

C O R R E C T E D
MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
August 19, 2014

A Workshop Meeting of the Planning Board of the Borough of Roosevelt was held on Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. at the Borough Hall. The Workshop was scheduled to begin at 6:30 P.M. but did not start until 7:00 P.M. to comply with New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act, since the public notices in the area newspapers noted a 7:00 P.M. start time. This meeting was opened by Chairperson Isaac Menda; Secretary Ann Kassahun called the Roll.

Mr. Menda stated: "Let the minutes show that adequate notice of this Meeting as required by Chapter 23, P.L. 1975 [the Open Public Meetings Law] has been provided by posting notice on the public bulletin boards at the Roosevelt Post Office and Borough Hall. Copies noticing this meeting were faxed to the Asbury Park Press and the Times [Trenton] for publication and filed with the Borough Clerk on February 12, 2014."

ROLL CALL:

Present: Battel, Hartley, Kaufman, Menda, Petrilla, Taylor, Warnick
Ticktin-Mayor's Alternate, LeCompte-Alt 1, Kassahun-Alt 2

Absent: Alt, Ord, Archer-Alt 3, Esakoff-Alt-4

Planning Board Attorney Michele Donato was not in attendance at this meeting. There were six (6) public officials in attendance: Mayor Beth Battel, Councilmen Jeff Ellentuck, Stuart Kaufman, and Michael Ticktin; also Councilwomen Michelle Hermelee and Peggy Malkin.

WELCOME:

Mayor Battel welcomed Planner Thomas and Roosevelt residents to this meeting.

INTRODUCTION & FORMAT OF PROCEEDINGS:

Chairperson Isaac Menda then provided an introduction to the subject. The Planning Board is interested in soliciting residents' thoughts about our streets for input in developing proposals for consideration by the Borough Council and supporting rationale when revisiting the Master Plan. Planner Thomas made the slide presentation. After the presentation, the Workshop attendees [a group of approximately sixty (60) residents including some six (6) public officials] broke out into five (5) groups for discussion. The discussions were led by group leaders who were charged with summarizing the discussions of these break-out groups. The group leaders consisted of the following: Mr. Robert Clark, Ms. Heather Giske, Mr. Ed and Mrs. Judith Goetzmann, Ms. Robin Middleman, and Ms. Donna Taylor.

It was noted that minutes would be prepared and posted on the Web2Sons.org site for review by all attendees along with excerpts of the Power Point presentation. In addition, members of the community would be welcome to join the Planning Board in its quest to develop context-sensitive proposals for Roosevelt.

PRESENTATION:

Planning Board Professional Planner, Mr. Thomas A. Thomas, PP, was introduced by Chair Isaac Menda. He has worked with Roosevelt for many years, has seen many changes.

Mr. Thomas presented a slide presentation with comments on “Our Streets” which stressed the importance of Roosevelt transforming its streets into more pedestrian-friendly thoroughfares. Many towns are re-developing their “main” streets, so he provided examples from both within and outside of Roosevelt on what is good about our streets and what needs work.

Mr. Thomas noted that traffic has increased over the years creating problems. Only an estimated one-fourth (1/4) of the families that first settled Roosevelt (then Jersey Homesteads) originally owned cars—say a total of 50 autos. At present of the 330 homes, each household typically has a number of autos (plus, in some cases, a smaller number of commercial vehicles). It is estimated that our residents now have between 450 to 775 motor vehicles, constituting a ten-fold increase or greater. He noted that there are various levels of government that have control over roads. Route 571 (Rochdale Ave) is controlled by both Monmouth Co. and the State. There are grants to help with roads. Mr. Thomas felt there needs to be a balance between pedestrians, bikes, and traffic. Other issues of concern are speeding on our streets and parking. Mr. Thomas said there are now “scenic corridors” in many communities and Mr. Menda added that Roosevelt has applied for a “Safe Routes to School” grant for sidewalks along the east side of Rochdale Avenue. Mr. Thomas also added that today busing children is expensive, thus communities are returning to sidewalks.

WORKSHOP GROUPS:

This meeting was well represented by the public and was an example of the collaborative effort in which open discussions are held to prioritize the concerns. The attendees were formed into different groups for discussions. Some members of the Planning Board were in each of the groups to note residents’ concerns of what they would like to have happen in our town.

Keeping taxes in check - Whatever improvements are considered should not bring about an increase in taxes. The immediate needs of the Borough, including our need to improve utilities, are substantial. It was also noted that in some cases grants might be available to make capital improvements. In either case, the Planning Board is seeking to develop plans that might serve as the guide for future developments whenever funding might be available.

Slowing down vehicular traffic - There was consensus that enforcement of traffic regulations along Rochdale Avenue [Route 571] is essential, but the shortage of State troopers will not allow considering this. Some felt Roosevelt should share a policeman with another community to ticket speeders. Entering into an agreement with a neighboring municipality is being looked at by the Council. Radar devices displaying the travel speeds might help slow down traffic. Other ideas discussed included: restricting parking, allowing more street parking, constructing sidewalks, installing more roadway speed humps, widening (or narrowing) streets.

Pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety - Sidewalks along Rochdale Avenue were felt to be a sensible idea but must be developed with the agreement of the property owners since this

will mean maintenance costs. The idea of restricting parking to one side of the road along the Borough's local streets, e.g., Pine Drive, was deemed to be inappropriate, since this would encourage drivers to speed up. Parking along our streets should be restricted the least amount possible except where necessary, such as along the courts. It was noted that there are a number of locations where overgrowth of vegetation is restricting views along the roads; this is affecting the safety of the streets. The project comprising the installation of school crosswalk flashing beacons is underway and will be completed soon. Other improvements are being considered. Discussions are underway with Monmouth County Engineering on how to make the intersection of Clarksburg Road and South Valley Road safer. A bicycle network is being considered to encourage cyclists to use North and South Valley Roads instead of Rochdale Avenue.

OTHER:

It was suggested that additional meetings could be held to help bring the residents together to strengthen our community. Such meetings must meet the requirements of the OPMA. Councilman Kaufman suggested that the format of this meeting would be good to consider for discussing utility needs and concerns.

MEETINGS SCHEDULE:

September 2, 2014 at 7:00 – Regular Meeting

September 16, 2014 at 6:30 – Public Hearing re updating Master Plan
Note this public meeting was subsequently cancelled to ensure that it meets all OPMA requirements.

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion by Mr. Ken LeCompte and second by Mr. Stu Kaufman, this meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Attest:

Ann M. Kassahun, Secretary