

February 7, 2008

A Special Session of the Allendale Planning Board was held in the Municipal Building on February 7, 2008. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. by Mr. Quinn, Chairman. Mr. Quinn announced that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act had been met by the required postings and notice to publications.

On roll call Mr. Quinn, Mr. Bernstein, Mr. Fliegel, Mr. Herndon, Mr. Sirico, Mr. Tatosian and Mr. Yevchak were present. Mr. Barra and Mr. Gravina were absent. Mr. Maloof was also present.

Mr. Quinn announced that this evening's Special Meeting was for discussion among the Board members pertaining to the issue of the Northern Highlands Regional High School Field Improvements.

At the last meeting testimony was taken on this subject. Tonight a recommendation will be given by the Board in order for Mr. Maloof to write a letter to the State Board of Education.

Mr. Maloof said he received a letter from Mr. Dave Bole, Municipal Attorney, that included a copy of Resolution 07-351 that was passed by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale. This resolution pertains to the approval of a soil movement permit for Northern Highlands. Mr. Bole stated in his letter that the Planning Board's comments should be directed to the State Board of Education by February 19, 2008. The recommendation for that letter will be drafted this evening. Mr. Maloof proposed that a discussion be held by the Board members with regard to the recommendation they wish to make. The recommendation could be faxed to the State Board of Education on February 19th, with a hard copy to follow in the mail.

There will be no additional comments taken by the public this evening.

Mr. Bernstein asked what recommendations could be made by the Board. Mr. Maloof said the Board could recommend that the turf field not be installed, or the Board could recommend the turf field be installed without conditions. The other option would be to recommend installation with conditions.

Mr. Tatosian asked how the State Board of Education deals with the Planning Board's recommendation. Mr. Maloof responded that he didn't know because he doesn't have any experience dealing with the State Board. He has a phone number that was provided to him by Mr. Bole and he will call the State Board of Education for more information.

Mr. Tatosian said there are letters circulating concerning the health risks of artificial turf fields. He questioned how the Board should deal with that matter.

Mr. Maloof responded that the Board could reference the literature it has received. The Board could ask the State Board to consider the literature and make a recommendation for further consideration of the information so that the topic is not being ignored.

Mr. Herndon commented that the Planning Board is not charged with bringing health issues to the attention of the State. There are local, County and State Health Departments that are prepared to do that. He suggested that the Board note the issue but not go beyond that.

Mr. Fliegel said he is in favor of approving the artificial turf field in conjunction with item number six under "Goals and Objectives" on the Master Plan. This item addresses promoting improvements that encourage the use and access of open spaces. He added that he would like to include two conditions, that the excess soil should be used to buffer the adjacent properties, and that the soil that will be stockpiled on the campus should be surrounded by a substantial fence.

Mr. Quinn said he is also in favor of moving forward with conditions. He noted that screening is contemplated in the Master Plan. He doesn't want to see the excess soil piled up for screening to the point that it endangers the trees that are currently there. The fencing is a public safety issue that has to be addressed. Finally the commercial signs that are proposed should point inward and not toward people's homes.

Mr. Tatosian said he agreed with the comments that were already made. He would like to add the need for a soil analysis before the soil is removed in order to determine it isn't contaminated. He added that it is done on all his major construction projects that involve the importing and exporting of soil.

Mr. Yakimik responded that the soil work is tentatively scheduled for next week. A visual inspection of the soil will be done to determine the high water table and to ensure the soil is permeable. Laboratory testing of the soil is not planned at this time. If the Board wants laboratory testing, there are approximately 25 additional tests that could be done.

Mr. Yevchak said he is in favor of the turf field as long as it is safe and the buffering is in place.

Mr. Quinn raised the issues of field usage and service road issues and asked if anyone felt those issues were compelling. No one responded that those issues were significant enough to address. Mr. Quinn added that the field belongs to the high school and they can use it as they like.

Mr. Fliegel added that the Master Plan encourages use of open space and does not recommend limiting it. He added that there was no compelling argument against the increase of traffic on the surface road.

Mr. Yakimik presented aerial maps of the facility and pointed out the existing vegetation and areas where additional vegetation could be added. The areas that could be enhanced are on the northwest corner of the field. There is also room on the access room for additional planting if that is the wish of the Board.

Mr. Yakimik pointed out to the Board that the soil that will be imported is essentially gravel which will come from a quarry. He asked if it is the intent of the Board to test that also.

Members of the Board agreed that if the gravel comes from a quarry it would not require additional testing.

Mr. Herndon commented that he would not be present at the February 18th meeting of the Board. He asked if the issue would be voted on this evening.

Mr. Maloof responded that the issue could be moved this evening and that he be directed to memorialize the resolution. On February 18th the Board could adopt a report to confirm the resolution that is passed tonight.

Mr. Plosia stated that the Board of Education could not seek local building permits until they receive permission to proceed from the Sate.

Resolution No. One – Offered by Mr. Sirico, Seconded by Mr. Fliegel

Be It Resolved that the Planning Board issue a report and recommendation to the State Board of Education advising that the proposed development at Northern Highlands Regional High School for installation of a turf field comports with the Master Plan of the Borough of Allendale, and recommends that a permit be issued subject to the incorporation of the following recommendations:

1. That the State Board of Education assure the safety of the material to be utilized on the installation of the field.
2. That there be soil testing of the on-site material for permeability and contaminants before the soil is removed and stockpiled on the site itself.
3. That fencing of substance be installed around the stockpile of soil for reasons of safety.
4. That there be a consideration of landscaping techniques to be imposed upon the applicant for the northwestern portion of the development to lessen the impact of the installation on the surrounding homeowners.
5. Any commercial signage to be installed be placed facing inward toward the campus and away from any residential occupants.

On roll call Mr. Bernstein, Mr. Fliegel, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Tatosian, Mr. Sirico, Mr. Herndon and Mr. Yevchak voted in favor.

On a motion by Mr. Herndon, seconded by Mr. Yevchak, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy
Recording Secretary