

**OCEANPORT PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
September 19, 2012**

Chairman Widdis called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and announced that the meeting had been advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Chairman Widdis led the flag salute.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Kahle, Councilman Johnson, Mr. Kleiberg, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. DeSousa, Mr. Whitson, Mr. Widdis

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Savarese, Mr. Fichter, Ms. DeSousa

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Jeanne Smith, Board Secretary, Rick DeNoia, Board Attorney, William White, Board Engineer/Planner

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. PB File: 2012-07
Sea Girt Avenue LLC
Block 88, Lot 8.03 – Vacant lot
Request for Bulk Variance(s) for Front Yard Setback and Minimum Habitable Floor Area

Chairman Widdis advised that the matter concerning Sea Girt Avenue LLC would not be heard that evening due to a deficiency in the notice requirements and would be rescheduled for the October 10, 2012 meeting with new notices required.

Mr. DeNoia added that was correct – there was a deficiency in the notice and notices are jurisdictional so therefore the Board had no ability to entertain and accept jurisdiction on the application and though intended to return on October 10th again would be subject to proper notice as well.

BOARD BUSINESS:

2. Discussion on proposed FMERA Plan Amendment #2

Chairman Widdis stated that the Board, at the request of the Mayor, was provided with the a proposed Plan Amendment #2 to the Fort Monmouth Vision Plan presently being considered by the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA) for a parcel in Oceanport known as the Patterson Army Clinic for the Board's comments and opinion. The parcel was located in the southwest corner of the Oceanport section of the Fort and abuts Oceanport's Main Street properties and consisted of 118,000 ft² and has a clinic there presently although not sure of the condition of the structure, with land consisting of 16 acres and was built in 1961. Chairman Widdis explained that the Board was asked to review and comment on the proposed change to the original plan and gave a detailed description of the differences between what the original plan proposed and what Plan Amendment #2 proposed – the differences being that the clinic was to be torn down and would be used to construct 85 units of mixed income apartments, small detached housing and townhouses whereas the proposed plan amendment would leave the clinic and use the site as a wellness campus. The present plan has 720 residential units proposed for the Oceanport section and the proposed plan amendment indicates that the 85 units originally planned will be relocated elsewhere within the Oceanport section.

Mr. White commented that the unit count for residential would stay at 720 units within Oceanport and was redistributing with a net result of another 38,000 ft² of non-residential space which hopefully would be ratable. At the request of Chairman Widdis Mr. White sworn in.

Chairman Widdis stated his major concern was that like all other types of hospitals they were always pursuing ways to not pay real estate taxes and if it were granted would there have been another way to utilize the area and gain real estate taxes.

Mr. White added that the original plan said 38,000 ft² of non-residential but did not state what the non-residential use was and that was a good point that the use while beneficial to whom it serves may not be beneficial to the tax base of Oceanport.

Chairman Widdis added that if the facility served the public, veterans there would be no argument and that that would be a good public use.

Mr. Whitson expressed concern about the ratable of the hospital but also agreed with Chairman Widdis that the total residential units should be lowered down to 635 instead of trying to squeeze the 85 units elsewhere and they should maintain the original plan's density and lower the number to 635 residential units.

Mr. Sullivan agreed with Mr. Whitson that the number of residential units should be lowered from the 720. Mr. Sullivan wondered if part of the 38,000 ft² would be doctor offices or other medical offices.

Chairman Widdis referred to an Amendment page that states it would be a "medical clinic and offices" and does not specify it further.

Mr. Sullivan stated those buildings would be taxable.

Chairman Widdis summarized that the concern was that they want to see taxes being paid to the town.

Mr. Kahle stated he agreed with everyone else and that the 720 number should be reduced.

Mr. Kleiberg added his agreement to reduce the 85 from the 720 and asked if the clinic would be part of a larger system such as Barnabas or Meridian.

Councilman Johnson responded that the entity was AcuteCare and that there was no awareness of any affiliations and that AcuteCare was the direct lessor.

Chairman Widdis read from the Plan, "the housing types and density of the region would remain the same as indicated in the Plan, i.e., 48 mixed income apartments, 22 houses would be redistributed in the wellness campus and 15 small detached houses would be planned for the townhouse area north of Anson Avenue and south of Oceanport..." and asked Councilman Johnson if they were leaving that in place because they were talking to other groups that want the low to moderate and low income and were they trying to appease everyone.

Councilman Johnson answered that the Borough has an affordable housing obligation but that it was a legitimate concern.

Councilman Johnson commented that he too agreed with everybody and that if they were eliminating 85 homes from the Plan why would the Borough let them disperse that amongst the other homes and if they were to come up with another use for the Commissary would they make those housing units move to somewhere else in the Plan. Councilman Johnson continued that if they were to eliminate 85 units from the 16 acres parcel he believed they should be eliminated from the Plan and it shouldn't be Oceanport's obligation to build those units and that the Plan should be reduced to 635 homes.

Councilman Johnson continued his comments referring to Page 10, last paragraph "The amendment would involve the placement of fifteen small lot detached housing units on the north side of a street shown in the *Reuse Plan* with townhouses on its south side. This will encroach slightly into the Wetland Preservation Park south of Oceanport Creek" and asked where would it stop. The Plan had wetland

buffers all over the Plan and if they were going to encroach *slightly* into the park south of Oceanport Creek, they were going to be building homes all over the place. Councilman Johnson then referred to page 14 of the Plan, Principle #4 and read the principle and concluded that they were going against their own principles.

There was additional discussion on other portions of the proposed Amendment with similar conflicts.

Chairman Widdis added concern that those extra 85 houses would impair somewhere along the line the zoning – setbacks and density as there was only so much space. There was additional discussion and agreement that concerns regarding density and its impacts on quality of life and the potential for similar plan amendments with other areas down the road.

Chairman Widdis asked Councilman Johnson for some guidance on how to present the Board's comments to the Mayor. Councilman Johnson answered that he believed it was discussion and that he would bring the Board's comments and concerns back to the Mayor and Council the next night at their meeting.

There was discussion amongst the Board on whether or not to provide official action on their comments through a resolution and when that could be accomplished. It was decided that Councilman Johnson would utilize the minutes from the meeting to bring back to Council until the Board met again in October to adopt a resolution.

There was additional discussion regarding the FMERA Plan Amendment #1, how the Board voted, did the Planning Board and Oceanport comments impact any decision and the need for the host municipalities to work together and the current topic concerning the County's interest in the motor pool area on the Fort.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: Chairman Widdis opened the meeting to Petitions from the Public and as no one from the public wished to be heard, Chairman Widdis closed that portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Whitson which was seconded by Councilman Johnson and approved by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

JEANNE SMITH
Secretary