



**Borough of Stockton
County of Hunterdon
Planning Board**



October 1, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The Stockton Borough Planning Board was held via Zoom and called to order on October 1, 2024 at 7:00pm by Chair Bonanni. Board secretary Orlando read the following statement: Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by a notice mailed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and The Trenton Times posted on the Borough Website, on the window of Borough Hall, and filed with the Borough Clerk as required by law.

Ms. Orlando read the following: The Board's General Policy is to end the presentation of testimony on applications and Board discussions by 9:00 PM and to conclude all Board business by 9:30 PM. When necessary, the Chair may permit a reasonable extension of those time limits. This meeting is being held via Zoom, a cloud-based web conferencing program. This meeting is being conducted pursuant to guidance from the Division of Local Government Services ("DLGS"). <https://www.nj.gov/govconnect/news/general/#8>. All members of the public participating in this meeting will be muted during the meeting. Please keep yourself muted until instructed to unmute yourself in order to prevent unnecessary disruptions. If you have a question or comment during the designated public comment period, please click "raise your hand"; at the bottom of your screen. You will need to have the "participants" window visible in order to see the "raise your hand"; button. You will be instructed to unmute yourself and turn on your camera (if able). If you have called into the meeting, please press *9 to raise your hand. The moderator will call on you and will need to press *6 to unmute yourself when it is your turn to speak. Please be advised that if you called into the meeting, you will be identified by your telephone number. The moderator will, if needed, acknowledge you by the last 4 digits of your telephone number. Your telephone number will be visible to all participants in the meeting and will be visible to anyone that watches a recording of this meeting. Before you begin your comment, please state your name and address for the record. If you are having technical issues, please use the chat function to alert the moderator. Please do not use the chat function for any other purpose during the meeting. Public comments and questions will not be accepted via the chat function.

Roll Call and Attendance

Present: Ms. Bassett, Ms. Brown, Mayor Lipsen, Vice Chair Meltzer, Mr. Wallace, Chair Bonanni, Dr. Harrison, Mr. Gallagher

Absent: Mr. Martino, Mr. Miller

Also present: Attorney Tara St. Angelo, Planner Joanna Slagle, Board Secretary Monica Orlando

Flag salute done by all.

Board Attorney Tara St. Angelo administered the Oath of Office to Dr. Jeffrey Harrison

Chair Bonanni asked Ms. Slagle to speak briefly about the Master Plan Examination report. Ms. Slagle explained how the Reexamination Report is handled and the criteria used to make any changes in the Master Plan.

Open to the Public

Chair Bonanni opened the meeting for Public Comment.

Michael Odenwald, 19 Risler Street: asked how the council introduces alternate members. Ms. Orlando explained that it is a Mayoral appointment.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Bonanni closed this portion of the meeting.



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Approval of Minutes

Motion by Ms. Bassett to approve the minutes from September 3, 2024

Second by Vice Chair Meltzer.

Ayes: Bassett, Brown, Lipsen, Martino, Meltzer, Miller, Wallace, Chair Bonanni.

Mr. Hunt abstained. None opposed.

Approval of Bills

Planning Board Account

Gebhardt & Keifer – Inv # 100928 dated September 10, 2024 - \$476.00

NJPO – invoice #082025921 dated September 25, 2024 - \$95.00

Stockton Inn Escrow

Gebhardt & Keifer – Inv # 100929 dated September 10, 2024 - \$595.00

Stockton Market Escrow

Gebhardt & Keifer – Inv # 100286 dated September 10, 2024 - \$1,343.00

Motion by Ms. Bassett to pay the bills as written. Second by Mr. Martino.

Ayes: Bassett, Brown, Hunt, Lipsen, Martino, Meltzer, Miller, Wallace, Chair Bonanni.

Nays: none

Motion carried

New Business

At the request of Ms. Meltzer, Ms. St. Angelo spoke about a chicken ordinance she worked on in Clinton. She explained it set sufficient setbacks for coops, restrictions on the number of chickens per property based on property size, and prohibiting roosters. Suggestion made by Ms. St. Angelo to also consider including ducks in this ordinance as well.

Chair Bonanni asked the steps to have this passed after reviewing the draft. Ms. St. Angelo explained that this can be suggested to Council if it's something the Board feels strongly about. Ms. Slagle stated that she and Ms. St. Angelo could draft an ordinance for the Planning Board to review and propose to Council.

Mr. Hunt asked if there would be room for variances or grandfathering for this ordinance. Ms. St. Angelo explained that would be at the discretion of the Council and would be written into the ordinance.

Ms. Orlando spoke on the Planning Board fee ordinance and the need to increase the escrow fees as they don't even cover the initial review by professionals. The draft by Ms. St. Angelo was distributed to the Planning Board to review. She would like the Planning Board to propose this to the Council to review and adopt. Ms. St. Angelo stated the amounts she suggested are based on reviews of other municipalities and balancing not overwhelming applicants with initial fees, but also to start with enough escrow so that secretary doesn't need to ask for escrow deposits all the time. Ms. Brown asked for clarification on c1 fee, Ms. St. Angelo explained it was a typo and stated she would clean up the document to be clear. Chair Bonanni stated he agreed with these new fees. Mr. Hunt asked again for clarification on item c1. Ms. St. Angelo clarified it appears to be a typo from the copy and paste, and she would amend it before sending to Council to review.

