OLDMANS TOWNSHIP

PLANNING BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

February 28, 2023

A special meeting of the Oldmans Township Planning Board was held on February 28, 2023 at the Oldmans Elementary School. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sandy Collom at 7:00 PM. This meeting was held in compliance with the Sunshine Law.

IN ATTENDANCE: Sandy Collom, Sue Miller, Mike Tuturice, Rae Walzer, Steve Wilson, William Ferrell Jr., David Murphy, Jeff Moore, Theresa DeSanto, Hobie Medford, Rick Verdecchio and Melinda Taylor.

Professionals: Louis Cappelli, Jr., Solicitor and Brian Slaugh, Professional Planner.

Mr. Cappelli made two announcements:

Knight Owl applications (2) scheduled for tonight’s hearing have been postponed to Monday, April 3, 2023 beginning at 7:00 pm at the Oldmans Township School. No further notices will be required.

D2Penny Run application has been rescheduled for Tuesday, March 28 2023 beginning at 7:00 pm at the Oldmans Township School. No further notices will be required.

NEW BUSINESS: Farmland Preservation Element to the Master Plan

Brian Slaugh, Professional Planner for Clarke Caton Hintz, prepared the draft being presented. There are four requirements that need to be met for the element:

* Inventory of farm properties (used State farmland assessed properties 3A & 3B)
* Map illustrating significant areas of agricultural land (Alaimo map modified by CCH)
* Statement showing how the municipality supports and promotes agricultural business
* Spending plan to preserve farmland

Approximately 300 lots are listed, with a total of approximately 6,300 acres in Oldmans Township. Salem County approved their farmland preservation plan April, 2022 which included area within Oldmans Township south of Route 295. Farms within the Agricultural Development Area can now apply to the County for preservation. This a voluntary program.

The Township adopted a “Right to Farm” ordinance (110-7 of the Oldmans Code Book) which supports agricultural businesses and also states that property owners have the right to farm, regardless of zoning, an “overlay use.” Two-thirds of Oldmans Township is zoned Agriculture/Residential. The Farmland Preservation Element supports the current zoning map and the Master Plan.

Oldmans Township lacks public infrastructure for extensive development; no public water or sewer. There is also a significant amount of wetlands within Oldmans due to the proximity to the Delaware River, flat ground and high water table.

A Trust Fund has been established with dedicated tax revenue for Oldmans Township. Salem County leads the State in total preserved farm acreage and percentage of land. In the future, Oldmans Township plans to apply to the State for a municipal sponsored preservation plan.

Goals and Objectives:

* Preserve the agricultural character of the municipality
* Maintain the agricultural economy within the Township
* Help maintain the viability of farming in Oldmans Township
* Provide for long term growth of farming

Open to the Public

Francis Talarico Is the plan on the website and is there a map?

Sandy Collom Plan is available at townhall.

Melinda Taylor Will place on the website.

Keith Walton There is an interactive map available on the State website with overlays.

Brian Slaugh Known as NJ DEP Geoweb.

Don Yonker Is property located in the IPRA ineligible for preservation?

Brian Slaugh Gateway Business Park is not an Agricultural Development Area.

Don Yonker Right to farm in all zones?

Brian Slaugh Limited funds available; County must prioritize how to use the funds. Farms need to meet certain criteria to be eligible for preservation.

Roseann Hultsch Expressed her concern about warehouses and wanted the Planning Board to make changes to land use to restrict warehouses.

Brian Slaugh Planning Board sets policy for Master Plan; Township Committee passes zoning ordinances. There is a “Time of Application” rule that would apply to any existing Planning Board applications.

Roseann Hultsch Would like changes for the future.

Brian Slaugh Tonight’s topic is farmland preservation which will become a part of the Master Plan.

Louis Cappelli The Governing Body (Township Committee) directs the Planning Board.

Clint Allen Solicitor for Knight Owl Holdings III, IV &V represented his client. Knight Owl owns twenty-one (21) of the properties located in the ADA which equates to 574 acres. His client is concerned about the economic impact of farmland preservation in relation to his properties, any zoning changes, loss of land value, would future water/sewer occur? The 2009 Master Plan encourages development. Suggested another reexamination of the Master Plan.

Brenda Powell Were any changes made to zoning for farmland preservation?

Brian Slaugh There is no intention to change the A/R zoning.

Francis Talarico Knight Owl k4v new when they purchased the land that is was zoned A/R.

Helen Paxton Concerned that her property will be surrounded by warehouses. What happens to farmland preservation funding if she wants to preserve her farm, surrounded by warehouses?

Brian Slaugh State ranks application and takes into consideration whether adjacent to farmland or warehouses.

Louis Cappelli Reminded the audience that the hearing is for farmland preservation, not a warehouse hearing.

Genevieve Sarlo How are farms with wetlands ranked?

Brian Slaugh Some wetlands can be farmed. There is a priority system based on percentage of prime soils.

Jack DeFeo Is farmland preservation available through the County and State?

Brian Slaugh State can do their own preservation or work with the County.

Jack DeFeo Minimum acreage needed for preservation?

Brian Slaugh Yes, minimums exist.

Helen Paxton State needs 100 acres minimum; county and municipal are less than 100.

Tony Carassai Thanked the Planning Board for working on farmland preservation. Questioned status of Master Plan.

Brian Slaugh New Jersey requires a Master Plan for every town that wants zoning. A Master Plan includes goals and objectives, land use plan and housing plan. Optional elements are available, depending on the needs of the municipality. The Master Plan must be reviewed every ten years. A reexamination does not require a public hearing, but a Master Plan does require a public hearing.

Tony Carassai Are there State standards for building height?

Brian Slaugh Municipality determines that through land use element/zoning ordinance. Variances always exist.

Steve Baker Wants to save rural community feel of Oldmans; how much land can be preserved?

Brian Slaugh Township needs to go through a second process to obtain more funding sources. Showing a commitment to agriculture should get some more funding. State wants to allocate funds evenly throughout the State/County. There is a legislative influence.

Dominic Sassi Master Plan protects people and property value when a property is being used inconsistent with the Master Plan and zoning. Doesn’t want to encourage variances. Municipalities are too concerned about ratables.

Jack DeFeo Expressed his concern about older farmers and the long term problem to keep the farms going. If a farmer discontinues farming, penalized by State and losses farmland assessment.

Jennifer Dohner In favor of farmland preservation. The Salem County Votech is the biggest producer of Future Farmers of America (FFA).

CLOSED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

David Murphy made a motion to approve the farmland preservation element to the Master Plan, Bill Ferrell Jr. seconded and a roll call vote was held:

Sandy Collom Yes

Sue Miller Yes

Mike Tuturice Yes

Rae Walzer Yes

Steve Wilson Yes

William Ferrell Jr yes

Melinda Taylor Yes

David Murphy Yes

Jeff Moore Yes

9 aye/0 no

Chairperson Sandy Collom sought volunteers for Subcommittees:

Farmland Preservation Melinda Taylor, Rick Verdecchio and Steve Wilson

Farmland Subdivision Melinda Taylor, Theresa DeSanto and Steve Wilson

Economic Development Rick Verdecchio, Earl Ransome and Mike Tuturice

Environmental Sandy Collom and Mike Tuturice

There being no further business, David Murphy made a motion to adjourn, Sue Miller seconded which was agreed to by all to adjourn at 8:45 pm.