Voorhees Township Environmental Commission Minutes December 10, 2019

The Chairperson called the meeting to order. It was stated that this meeting is being held in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act and has been duly published and noticed as required by law”.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

Present: Mrs. Brown, Mr. Rashatwar, Mrs. Schwartz, Mr. Pike, Mr. Sytnik and Mr. Hale

Absent: Mr. Gaffney and Mr. Khayati

Mr. Joseph Giddings, CME Consultant also present.

NEW BUSINESS

The Quaker Group

Block:272 / Lot:5

Cardinal Lane, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Concept Plan

Mr. Nick Casey approaches the Commission and presents the conceptual plan for Cardinal Lane single family homes. Mr. Casey explains that The Quaker Group owns the vacant land located at Block: 272, Lot: 5. The property had originally been subdivided for Carrefour, which no longer remains at this site. The Quaker Group is looking for options to develop the land and currently has (2) plans they feel would fit the need of the neighborhood.

The 1st plan which is considered the “by-right” plan incorporates 15 acres of land. This (7) Lot plan would consist of single-family homes, incorporate 15,000 square feet and would likely meet current zoning standards. Mr. Casey states that this plan is the least favorable because it would create 17% disturbance and increased impervious coverage.

The 2nd plan creates less disturbance and would construct (10) Lots of single-family homes with smaller yards. They would also create a footpath to connect with the adjoining neighborhood at Harvard Avenue. The Quaker Group would then deed a small portion of the land to the Township to use and own for open space purposes. He feels this would benefit the townships Sustainable Voorhees program.

Mr. Hale stated that the (10) Lot plan shows a 50-foot buffer but the (7) Lot plan does not. Mr. Casey advised that the buffer behind the store falls under the prevue of the commercial property plans of the shopping center. Mr. Hale points out that Lot 1 in the by-right plan falls within the buffer. Mr. Casey explains that it is permissible under current wetlands regulations. He further stresses that this is only a conceptual plan and that The Quaker Group decided to appear prior to concrete plans to gauge the temperature of the residents and commission. Mr. Hale asks about the portion of the property that is intended to be deeded to the township. Mr. Casey advises that they do plan to deed the property over because it benefits the project and provides for less limitations to the property and adjoining areas. Mr. Giddings questions whether the intended footpath would extend to the stream. Mr. Casey explains that there will be a small stream crossing constructed. Mrs. Brown asks whether by current drainage calculations are these (2) streams part of the headwaters and Mr. Casey advises that they are. Mr. Hale doesn’t feel that the portion of the property that would be deeded to the township would make a difference or impact the project positively. Mr. Rashatwar asks whether the plans presented are current and if not, when they were produced. Mr. Casey explains that the plans are about 20 years old, but he does not feel the property has changed much since then. Mrs. Brown asks whether the drainage goes towards the property or goes to Route 73. He explains that the drainage discharges onto the property.

Mrs. Brown motions to open the public portion and Mr. Rashatwar seconds the motion.

Anthony Caruso

12 Sunset Drive, Voorhees, NJ

Mr. Caruso stated his dismay with the project as he has been a lifelong resident of Voorhees. He understands that the wetlands and headwaters feed into the Rancocas river and he worries about increased pollution to the waterways. He doesn’t want to see the wildlife and environment disturbed. He states that the undeveloped land is the last buffer before the shopping center, and he would prefer nothing be built there.

Dean Carnival

34 Cardinal Lane, Voorhees, NJ

Mr. Carnival explains that he understands the desire for The Quaker Group to develop the land and profit from it. He does not fault them for this but he does have some logistical concerns.

\*\*At this time residents from the audience requested the ability to view the plans closer\*\*

Mr. Hale advised the commission and public that we would take a 10-minute recess and afford the residence time to view the plans.

Mr. Carnival continues after the recess and states that one of his main concerns is that Cardinal Lane is not big enough for (2) way traffic. He also stated that he worries about the headwaters that feed the streams and understood that American Water Company owns a portion of that area. Mr. Carnival advises that the map does not properly show the property as he has walked the area. His main concerns are the runoff that could potentially be polluted by pesticides and the natural buffer that will be destroyed.

