

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Leary called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and stated it was open to the public in compliance with Public Law 1975, Chapter 231, Sections 4 & 13.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL: Members Present: Suljic, Corcoran, Leuthe, Didyk, Taylor, Van Sickle, Aikens, Allison, Potter, O'Leary, Hughes(7:43pm).

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Ursula Leo, Esq.
Nevitt Duveneck, PE
David Banisch, PP

MINUTES: None.

COMPLETNESS / HEARINGS / CONCEPT: None

Mr. O'Leary changed the order of the agenda to address item number 1 under new business.

1.) Re-Zoning of the Golf Course Zone consideration

Mr. Tim Keyes and Ms. Marybeth Somerville said they were the new owners of the property located at 123 Pierce Road, Lafayette, NJ. Mr. Keyes said a good portion of the property is in Lafayette and some of it is in Andover Township. He said the portion in Lafayette is zoned Golf Course and they were asking the Land Use Board to consider recommending to the Township Committee that it be rezoned Residential. He said they thought the existing house could be renovated however; it is in such disrepair they will need to tear it down and rebuild. He said that would be difficult if the property were to remain in the Golf Course zone.

Mr. O'Leary gave a brief history of the property. Ms. Leo said the Golf Course zone does not allow for anything other than a golf course. She said the Township Committee had sent a letter to the Land Use Board recommending they change the zone. If the property remains in the Golf Course zone the owners would have to apply for a variance for anything they wanted to do on the property. Mr. Duveneck said the entire GC zone is about 100 acres however, the small piece that Mr. Keyes now owns is across the street and it would make no sense to keep it in the GC zone. He felt that even if the other lots in the zone were developed as a golf course, the piece across the street would never be part of it.

Mr. Keyes said they are planning to continue farming the property. Mr. Banisch said the property owners would have the right to farm the land under the Right to Farm Act.

Ms. Leo said she could prepare an ordinance to have sent to the Township Committee for their approval. Mr. Hughes felt it makes sense to change the lot to the R-5 zone.

Ms. Leo will draft an ordinance. There was a discussion on the required notice. Ms. Leo felt it could be done as part of the Master Plan. Mr. Banisch will draft an amendment to the Master Plan. There was a discussion on the best way to handle the zone change. Mr. Taylor asked what the property owners are allowed to do prior to the zone change. Mr. Banisch said they can repair the barn and they can demolish the house however, the new construction would have to wait for the zone change.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mrs. Celia Ostertag and Mrs. Joan Smith were present to represent the Economic Development Committee. Mrs. Ostertag said that also present were EDC members Laura Camp, Don Khilstrom and Sal Torre. Mrs. Ostertag gave an overview of the purpose of the EDC. She said they wanted to discuss making changes to the sign ordinance to allow for internally lit signs in the Highway Commercial zone and to allow signs painted on historical buildings in the Village

Commercial zone. The EDC suggested having any signs painted on the side of a historical building to be approved by the Lafayette Center Preservation Foundation for a historical authenticity prior to being approved by the Land Use Board. They were suggesting the painted signs be handled as a permit fee to help keep the cost down for the business owner. Mrs. Ostertag said the EDC was suggesting that a freestanding sign on the HC zone be increased to 15 feet in height. She said the EDC is trying to attract businesses and felt the changes would help entice more businesses to Lafayette. Mr. O'Leary gave a brief history of the sign ordinance. He felt the zoning officers have all liked working with the existing ordinance. Mr. O'Leary felt the externally lit gooseneck lights look nice and keep with the rural look of Lafayette. He felt the brightness of an internally light sign would be a problem. Mrs. Ostertag said the brightness of the internally lit sign could be controlled. She felt the downward externally lit signs were not effective.

Mrs. Ostertag said she did look at other town's sign ordinances and they seem to have different guidelines for different zones and felt Lafayette should do the same. She noted that buildings back in the 1800s had painted signs on them and that look is within the keeping of the historic nature of the zone. She felt it would not work on every structure because of constraints such as windows and doors. Mrs. Ostertag asked if the Board would consider a permit fee for signs needing a variance since it would keep the cost down. A business owner needs to hire a lawyer to appear before the Board with a variance application and it becomes expensive.

