

ADJOURNMENTS OF ANY SCHEDULED HEARINGS OR MOTIONS

There were none

TRC UPDATE

Chair Villa stated that the TRC reviewed the Tesla Inc. application for EV charging stations at the Wawa and it was deemed incomplete. He also stated that the TRC will continue the review of the new application checklists.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

OLD BUSINESS

Chair Villa reviewed and provided updates on the old business as follows:

1. Municipal Climate Resilience Planning-Ongoing
2. Application Checklists-Ongoing
5. Subcommittee Updates-Ongoing

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

Discussion-Route 22 Corridor Zoning

Chair Villa clarified that the Planning Board does not have the power to approve zoning changes. He explained that the Board can make recommendations to the Township Committee where they may see a need for a change but it the Township Committee that ultimately approves any ordinances and amendments to zoning.

Christina Schwartz, Director of Land Use and Development provided some history and explained that the original subcommittee was formed in 2020 as a result of many inquiries received in her office from business owners who were having difficulty buying, selling or renting tenant spaces on property along the Route 22 corridor. She stated that many of the buildings that were vacant in 2016 when she came to the Township are still vacant now. She explained that the goals of the subcommittee were to see what uses could be added to create opportunities for existing business owners, increase economic development in these existing buildings, redevelop existing downtrodden properties and consolidation of zones. She stated that in 2022 as a Phase 1, several uses were added to the PO Zone by an ordinance adopted by the Township Committee.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan spoke to the work the subcommittee has done to date specifically reviewing many uses to see what might be appropriate along the Route 22 corridor while considering design standards and regulations.

Chair Villa asked for comments from the Board.

Mr. Becker would like additional recommendations from the subcommittee.

Ms. Allen spoke to revitalizing what is already developed, repurposing vacant buildings, and

protecting the natural resources of the town. She also expressed concern about the effects of having drive-thru's.

Mr. Panico spoke to the need to consider the area between Power Place and the Spinning Wheel Diner including Salem Square and Salem Industrial Park.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan confirmed that all existing regulations would remain with any zoning changes.

Mr. John spoke to the previous work of the subcommittee over the past few years that focused on the eastern portion of Route 22 with the main intent to revitalize and make that area including the existing office complexes and strips malls more useful while incorporating downtown Whitehouse Station into the redevelopment.

Board Planner Michael Sullivan spoke to the process of the subcommittee's review and the things that were considered when creating the proposed zones.

Christina Schwartz, Director of Land Use and Zoning Officer spoke to the requests that she regularly receives to her office.

Mr. Mueller stated that he has received numerous requests from business owners who have been waiting for these zoning changes along the Route 22 corridor.

Ms. Hindle spoke to redevelopment versus new development.

Char Villa opened the meeting to comments from the public.

Baljinder Singh, owner of three properties along Route 22 spoke to the need for a change in zoning due to difficulty finding tenants for his properties with the current zoning noting that one of his properties has been vacant for a year and a half.

Matthew McWilliams stated that agrees that the zoning on Route 22 to the east does need to change to help existing business owners such as Mr. Singh but he is not in favor of any changes west of Van Horne Road.

Renee Rao expressed her opposition of zoning changes on Route 22 west of Van Horne Road stating that it should be kept as agriculture to protect the rural character of the Township and the environment. She stated that she is in favor of Highway Commercial zoning to the east of Route 22 because it is community friendly and would be businesses that would benefit the residents.

Kelly Patterson concurred with the comments made by Ms. Rao expressing her desire to maintain the rural environment and not overdevelop the area with fast food restaurants and self-storage facilities.

John, a resident, spoke in opposition of the rezoning of Route 22 specifically to the west expressing concerns about increased traffic and maintaining the existing rural character of the Township.

Frank Leshik thanked the Board for their efforts and spoke to the negative impacts of drive-thru businesses.

Mike O'Donnell inquired about making it a step by step process to help some of the business owners who have immediate need to the east on Route 22.

Kate DeLuca spoke to concerns of flooding in the area and increasing impervious surface in sensitive areas.

Denise Duncan concurred with the comments made by the other members of the public. She read a letter from a neighbor who opposes the rezoning of Route 22 west of Van Horne Road.

Susan Masinda spoke to tabling the controversial aspects of the zoning changes to the west of Van Horne Road and passing an ordinance that would help business owners who are currently in need. She stated that she is not in favor of drive-thru fast food restaurants, rezoning, or development on Route 22 to the west.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Becker moved, and Ms. Allen seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marie Lehberger
Planning Board Secretary