan (Co-locate)**Dish**, with the aforesaid modifications. Roll call vote: Mohr, Murray, Van Valkenburg, Dalton, J. Sikkes, Waldron and Daleo - yes. Green and Keller abstained.

**LUB Adoption of Housing Element & Fair Share Plan**

**Action:** A motion duly made by Mr. Keller, seconded by Mr. Mohr, to approve the Resolution for **Adoption of Housing Element & Fair Share Plan** dated August 21, 2017, making it a part of the Master Plan. Roll call vote: Green, Keller, Mohr, Murray, Van Valkenburg, J. Sikkes, Waldron and Daleo - yes. Dalton – abstained.

**COMPLETENESS**

None

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**COAH**

Roger Thomas explained that the LUB has adopted Housing Element & Fair Share Plan, (see above Resolution) which is now sent to the Township Committee to take action. He believes it is coming to an end from a procedural viewpoint.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

NJ Planner Jul./Aug. issue

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**LB#06-15 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Blairstown** – Sidewalk Maintenance Agreement

Chairwoman Waldron revealed she received a letter dated 8/30/17 from Attorney O’Connell, who represents 1<sup>st</sup> Pres. Church, requesting the LUB extend Conditional Approval until February, 2018. (LB#06-15 LUB Resolution was memorialized on 3/20/17, granting an

extension on this approval until 3/20/18.) She noted part of that action was that the Township Attorney was to release a letter stating everything was complete and the Township held no responsibility for this property. There have been County roadblocks as they thought Blirstown assumed responsibility for the sidewalks and wanted Blirstown to sign off. She said, now the County understands Blirstown does not take care of the sidewalks.

Chairwoman Waldron declared she will go to the Township Committee and request something be done so the Church can get their CA. She confirmed that the issue is regarding the maintenance of the sidewalk.

Mrs. VanValkenburg, noted the Township notified the Church, they will inform the County that the church can do the sidewalk, but the Township doesn't want responsibility for the sidewalk.

**LB#08-15 Blair Academy CIC Bldg.** – Ted Rodman report 9/5/17 re: CO issuance

Ted Rodman stated this is for information only. He said that report was directed to Construction Dept. who issued a CO.

**LB#05-12 NWRHS – Solar Panels**

Chairwoman Waldron sent a letter after speaking to Roger Thomas last week, and has received no response. She has received no answer as to who their attorney is. She is asking for a commitment from NWRHS re: an easement on Marilyn Maring's property, to fulfill the obligation for the tree planting. She has not received a copy of that easement yet. Nor has she been given a copy of the number of plantings and types, so that Ted Rodman, as a Condition of Approval, can approve that, prior to ordering the plantings.

She will phone NWRHS tomorrow to obtain information, stating thereafter, it is in Roger Thomas' hands.

She also revealed she spoke with Devon Race who indicated she is ready to help.

Mrs. Dalton met with Sarah Bilotti, NWRHS Supr., on Friday. According to the Superintendent, the Attorney has the Easement ready for Marilyn Maring to sign. She noted the Board of Ed did not meet until 8/29/17.

On Friday Mrs. Dalton asked that the map be forwarded to Ted Rodman. It included Japanese Cedars and Verbinum. Ted responded he has not seen the map. Mrs. Dalton admitted she does not have a copy of the map but saw where they will be planted.

Nick Mohr noted they have 45 days left of planting season.

Chairwoman Waldron said LUB and NWRHS are supposed to be working together, yet there is the notion they do not have to answer to this Board.

She reiterated, she will give the information to Roger Thomas tomorrow to address this issue.

**Darst #ZB04-10 / LB03-15 (2nd Amended)**

Roger Thomas indicated he will be happy to contact David Diehl, Zoning Officer, to find out if violations have been issued. He will find out the status. He will report back to Chairwoman Waldron by phone.

**Design Standard Committee**

Rosalie Murray, Chairwoman of the Design Standard Committee, stressed that the Design Committee is for the entire board and needs all LUB members' input.

She stated Blirstown already has a Design Standard in place in General Code, Chapter 19 Land Use Ordinance for the Township. She requested all the LUB members be given a copy of it. Chairwoman Waldron pointed out as a Zoning Board, each member always had a copy of it.

An up-to-date version, which can be downloaded free by anyone, exists on the Township website.

