TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM PLANNING BOARD
MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

August 30, 2018

PREPARED BY:

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TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM

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1.0 Introduction

The intent of this Master Plan Amendment is to address two properties within the Township that require additional scrutiny in regard to their current zoning designations. The 2002 Land Use Plan and the 2008 Master Plan Reexamination addressed broad areas of the Township and forwarded plans that called for large lot development based on ground water limitations that were supported by environmental studies completed prior to those plans. The updated Master Plan Reexamination, which is pending approval, has called for a new comprehensive land use plan that should include background studies that will update those environmental analyses that formed the basis of the previous plans. These lots that are the subject of this Master Plan Amendment are examined at this time because they both are unique properties that do not currently conform to neighboring development patterns.

2.0 Block 131.01, Lot 1 - 1 Cold Hill Road – Pitney Property

Existing Conditions

The subject property is approximately 12.27 acres and is currently located in the R-2 Single-family residential district. The R-2 zoning district permits single-family dwellings on lots that are a minimum size of two (2) acres. The property is bounded on three sides primarily by the rear lot lines of single-family lots that front on Ballantine Road and Shelton Road. The subject property has approximately 690 feet of frontage on Cold Hill Road and frontage on a portion of Shelton Road. There also is a small area of frontage on Ballantine Road. The municipal boundary with Mendham Borough is along Cold Hill Road. The lots that border the subject property are located within the CR-2 zone and have minimum lot sizes of 20,000 square feet. Lots 52 and 52.01 on Block 131 located on the north side of Shelton Road are in the R-2 zone. Both of those lots are just over one acre in area. Public potable water is available in the area.
The subject property is occupied by the remnants of the main house which was severely damaged by fire and several other buildings. The other buildings on the site include single-family dwellings, four barns, a garage, a studio and sheds. The property is owned by the Township of Mendham and as a consequence of relying in part on Morris County Open Space funding to assist in the purchase of the property the twelve (12) acres is functionally divided into two sections. Approximately five (5) acres of the site in which most of the structures are located is unrestricted as to use. The remaining seven (7) acres is restricted as open space by Morris County. That restriction prohibits the construction of any structures or land disturbance other than routine maintenance. Any structures on the open space portion may be maintained and any relocation of the access road may be permitted if needed through the open space. Disturbance is also permitted for either stormwater management or in support of septic facilities. A comprehensive study and analysis of the property was completed in 2014 and can be referred to for a complete description and history of the property.

**Proposed Rezoning**

As was noted above and illustrated on the accompanying mapping the properties mostly surrounding the subject site are located in the CR-2 zone. The CR-2 Combination Residential District zone permits conventional single-family detached dwellings in combination with limited income housing. The detached single-family housing is required to meet the bulk requirements of the R Residential District. As was also noted above the minimum lot size permitted in the R zone is 20,000 square feet.

It is recommended that the subject property be rezoned to the R Residential zone in order to be in greater conformance and consistency with the adjacent properties. While the entire twelve (12) acres is recommended for inclusion in the zone the practical effect will only apply to the unrestricted five (5) acres. If the current R-2 zoning were maintained it would result in lots that could be almost four times the size of the adjacent properties. Adopting the R zone standards in this area would be more compatible with the neighboring development than the existing zone designation.
Extending the CR-2 zone to the subject property would also allow a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. Adopting that zone designation would also require the provision of limited income housing, which would not be appropriate for the limited area available for development and the need for greater development intensity. The R zone designation has the benefit of allowing compatible lot sizes and development pattern without the limited income housing requirement and is therefore recommended.

3.0 Block 127, Lot 29 – 9 Shores Road

Existing Conditions

The subject property is approximately 11.5 acres and is currently located in the R-3 Detached Single-family zone. The minimum lot size required in the R-3 zone is three (3) acres. The property is located on the west side of the south end of Shores Road. The north end of Shores Road is in the R Residential zone and abutting property to the northwest is in the R-1 zone. Adjacent lands to the southwest and south are also in the R-3 zone. Lands to the east are zoned R-C and R-10. The area of R-10 zoning is the Dismal Harmony Natural Area and is preserved open space.

The property has frontage on Shores Road along a portion of its eastern boundary. The paved portion of the road is narrow and in need of some repair. The property generally slopes from northeast to southwest. The lot is currently occupied by a single-family dwelling that was constructed in 1936 per the tax records. Public water service is not immediately available to the site. The attached map and aerial map illustrate the property and neighboring area and zoning as described above.
Proposed Rezoning

The property is surrounded and bounded by five (5) different zone designations. Access to the site from Woodland Road is solely via Shores Road. The zoning designation along Shores Road between the site and Woodland Road is the R zone with its 20,000 square foot minimum lot sizes. The property is not geographically related to the remainder of the R-3 zone especially through access.

It is recommended that the property be rezoned to the R-1 Single-family zone designation. That zone is adjacent to the northwest portion of the property. That zoning would permit single-family dwellings on lots with a minimum size of one (1) acre. The R zoning, which is along the north end of Shores Road, is not recommended because it is anticipated that development of the subject property would be served by individual wells and septic systems, which are more easily accommodated on one acre lots. Rezoning the property and proposed development would result in a more efficient use of the land and would be compatible with the neighboring properties. Improvements at least to the frontage portion of Shores Road could be achieved through any subdivision approval process along with access to the open space located to the south.