

**HOPE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 5, 2015**

The agenda/business meeting of the Hope Township Planning Board was held on Monday, October 5, 2015. Chairman Fish called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and he announced that notice of the meeting was given in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act – This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975." He then led the Board in the pledge of allegiance.

Roll Call:

Members present: John Kruk, Marvin Fish, Steve Larena, Robert May, and Tom Toohey.

Member absent: Chris Maier, John Koonz, Betsy Peterson, Mayor Timothy McDonough, Neil Rosenberg, and Brian LaBar.

Also Present: Board Attorney Roger Thomas, Board Engineer Ted Rodman, and Board Secretary Alfia Schemm.

Correspondence:

8-21-15 Frelinghuysen, **Re: Ordinance 2105-14**

9-18-15 WCPB, **Re: May**

8-24-15 Schaffer Civil Engineering, **Re: Hope Conference & Renewal Center**

Chairman Fish reviewed the correspondence received by the Board.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of August 4, were distributed prior to the Board meeting. Chairman Fish had several questions regarding the minutes and the discussion pertaining to: limiting the cemetery to the Hope Parish, limiting the cemetery to the acreage and burial plots as proposed, and the cemetery rules and regulations that state that they reserve the right to sell the burial plots to members of the Ecumenical Orthodox Christian Parish. He also questioned the number of parishioners that belong to the Hope parish, which he believes is 250 and the total number of parishioners throughout all of the parishes. The Applicants stated that they have 80 members in their church and that there are 40 parishes in the entire Eastern Section of the United States. They stated that there are 4 parishes in their area, 3 in NJ and 1 in NY. They stated that the "250" number came up from the maximum occupancy permitted for the existing building on the property. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to defer the adoption of the minutes, so that the audio of the meeting can be reviewed.

Completeness:

#15-003 Estate of George B. Winter, Block 5000, Lot 400

Board Attorney Thomas stated that completeness is not technically required if the application is for an agricultural division of land.

Steven R. Tombalakian Esq., was present and he asked if the Board would consider hearing their proposal this evening as the testimony will be very brief.

Daniel E. Kent was sworn in as a Surveyor. He then displayed the submitted plans and he described the agricultural subdivision, which was reviewed and discussed with the Board.

The hearing was opened to the public. With there being no public comment, the hearing was closed to the public.

Board Attorney Thomas reviewed the possible conditions of an approval.

Mr. Larena made the motion to approve the proposal. Motion seconded by Mr. Toohey. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

New Business:

#14-001 St. John the Baptist Serbian Orthodox Church, Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan, Block 4000, Lot 500

Steven Schepis, Esq. was present on behalf of the Applicant. He stated that as required they met awhile back with the Mayor and Council and they were authorized to proceed before the Planning Board. He reviewed where they left off at the August meeting, where the Board voted that the proposed cemetery use of 1760 grave sites/plots, is an accessory use to the Church Use. He stated that the cemetery will be titled to the Church and the Church will maintain the property and give out licenses for burial. He stated that this type of church cemetery is exempt from some of the regulations of the State Cemetery Act. He stated that they acknowledge that their rules and regulations needs to be modified. Chairman Fish questioned who would be eligible to be buried in the cemetery. Attorney Schepis stated that it would be anyone baptized in the Eastern Orthodox faith as testified and voted on at the August meeting. Chairman Fish stated a concern over the a church membership of less than 100 people and a cemetery that has almost 2000 grave plots. Attorney Schepis stated that the Board voted that the cemetery is limited by the 1760 grave plots within the cemetery area and that the eligible people permitted to be buried in the cemetery will need to be baptized in the Eastern Orthodox religion. He stated that it was agreed that the remainder issues would be dealt with during the site plan review.

Reza Hashemi was sworn in and he acknowledged that he has been qualified in the past as an Engineer. The following was submitted and marked as an Exhibit:

A-8 Colored Rendering, revision date of 6-22-15

A-9 Revised Plans, dated 8-22-15

Engineer Hashemi reviewed the modifications made to the plans. He then displayed Exhibit A-7. He went on to address the existing topography and proposed topography and the flow of stormwater. Board Engineer Rodman questioned the volume and velocity. Engineer Hashemi then displayed Exhibit A-6 and he described the photographs of the site. He stated that 20 to 40 trees will be removed throughout the site. He stated that they have increased the buffer and additional trees will be planted . Attorney Schepis touched on the variance for lot coverage. Engineer Hashemi went on to review Board Engineer Rodman's October 1, 2015 report. He reviewed the lot coverage and he stated that they reduced the area allocated for the cemetery and the width of the driveway. He stated that landscaping has been added and he addressed the area of disturbance. Attorney Schepis noted again that the cemetery is exempt from some of the State Regulations and Board Attorney Thomas will confirm that. It was noted that there will be no phasing and all site improvements/infrastructure will need to be done within 36 months. The Board continued to discuss the area of the cemetery and the area of disturbance. Engineer Hashemi stated that all of the utilities are in and the only item to be addressed is the stormwater.