Old Business

Chair Bonanni stated the November meeting would be a public hearing on Master Plan Reexamination Report. Working on a location to potentially hold a meeting in person while considering quorum, recording, and the ability to fit everyone into a physical location. It will be posted with sufficient notice.



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Master Plan Reexamination: Chair Bonanni thanked Ms. Slagle for giving an overview earlier in the meeting. Chair Bonanni state the subcommittee, consisting of him, Mayor Lipsen, Vice Chair Meltzer, and Mr. Hunt along with Ms. Slagle – met several times to review the document. Ms. Slagle stated that this criteria for this report is set by the MLUL.

Criteria A – Items from 2014 Reexamination report that were identified as the problems and objectives at the time. Other goals and objectives were pulled from earlier Reexamination reports.

Criteria B – Looking at the items in Criteria A and examining if they were or weren't addressed

Criteria C – all the changes that have happened locally, within the MLUL, and state initiatives that have happened in the past 10 years. This also includes affordable housing, cannabis, stormwater, etc.

Criteria D – bulk of the Reexamination plan. Reviews A-C to see what needs to be focused on. This includes - Traffic and Pedestrian safety and finding ways to work with DOT, ways to find funding, parking situation in the Borough and the need to find the best strategy, economic development plan (optional under MLUL), open space and recreation plan (also optional under MLUL) to look at all active and passive facilities in conjunctions with DEP Green Acres plan, and also general zoning and ordinance recommendations.

Criteria E - does not apply to the Borough. Only applies to municipalities that have a Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Hunt thanked Ms. Slagle for her hard work on this Reexamination Plan. Chair Bonanni echoed these comments.

Chair Bonanni opened the discussion to the rest of the Board.

Mr. Wallace stated there was jargon he was unfamiliar with and wanted to know what is most important to focus on as a Board Member. Ms. Slagle said Criteria D is most important as it's the specific recommendation that the Board is putting forward and focusing their efforts on.

Mr. Hunt said the Planning Board does this work with public input and gets sent to the Borough Council to adopt. Ms. Brown asked if this was a guiding document or a recommendation document. Ms. Slagle explained it is both. Mr. Wallace said he reviewed the Hunterdon County Master Plan and how do their goals affect the Borough's Master Plan. Ms. Slagle explained that is their long-term goals and objectives, and it is similar to the Borough's 2006 Master Plan. It was identified in the 2014 Stockton Borough Master Plan.

Mr. Hunt asked if the County and State Master Plans supercede the Borough's Master Plan and if we are obligated to be consistent with their plans. Ms. Slagle said it's difficult to be inconsistent with the State plan as it addresses all types of municipalities and their individual needs. She also stated it's very hard to be inconsistent with the State Plan.

Mr. Miller stated this document is the recommendation for the Planning Board to make, and also guides applicants going forward, especially for variance applications and how they can meet the Master Plan.

Mr. Hunt asked if this Reexamination report is a binding plan or guidance. Ms. Slagle stated it's like an umbrella, the top, and everything funnels under that. Land use ordinances must be consistent with the plan. Court and Judges review the history of planning documents, including reexamination reports, when there is a challenge.

Chair Bonanni asked for members to reach out to the professionals if they have any questions, and to not include the entire board to avoid OPMA violation. Ms. Slagle said to email her and copy the Board secretary so there is a record.



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Open to the Public – Non-Agenda Items

Chair Bonanni opened the meeting for Public Comment.

Michael Odenwald, 19 Risler Street: stated he read the Master plans and planning documents over the past 20 years. He believes he has found several inconsistencies. He asked the following:

Directed to Ms. Meltzer – why ask Clinton about chickens and not look into Cannabis

Regarding Master Plan – new focus on economic development. He thanked the Planning Board for focusing on this for the first time. He spoke on the surrounding towns and what he believes is the vibrancy these towns have and Stockton does not. He believes the Planning Board should provide more solutions and not just recommendations to the Borough Council. He believes this is where the Master Plan falls short and does not realize what the town needs. Council President and Mayor serve on the Planning Board and he thinks that needs to be more transparent. Page 14 Section D of the Reexamination report needs to be evaluated. He also asked again how members are invited to be on the Planning Board as a mayoral decision, and he doesn't agree. He doesn't think this is in the best interest of the town. He believes the Master Plan is important because the town is broke and has no expenditures. Mr. Odenwald was muted for reaching his 5 minute time limit.

Ms. Orlando addressed that MLUL law is the Mayor and one member of the governing body are Class I and Class III members and has nothing to do with the perception of lack of transparency.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Bonanni closed the public portion.

Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Bassett to adjourn. Second by Mr. Hunt. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Orlando
Planning Board Secretary