



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE FOR PLANNING ADVOCACY
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Governor

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Lieutenant Governor

GERRY SCHARFENBERGER, PH.D.
Director

February 24, 2011

The Honorable Thomas Harper
Borough of Wrightstown
21 Saylor's Pond Road
Wrightstown, NJ 08562

RE: Borough of Wrightstown, Plan Endorsement Vision Waiver and Next Steps

Dear Mayor Harper:

Over the past year, the Office for Planning Advocacy (OPA) has been working with Wrightstown Borough on its Plan Endorsement petition. During this collaboration, it became clear that the Borough of Wrightstown had conducted significant public engagement. OPA requested that the Borough submit documentation to support its waiver request, which the office has now reviewed.

The Borough conducted two formal visioning sessions, one on April 12, 2010 covering the Fort Dix Street corridor and one on September 14, 2010 that addressed the entire municipality. Documentation was submitted which verifies that these sessions fulfill the requirement for two of the three required sessions for Plan Endorsement.

Attached is the Borough's visioning waiver request for one of the three sessions, which describes the municipal commitment to public involvement over the past 15 years. Wrightstown realized that it needed to take dramatic action to address the challenges arising from its changing relationship with the military base to its south. The Borough has been interacting with its citizens, government at multiple levels, non-profit organizations, consultants, the military, regional entities and even utilities to solicit ideas and solve problems.

Upon review of all the information submitted (planning documents, ordinances, Municipal Self Assessment, documentation of public engagement) to OPA by the Borough of Wrightstown for Plan Endorsement, pursuant to the State Planning Rules N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.12, we will grant a *partial visioning waiver*, thus allowing the petition to proceed to the next step, Consistency Review.

In order to insure that a revitalized Wrightstown is moving in the right direction for its businesses and citizens, OPA will require Wrightstown in the Planning and Implementation Agenda (PIA) stage of its Plan Endorsement to conduct a final vision session to determine the desired form of future development. This session should reassess Phase II of the Patriots Walk development in light of developments since implementation of Phase I. OPA would like to insure that Phase II of the redevelopment plan ties into the existing road network, includes development that is unique in the region and suited to the location, encourages walking and other non-vehicular movement throughout the redevelopment area, and serves not just the narrow vision of a cookie cutter developer but of the citizens of the Borough.


Normally, within the next 90 days OPA and partner state agencies would conduct the Consistency Review to insure that the petition and related documents are consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. While staff will make every effort to make the 90 day deadline, due to high demand on staff this may not be possible.

If it is determined that the petition is consistent with the State Plan N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.15, OPA will prepare a recommendation report to the State Planning Commission and a draft Planning and Implementation Agreement (PIA).

If it is determined that additional action must be taken by the municipality to achieve consistency with the State Plan, OPA will consult with our State Agency Partners and develop a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Action Plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.15.18 (d). If OPA fails to provide a draft MOU and Action Plan to the Commission within that 90 period, the municipality may directly petition the Commission for Plan Endorsement.

As always, OPA commends the Borough of Wrightstown for its active pursuit of Plan Endorsement. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Karl Hartkopf, Planning Director and lead planner for Burlington County at (609) 984-9797 or via email at khartkopf@dca.state.nj.us. We look forward to continuing to work with the Borough as it pursues Plan Endorsement and its significant redevelopment agenda.

Sincerely,



Gerry Scharfenberger, Ph.D.
Director
Office for Planning Advocacy

GS:kh:km

c: Rick Ragan, Ragan Design, Wrightstown Planner (*Via E-Mail*)
Mara Wuebker, Ragan Design, Assistant Wrightstown Planner (*Via E-Mail*)
State Agency Partners (*Via E-Mail*)
Mark Remsa, Director of Planning, Burlington County (*Via E-Mail*)
Ed Fox, Senior Planner, Burlington County (*Via E-Mail*)
Joy Farber, Esq, Chief Counsel and Policy Director, OPA (*Via E-Mail*)
Karl Hartkopf, PP/AICP, Planning Director, OPA (*Via E-Mail*)
Borough of Wrightstown, Plan Endorsement File