The Board took a brief recess. The meeting resumed at 9:28 p.m.

Attorney Schepis addressed the concrete burial vaults used in burial and he stated that all six sides will be sealed. Engineer Hashemi continued to address Board Engineer Rodman's report and he addressed the existing water tank that would be used for fire protection. Board Engineer Rodman asked if the Fire Department has reviewed the fittings on the tank to make sure that it is compatible with their equipment. The Board discussed the width of the driveway and if it would be sufficient in the case of a fire. It was suggested that perhaps the Fire Department should review the proposal. The Environmental Commission provided their review in a memo of April 22, 2015. The Applicants continued to review the removal of the chain link fence and the planting and maintenance of the proposed trees and the proposed stone driveway. The Board then went on to discuss the elevations of the property, the proposed tree plantings (Norway and/or Serbian Spruce Trees) and what would be seen by the adjacent properties. Board Engineer Rodman stated that there should be a revised Landscaping Plan submitted. Traffic circulation within the site was reviewed and it was noted that no mausoleums are being proposed. Attorney Schepis stated again that they are exempt from some of the regulations of the Cemetery Act and he can provide Board Attorney Thomas with the telephone number of his contact person.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Anthony Alter, 418 Silver Lake Road, asked why the cemetery could not be moved away from the residences. He stated that he will be able to see the proposal from his home. Engineer Hashemi described the site and he stated that the proposed site, away from the lake, is the best location. Mr. Alter suggested other locations. Engineer Hashemi discussed the soil logs that were taken, during the investigation of the proposed septic system. Engineer Hashemi reviewed the distance from the proposed cemetery and Mr. Alter's home and he described the topography. The Applicants stated that they might be able to plant evergreen trees on a berm to provide a buffer and also limiting the height of the grave stones. Various optional locations were discussed and Board Engineer Rodman asked that a map be submitted showing the location and depths of the soil logs that have already been taken. The Applicants again offered a berm with evergreen plantings. Board Attorney Thomas suggested that the Applicant investigate some of the items that were brought up this evening. Chairman Fish stated that it is his understanding that there was an oral confirmation from the Zoning Officer that the conditions of prior approvals have been fulfilled. The Board discussed getting a written confirmation from the Zoning Officer that prior conditions have been fulfilled. The Board Secretary will contact the Zoning Officer to request a written confirmation. The Board continued to discuss the soil logs and Board Engineer Rodman requested a map depicting the location and results of the of the soil testing. Attorney Schepis stated that they will also provide a line of sight from the cemetery to the neighbors home. Mr. May had a question regarding lighting on the gate and the height of the proposed monuments. The Applicants stated that there will be no lighting on the gate and the maximum height of the grave stones would be 42 inches. The staggering of the proposed landscaping was discussed.

Planner Megan Hunscher acknowledged that she was still under oath. She addressed the coverage variance and the positive and negative criteria. She referenced RLUIPA and

she concluded by stating that the benefits of the proposal outweigh any detriments, which was debated and discussed with Board.

The hearing was opened to the public for questions of Ms. Hunscher.

Anthony Alter questioned whether the facilities in Hope are considered a retreat or a church. Ms. Hunscher stated that the Planning Board addressed that years ago. Mr. Alter asked if the priority is the cemetery or the recreational fields.

With there being no further questions, Ms. Hunscher was excused.

The hearing was then opened to the public for general comments.

Anthony Alter stated his concern over the location of the cemetery and he acknowledged that all of the statements that he has made has been truthful.

The hearing was then closed to the public.

Attorney Schepis stated that they have a list of items that need to be addressed and that new plans would be submitted at least 10 days prior to the next meeting. He asked that this matter be carried to the December 7, 2015 meeting and he granted an extension to December 31, 2015. Board Attorney Thomas stated that the audio of the August meeting will need to be reviewed to clarify the record. He then went on to announce that this matter is being carried to the Board's December 7th meeting, without further public notice.

Bills:

Rodman & Associates

Re: General	\$ 31.75
Re: St. John	\$1238.25
Re: Winter	\$ 508.00

Mr. Larena made the motion to approve the vouchers. Motion seconded by Mr. Kruk. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Dolan & Dolan

Re: St. John	\$ 199.04
Re: Winter	\$ 96.56
Re: St. John	\$1176.30

Mr. May made the motion to approve the vouchers. Motion seconded by Mr. Toohey. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Open to the Public:

The meeting was opened to the public. With there being no public comment, the meeting was closed to the public.

Adjournment:

In a motion made and seconded the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Alfia Schemm
Board Secretary
10/29/15
12/2/15