

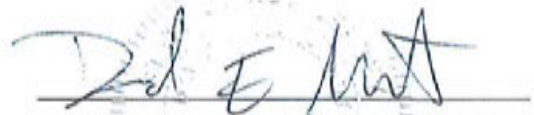
MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

September 17, 2014



TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA
SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David E. Manhardt", is written over a horizontal line.

David E. Manhardt, A.I.C.P., P.P. LI00613700

2014 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA Sussex County, New Jersey



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SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

The original of this document was signed and sealed
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Prepared by:

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TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA 2014 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.) provides that each municipality within the State of New Jersey periodically reexamine its Master Plan policies and assumptions, and its zoning restrictions and site plan and subdivision regulations, and prepare and adopt by resolution, a report on the findings of such reexamination. The Reexamination Report must include the following components (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89):

1. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
3. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
4. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
5. The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The current Township of Sparta Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board pursuant to Article 3 of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28) in 1984. The Board subsequently adopted the following amendments to the Master Plan: 1988, 1996 (Open Space Plan), 1997 (Route 15, Town Center Plan and Housing Plan Rounds 1 and 2), 2002 (Goals and Objectives and Land Use Plan), 2005 Housing Plan Round 3, 2011 (Planned Village Core and Planned Development-Resource Management Area). The last Reexamination Report was adopted on December 21, 2011.

Since the time of adoption of the last amendment to the Master Plan, the assumptions, policies, and objectives upon which the Master Plan is based have changed by virtue of: a) the enactment of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act ("Highlands Act," N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq.) by the State Legislature on August 10, 2004; b) the adoption of the Highlands Regional Master Plan by the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council ("Highlands Council") on July 17, 2008, which became effective on September 8, 2008; c) the requirement of the Highlands Act that municipal Master Plans and regulatory provisions be brought into alignment with the Highlands Regional Master Plan for lands located within the Highlands Preservation Area; and d) the affirmative decision of the Township of Sparta Governing Body to conform to the Highlands Regional Master Plan for municipal lands located in the Preservation Area, as set forth by Ordinance #09-199 adopted on December 2, 2009.

Accordingly, the Planning Board has reexamined the Township Master Plan and development regulations to determine the specific changes necessary to achieve consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan and thereby, to incorporate the specific changes in State policies, goals, and objectives as set forth by the Highlands Act. It is the intent of this Report to identify the specific revisions needed to bring the Township Master Plan and development regulations into conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

1. Major Land Development Problems & Objectives

The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the Highlands Preservation Area of the Township at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report which have changed, specifically as a result of the passage of the Highlands Act, the adoption of the Regional Master Plan, and/or the decision of the Governing Body to conform its planning documents to the Regional Master Plan, include the following:

- a. The Township of Sparta received approval of their Petition for Plan Conformance from the Highlands Council.

2. Extent of Reduction/Increase in Problems & Objectives

The extent to which each of the problems and objectives listed in item 1 above, have been reduced or have increased subsequent to the date of the last reexamination report, specifically as a result of passage of the Highlands Act, the adoption of the Regional Master Plan, and/or the decision of the Governing Body to conform its planning documents to the Regional Master Plan, is indicated below, in the same order provided at 1, above:

- a. The Township continues with the Petition approval. Yet has not received full conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan for lands within the Highlands Preservation Area.

3. Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies, Objectives

Since the reexamination of the Township Master Plan on December 21, 2011, the passage of the Highlands Act, adoption of the Regional Master Plan by the Highlands Council, and the adoption by the Governing Body of its resolution to conform the municipal planning documents to the Regional Master Plan, have significantly altered and increased the objectives that must be addressed in the Township Master Plan, including but not limited to incorporating a variety of Highlands Resource protections, providing an emphasis on infrastructure and environmental carrying capacities, and initiating a substantial modification to the methodology to be used in determining permitted densities of development within the Highlands Preservation Area of the municipality.

4. Specific Recommended Changes to the Master Plan

The Planning Board recommends that specific changes to the Sparta Township Master Plan be adopted, including modifications to the underlying objectives, policies and standards for the Highlands Preservation Area, all as outlined in detail, in the "Highlands Preservation Area Master Plan Element". The Highlands Element was approved by the Highlands Council as part of the Township's Petition for Plan Conformance. Since approval of the Township's Petition for Plan Conformance, the Highlands Element has undergone significant amendments in recognition of Sparta Township's limited development capacity. The Township of Sparta has limited potential for development other than projects that would be exempt from the Highlands Act. The Highlands Element recommended for adoption has been scaled back to reflect this limited development potential (copy attached herewith).

5. Specific Recommended Changes to Development Regulations

The Planning Board recommends interim changes to the Township Development Application checklist ordinance(s), effective until such time as the Highlands Area Land Use Ordinance is adopted and put into effect by the Governing Body. These changes would require that evidence of consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan be submitted with Development Applications as a requirement of Application completeness, as provided in the attached Ordinance entitled "Township of Sparta Highlands Preservation Area Checklist Ordinance."

6. Changes Recommended for Incorporation of Redevelopment Plans

At this time the Planning Board makes no findings or recommendations regarding the incorporation of redevelopment plans pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, P.L. 11992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.).

REEXAMINATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA MASTER PLAN PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 SPECIFICALLY WITH RESPECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING ACT (N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 ET SEQ.) AND MUNICIPAL CONFORMANCE WITH THE HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN, PREPARED AND PROVIDED FOR ADOPTION PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, TO AMEND THE MASTER PLAN OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA TO INCLUDE THE SUPPLEMENT TITLED, "TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA HIGHLANDS PRESERVATION AREA MASTER PLAN ELEMENT"

DECIDED AND ADOPTED: SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

WHEREAS, the Planning Board of Sparta Township, Sussex County, State of New Jersey ("Planning Board"), was established pursuant to all requirements and provisions of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board adopted the current Sparta Township Master Plan is amended pursuant to Article 3 of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28) on various dates; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 provides that each municipality within the State of New Jersey periodically re-examine its Master Plan policies and assumptions, zoning restrictions, and site plan and subdivision regulations, and prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has conducted such periodic reexaminations of the Master Plan since the initial date of its adoption and adopted reports setting forth its findings of each such reexamination, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act ("Highlands Act," N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq.) was enacted by the State Legislature on August 10, 2004 for the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring the natural resources of the New Jersey Highlands Region, in particular the water resources, which provide drinking water to over 5 million New Jersey residents; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Act created the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (the "Highlands Council") and charged it with crafting a comprehensive master plan for the New Jersey Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) was adopted by the Highlands Council on July 17, 2008, and became effective on September 8, 2008 as the product of a long-term, participatory, and region-wide planning effort; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Act creates a bifurcated system for municipal conformance with the Regional Master Plan – mandatory Plan Conformance for any portion (or if applicable, the whole) of a municipality located within the Preservation Area and voluntary Plan

Conformance for any portion (or if applicable, the whole) of a municipality lying within the Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, Section 14 of the Highlands Act expressly requires that municipalities revise and conform their local master plan and development regulations for that portion of their lands within the Preservation Area, as related to development and use of said lands, with the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan within 15 months of the effective date of adoption thereof, or December 8, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Section 15 of the Highlands Act provides for voluntary Plan Conformance where any municipality located wholly or partially in the Planning Area may at any time voluntarily revise and conform its local master plan and development regulations, as related to the development and use of land in the Planning Area, with the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, Sparta Township is located in the Highlands Region with lands lying within the Preservation Area, as defined by section 7 of the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2009 the Governing Body of Sparta Township, held a noticed public meeting during which it adopted Resolution No. 09-199, a resolution noticing of its intent to Petition the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance with respect to [that portion of the municipality located within the Preservation Area; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board did subsequently conduct a reexamination of the municipal master plan and land use regulations, in view of the model Highlands Master Plan Element and model Highlands Area Land Use Ordinance provided by the Highlands Council, to identify the specific changes needed to conform the municipal planning documents to the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board reexamination was assisted by preparation of detailed, draft versions of the Master Plan Highlands Element and Highlands Area Land Use Ordinance, each tailored by municipal staff and professionals, to the specific circumstances of the Sparta Township, providing for a comprehensive and explicit representation of the changes required to conform these documents to the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board reexamination was completed over the course of May to September 2014, inclusive of a collaborative process with the Highlands Council specifically to ensure that all necessary master plan and regulatory provisions necessary for Plan Conformance were appropriately considered; and

WHEREAS, on September 17, 2014 the Planning Board did hold a noticed public meeting for the purpose of initiating a public discussion concerning conformance with the Regional Master Plan and the components of the municipality's Petition for Plan Conformance to the

Highlands Council, including specifically, the Highlands Preservation Master Plan Element and the Highlands Area Checklist Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2009 the Governing Body of Sparta Township did hold a public meeting at which it discussed conformance with the Regional Master Plan and Governing Body adopted Resolution #09-199 petitioning the Highlands Council for approval of its Petition for Plan Conformance, prepared with respect to [that portion of the municipality located within the Preservation Area; and

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2009 Sparta Township did submit the Petition for Plan Conformance to the Highlands Council; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2011, during a duly-noticed public hearing and following receipt of public comment and public deliberation, the Highlands Council did approve the Township's Petition for Plan Conformance and did formalize such approval through the adoption of the Highlands Council Resolution; and

WHEREAS, a Highlands Council Resolution requires the Township, after public notice, holding of public hearings, and in full accordance with all provisions of the MLUL, to adopt a revised master plan and land use ordinance to bring them into conformance with the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, upon notice duly provided pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13, and in accordance with all associated requirements of the MLUL, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the Reexamination of the Township of Sparta Master Plan and the proposed Highlands Preservation Area Master Plan Element pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-10(a), on September 17, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has determined after reexamination of the master plan, receipt of public comment, and public deliberation regarding same, that the Sparta Township Master Plan must be amended to incorporate the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan; and

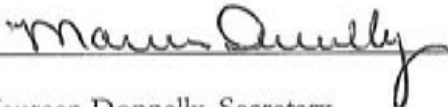
WHEREAS, the Planning Board has determined that the adoption and implementation of the Highlands Element of the Master Plan is in the public interest and protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Board hereby makes and adopts the findings of fact and all recommendations as set forth in the "September 17, 2014 Sparta Township Master Plan Reexamination Report," dated September 17, 2014, prepared by David Manhardt P.P., a reexamination of the Sparta Township Master Plan and development regulations conducted specifically to address the task of achieving

conformance with the provisions of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq.) and the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

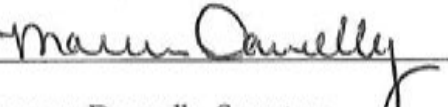
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sparta Township Planning Board hereby adopts the Sparta Township Highlands Preservation Area Master Plan Element, dated September 17, 2014, and prepared by David Manhardt, P.P. based upon the model Master Plan Highlands Element provided to Highlands municipalities by the Highlands Council.

SPARTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD


Maureen Donnelly, Secretary


Ernest Hofer, Chairman

I hereby certify that the within is a true copy of a Resolution passed by the Sparta Township Planning Board at a meeting held on September 17, 2014.


Maureen Donnelly, Secretary


Ernest Hofer, Chairman