Mrs. Smith felt that, while sign standards are important, there needs to be some flexibility as well. She felt that in order to preserve the history of Lafayette, the town needs to prosper. She said there is rebirth in Lafayette and felt the younger generations are starting to become interested in antiques. Mrs. Smith said we can only save the town by re-growing the town. She felt the town needs businesses such as Angry Erik's to attract younger people. There was a lengthy discussion on the existing sign ordinance.

Mr. O'Leary said the sign ordinance is the same for all of the zones to make it easy for the Zoning Officer to enforce. Mrs. Ostertag felt most of the businesses in the historic zone would want to keep the flavor of the district. Mrs. Smith said that back in the 1800s, the buildings in town did have signs painted on them however, there would need to be standards for today's signs. Mrs. Ostertag asked if the Board would consider having different sign ordinances for different zones.

Mr. Banisch suggested a subcommittee of the Land Use Board and EDC members to look at the standards of the ordinance. He said that a 15-foot sign could be taller than some of the existing buildings. He felt a 20-foot sign would have an impact on the character of the community. He felt there might be a place for the painted signs in the keeping of the community.

There was a lengthy discussion on multi-tenant signs. The Board and Economic Development Committee agreed to form a sub-committee to have a discussion on possible changes to the sign ordinance.

There was a discussion on what constitutes the sign area. Ms. Didyk felt the sign area did not include the support structure. Ms. Leo felt the Board should interpret the definition of sign area measurement. The Board determined the support structures are not computed in the sign area measurements. There was a discussion on what the owners of "The Shoppes at Lafayette" will be allowed to replace without coming before the Board. The Board determined they can replace the signs at the entrances along Route 15 and Route 94.

Mr. O'Leary asked the Board to consider allowing the service stations to have illuminated pricing signs. He felt it would make sense from a safety issue. Ms. Didyk agreed with making a change however, she felt it would need to be worded so that it only applies to fueling stations. Mr. Leuthe said the lighting intensity needs to be controlled. Mr. Banisch said that the light intensity could be controlled. Mr. Taylor said the sign organization has a recommendation for this type of sign however he felt it was very bright. Mr. Hughes was in favor of having the lighted pricing sign so long as the size and the brightness were controlled. The Board agreed that the pricing could be illuminated however; the rest of the sign would be externally lit. Mr. Suljic noted the intersection where the two service stations exist is already well lit.

AUDIENCE

Mr. O'Leary opened the meeting to the public. With nobody coming forward, the meeting was closed to the public.

OLD BUSINESS:

1.) Handweg drive Realty – Letter to Attorney

Ms. Leo said she had drafted a letter to the Applicant's Attorney however, he has not responded yet.

2.) Conservation easement for Property on Monroe Road

The Board agreed to carry the matter to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1.) Re-Zone GC Zone Consideration

Addressed earlier in the meeting.

2.) Air BnB

Mr. Suljic advised the Board that Air BnB are short short-term residential rentals and they are popping up all over the place. The problem is that there are no ordinances to control them and he suggested Lafayette consider drafting something.

RESOLUTIONS: None.

ORDINANCES:

1.) Definition of Minor Site Plan

A motion to recommend the ordinance to the Township Committee for their consideration was made by Mr. Corcoran. It was seconded by Ms. Van Sickle and passed with a roll call vote. Ayes: Hughes, Corcoran, Leuthe, Didyk, Taylor, Van Sickle, Aikens, O'Leary. Mr. Suljic abstained.

ZONING REPORT: See attached

Mr. Suljic went over his report with the Board.

BILLS: List #2

Mr. Leuthe went over the bills list with the Board.

A motion to approve the bills as presented was made by Mr. Leuthe. It was seconded by Ms. Didyk and passed with a roll call vote. Ayes: Hughes, Corcoran, Leuthe, Didyk, Taylor, Van Sickle, Aikens, O'Leary. Mr. Suljic abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1.) From: SC Dept. of Engineering

Re: Road Opening Permit for 56 Sunset inn Road

2.) To: Brian Tipton, Esq.

Re: Handweg drive Realty, LLC

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to come before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Van Sickle. It was seconded by Mrs. Aikens and passed with everyone saying aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Pizzulo
Secretary