

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP LAND USE BOARD

Great Meadows, NJ 07838

Meeting - June 19, 2024 7:30 p.m.

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING,

349 Mt. Lake Rd.,

Great Meadows, NJ

1. CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE
2. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE - Sunshine Law
3. ROLL CALL
4. OLD Business - None
5. MINUTES February 21, 2024
6. RESOLUTIONS - None
7. APPLICATIONS - Luckson Etienne
Block 38, Lot 1
1 Walnut Drive
Seeks to have the property declared a Pre-existing Non-conforming Use
8. DISCUSSION – Possible new Board Secretary
9. BILLS
10. ADJOURNMENT - (automatic at 10:30 p.m.)

Minutes of the Liberty Township Land Use Board

Regular Meeting

19 June 2024

The meeting was opened at 7:30 by Chairman Eric Tibak who read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

Flag salute

Attendance: Eric Tibak, John Inscho, Dan Grover, Jack Zybura, Dave Snyder, Pete Wicki and Nick Fania were present. Also present were Eric Snyder, Planner and Richard Schneider, Attorney

Minutes: On motion by Eric Tibak, seconded by Jack Zybura, the minutes for the meeting of 21 February were approved.

Old Business: None

John Inscho introduced Amber Gratacos as a possible new Land Use Board Secretary.

New Business:

The Board then took up the draft Trailer (Temporary Housing) ordinance. Changes proposed were:

Add time frame (three months. Extension by the Zoning Officer for good cause (e.g. availability of materials, etc.), only for major renovations such as roofs, substantial additions, or damages due to fire, weather effects, other catastrophic events that render the home uninhabitable. All permits properly secured. Temporary dwellings must meet safety codes (particularly Fire, electrical).

The Board then entertained a suggestion from John Inscho to look into possibly permitting marijuana growing, processing, retail sales in the Special Agricultural zone. Mr. Inscho stated there are financial benefits that might accrue to the township. Mr. Brian Merserlian, current owner of the former Pryslak property and processing facility, indicated that he would be interested in seeing this happen.

Eric Snyder indicated that it would be important to be as specific as possible as to where (what properties or a whole zone) and what (grow, distribution, processing, sales). In the event a change is recommended, the Land Use Board would have to prepare and adopt an amendment to the master plan, with notice to property owners within 200 feet of the affected property and also prepare and adopt a green buildings and environmental sustainability plan element.

Dan Grover indicated he has strong reservations and is opposed to any permissions regarding any of these activities as they tend to use substantial amounts of electricity (there typically does not appear to be sufficient electrical service in Liberty. He brought up the experience in Lafayette with the facility running off generators 24/7), water (20 – 30 thousand gallons per day – with recycling),

require 24 hour lighting (with potential negative effects on the observatory in the immediate area) and give off strong odors (See Bilby Road in Hackettstown).

Lands in farmland assessment cannot be used in these operations. Dan Grover also pointed out that the use, cultivation and sale of marijuana is illegal at the federal level. Accordingly, those engaged in the growth, processing, or sale cannot use banking services from any financial institution that has federally guaranteed protection of deposits. In light of this restriction, the Township is not set up to handle cash proceeds from these operations, particularly from the standpoint of security. As such there are a large number of “quality of life” issues. He also pointed out that once a municipality permits any of these activities, they cannot prohibit them for a period of 5 years.

Jack Zybura stated that all of his experience is that these kinds of operations have been isolated in industrial zones. The last issue raised was where this should be initially addressed. Whether the Township Committee wants to hold discussions there or begin it at the land Use Board. Eric Snyder stated this is a policy matter for the Committee. At the end of this discussion, John Inscho mentioned that mushroom farms were also worth considering.

In the absence of clear answers to the questions raised in the discussion, the Board felt that the matter was best concluded for this evening until the next meeting.

Eric Snyder noted that there is a stormwater management ordinance, provided and required by the NJ DEP. He provided a report for the Committee so that it can go to the County for their review. Once the County has reviewed it, it can be introduced by the Committee. The only substantive change he recommended is to make the Zoning Officer the enforcement official, not a police department nor the Township Engineer.

The meeting was opened to the public. No one from the public wishing to be heard, the meeting was closed to the public.

The Board then considered an invoice from Eric Snyder. On a motion from Dan Grover, seconded by Pete Wicki, the invoice was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric K. Snyder, AICP, PP
Board Administrator