Roger Thomas read the titles of each section, suggesting that he review Secs. 501 through 519, selecting the relevant sections, and have those sections copied. He noted Blirstown has design standards now and should work off them, rather than from other towns'.

Chairwoman Waldron explained to Mrs. Murray, the reason behind this review is because of what happened in the Township regarding the sewers. She explained the main concern is maintaining the rural character of this township. The ordinance must be amended to do that.

Mrs. Murray said the Township should stick to its guns and keep its values high.

Roger Thomas noted, as an example, Warren and Sussex Counties are losing population. He revealed Sussex County has lost between 7 to 10% of its population within the last 10 years. Mrs. Murray suggested, in view of that decline, it might be a good time to increase Blirstown's acreage requirements - looking to the future.

Roger Thomas suggested copies be provided of what Blirstown has. Modifications can be made from that.

Chairwoman Waldron explained Blairstown's is an aging population. She pointed out, if farmers want to sell their property and are notified their 5 acre zone is increased to 10 acres, they will not be happy. She stated property values in Blairstown are not increasing.

Vice Chairman Sikkes asked if zoning is changed from 5 to 10 acres, how many people can take care of that. He said people can't afford that.

Chairwoman Waldron stated her goal and original intent was in protecting the historic area.

Nick Mohr noted there is not that much left that is not farmland preserved.

He noted in 2016, Warren Cty. and the Township's OEM, renewed a 5 yr. Hazard Mitigation Plan, as required by the State. This plan is an attempt to prepare and mitigate for emergencies. He explained the biggest risk borne here, is the risk of flooding in the VN & VC areas. Regarding Chapter 19, he suggests implementing it with the inclusion of the hardening of infrastructure in those districts i.e. raising utilities, moving commercial units above the waterline, and no habitable units on the first floor.

He noted, based on flooding, it would be wise to look at Blue Water Grant buyout in the VN & VR areas. There are a small number of properties in Blairstown that are on the FEMA Residential Repetitive Loss List. FEMA would rather give Blairstown money to tear them down, and turn them into a park, than carry them on the Flood Insurance.

Chairwoman Waldron explained she is not looking to stop businesses from wanting to co-locate here. She feels the community is saying they don't want new businesses to look like every other one.

Mr. Mott asked how a foundation can be built, outside the Historic District, to preclude aesthetically-unwanted-style buildings.

Roger Thomas suggested what needs to be defined is what Blairstown's philosophy is, not just a suggestion from the LUB. He noted the Ordinance now says buildings should not look the same.

Chairwoman Waldron is asking Roger Thomas to provide her with those areas the LUB can address. Then, she would like to see if there is a township, with uniform commercial structures, with which Blairstown can identify. Then, she would like to get a copy of their Construction Code for review and comparison. She reasoned Blairstown can then see what can be done to its ordinance to make it enforceable.

Vice Chairman Sikkes, pointed out the large commercial businesses have many plans which are not divulged unless the issue is forced. He noted that does not have to be in the Ordinance. They will do it, if approval is prolonged.

Nick Mohr revealed the demand of an area, also changes it.

Rosalie Murray reviewed the Design Standards Report dated 8/21/17 which she issued to the LUB members.

Chairwoman Waldron asked Mrs. Murray to contact zoning depts. of exemplary rural communities and ask for copies of their ordinance for Blairstown to use as an example. She said she would like to have ordinance changes adopted before the Master Plan is due in 2020.

Chairwoman Waldron thanked Mrs. Murray for her efforts.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairwoman Waldron noted, Carl Race of Race Farms, recently died.

Chairwoman Waldron took a moment to recognize the pioneers who have made up this town and volunteered their time. She said they have left family members and history behind. She declared it is because of them donating their time to the Township, that it has become what it was and is now.

She stressed each LUB member contributes something because they care enough by being here, and things can change as a result. She appreciates the support of everyone on this Board.

**PUBLIC PORTION:**

There were no questions or comments from the Public.

**VOUCHERS:** Professional services rendered.

**Action:** Upon a motion duly made by Mr. J. Sikkes, seconded by Mrs. Green, escrow vouchers, as attached to these minutes, were approved. Roll call vote: Green, Keller, Mohr, Murray, Van Valkenburg, Dalton, J. Sikkes, Waldron, and Daleo – yes.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairwoman Waldron asked the Board for a motion to adjourn.

**Action:** Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Mohr, seconded by Mr. Keller, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion C. Spriggs, Board Secretary