Mrs. Brown interjects and asks Mr. Carnival to contact the NJDEP about the standing water ponds so they can be documented and did advised that any work done to the property must follow State and Municipal requirements.

Terry DeAngelis

140 Paradise Drive, Voorhees, NJ

Ms. DeAngelis explains that her main concern is the increased traffic that would result from this project. She explained that years ago when the Endo Center was built traffic patterns changed and traffic flooded the area when drivers tried to avoid Cooper Street. She is concerned that the same thing will occur this time when traffic cuts through the side streets. She can’t stress enough how much she loves and appreciates the nature and environment as it is and would be devastated to see it go.

Denise White

136 Cardinal Lane, Voorhees, NJ

Ms. White took pictures and provided them to the Commission for review. (documents were taken by the secretary and placed into record) She feels that the 20-year old plans are grossly outdated and doesn’t feel that the pooling area of the ponds can be paved over. She states that all the neighbors walk through and enjoy the property and wonders how or why they would pave over the vegetation. Mrs. Brown advised that should The Quaker Group determine they want to pave or develop the area they would need to obtain he proper permits. Mr. Casey advises that he does not feel that they will come close to encroaching on the wetlands, but Ms. White would still like to see new data otherwise.

Ken White

136 Cardinal Lane, Voorhees, NJ

Mr. White asks what constitutes a “wetland”? Mrs. Brown advises that it must meet (3) standards for: Soil, Hydrology & Vegetation. She advises that The Quaker Group would hire Princeton Hydrology to delineate the wetland buffer. The state then visits the site and determines the accuracy of the wetlands. Mr. Casey advises that he has visited the site and that they will require wetlands permits for a small area of fill. Mr. Giddings then suggests that The Quaker Group obtain a new GP10 because he thinks the project will nip the wetlands.

Janice Cranmer

93 Cornell Drive, Voorhees, NJ

Ms. Cranmer stated that she lives on the lake in the neighborhood of this project. Throughout the years she has walked the property with her children and grandchildren. She states that she knows that the wild orchid and small tree frog that live on the proposed property are on the endangered species list and would hate to see them go. She appreciates the property as it is now and fears what clearing and developing would do to the environment.

Michael McNally

127 Paradise Drive, Voorhees, NJ

Mr. McNally worries about the increased traffic with delivery trucks, buses, and trash trucks and the effect it would have on the deer that are already being pushed out by development. He worries that the increased traffic will cause congestion and accidents.

Bob Palumbo

135 Cardinal Lane, Voorhees, NJ

Mr. Palumbo has been a lifelong resident of Voorhees and has moved many times within the Township to avoid commercial building and encroachment. He feels that there has been plenty of development in the area and would like to keep his surrounding neighborhood as rural as possible.

Kim Bahnasi

136 Paradise Drive, Voorhees, NJ

Ms. Bahnasi stated that she currently lives in a home that has a wooded back yard with lots of natural vegetation and wildlife. As a child she grew up in Camden and did not have the luxury of trees, wildlife and a thriving natural environment. Now that she enjoys such a beautiful space for a back yard, she is devastated to think it will be cleared for development.

Mrs. Brown motioned to close the public portion and Mr. Pike seconded the motion.

Mr. Hale then suggests that the memo to the Pre-Development Committee read as follows:

1. The Environmental Commission feels regarding the cluster plan that the negative aspects of the development far outweigh the positive and would create a negative impact to the surrounding area.
2. The Commission agrees that there is no benefit of municipal ownership of the passive open space.
3. The Commission would ask that the pre-development committee with respect to Block:272 / Lots:5 & 6, review the buffers and setbacks and ensure any potential development meet State and Municipal standards.

The Chair of the Voorhees Environmental Commission would be willing and happy to sit in on any pre-development meetings regarding this site.

Mrs. Brown then motions to send the memo as stated and Mrs. Schwartz seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Aye: Mrs. Brown, Mr. Rashatwar, Mrs. Schwartz, Mr. Pike, Mr. Hale

Nay: None

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

MEETING ADJOURNED

VEC Secretary,

**Kendralyn Cornwall**