



TOWNSHIP OF LONG HILL

MEYERSVILLE HAMLET

ELEMENT

of the

MASTER PLAN

Prepared for:

The Long Hill Township

Planning Board

12 May 2009

Meyersville Final Hamlet Element V6 060209

Kevin O'Brien, P.P., A.I.C.P.

Shamrock Enterprises, Ltd.

NJ License #5348

LONG HILL TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Municipal Land Use Law requires planning boards to reexamine their Master Plans and the municipal development regulations at least every six years; and,

WHEREAS, the last Master Plan was adopted in 1996 and the last Master Plan Reexamination Report was adopted in 2003; and,

WHEREAS, the Long Hill Township Planning Board has prepared a new Meyersville Hamlet Element of the Master Plan with the assistance of Township Planner Kevin O'Brien, P.P., which has been the subject of discussion at 6 Planning Board meetings and a noticed public hearing:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Long Hill Township Planning Board hereby adopts the 12 May 2009 Meyersville Hamlet Element of the Master Plan, as referenced above; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning and Zoning Administrator/Secretary be directed to send a copy of the adopted report with this resolution to the Morris County Planning Board and to the clerks of each adjoining municipality.

I, Dawn V. Wolfe, Planning and Zoning Administrator/Secretary to the Planning Board of the Township of Long Hill in the County of Morris, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Planning Board at a regular meeting held on the 12th day of May, 2009.

Dawn V. Wolfe
Planning and Zoning Administrator/Secretary

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	4
II.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	5
III.	BACKGROUND STUDIES	5
IV.	PLAN GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
	A. INTRODUCTION	7
	B. PLAN GOALS	7
	C. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	8
V.	EPILOGUE	9
VI.	TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE AND BOARDS	10
VII.	MAPS	11
	A. CURRENT ZONING OF MEYERSVILLE	12
	B. PROPOSED ZONING OF MEYERSVILLE	13
	C. MEYERSVILLE CIRCLE	14
	D. AERIAL VIEW OF MEYERSVILLE	15
VIII.	BACKGROUND STUDIES	16
	A. ANJEC GRANT	17
	B. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	19
	C. COMMUNITY SURVEY	20
	D. CURRENT ZONING	26
	E. PROPERTY REVIEW	28
	F. TRAFFIC STUDY	29

I. INTRODUCTION

Meyersville is distinct from the other areas of Long Hill Township and is more a crossroads of a hamlet than an actual hamlet. The designated Meyersville Hamlet Zone consists of 8 properties that surround the Meyersville Circle and includes three eateries, a church, an antique shop and residences. Yet Meyersville encompasses an entire community that surrounds the core hamlet. The people of Meyersville have a long history of protecting their small corner of Long Hill Township as a quiet, peaceful, unrushed place removed from the bustling modern world.

The hamlet is centered on the Meyersville Circle where four roads intersect: Meyersville Road (Morris County Route 638); New Vernon Road (Morris County Route 604) Hickory Tavern Road; and Gillette Road. The 'circle' consists of an oval shaped island offset slightly to the east of the intersection of New Vernon and Meyersville Roads.

The people of Meyersville appreciate the peace and quiet of their hamlet and have expressed their interest in keeping it that way. New development and redevelopment in general are not seen as a positive unless it conforms to the current low density, semi-rural character of the hamlet.

Meyersville is the oldest section of the Township and was settled in the 1730's. People in Meyersville have attended the Presbyterian Church since 1895, gone to social events at the Grange for 100 years and played ball on the municipal field. Some pause to consider the monument to Lou Schwankert, former Civil Defense Director, in the Meyersville Circle. This dedication to community is a very strong characteristic of the community.

The location of Meyersville is of great importance to the people of Long Hill Township. Meyersville serves as one of the gateways to the community and also represents one of the entry points to the Great Swamp, a major recreational asset.

This **Meyersville Hamlet Element** of the Master Plan is based upon public comments at public hearings of the Planning Board, responses to a community survey, review of the 1993 Master Plan Element authored by Carl Lindbloom, P.P. and observation of the area. This document examines existing conditions in the hamlet and recommends goals on how the hamlet may be developed in the future.

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This **Meyersville Hamlet Element** was prepared with the assistance of a Smart Growth planning grant from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC). The Planning Board and Environmental Commission thank ANJEC for their support, guidance and encouragement throughout this effort.

III. BACKGROUND STUDIES

The following Background Studies were performed to gather information about Meyersville and are attached to the document as Appendices.

A. ANJEC Grant

Details of the ANJEC Grant from 2007 are listed in Appendix A.

B. Community Involvement in Master Planning

A list of Planning Board meetings on the Meyersville Element is provided showing public involvement in the Master Plan effort in Appendix B.

C. Community Survey

The Planning Board surveyed the Meyersville Community during March 2009. Surveys were distributed through the Township website and Township offices, and sent to Meyersville property owners.

The survey garnered 76 responses with 32 identified as Meyersville residents, 34 from Gillette, nine from Millington and one from Stirling. The survey was by no means a scientific one, and represents the opinions of those who chose to take the time to respond. A majority of the respondents had attended a Planning Board hearing (21) or learned of the survey from another person (22).

The general sentiment expressed was to keep Meyersville as it is and few people wished to see any change to the existing Meyersville streetscape in terms of lighting, street trees and sidewalks.

There were some mixed sentiments expressed, such as a majority supporting the current regulation allowing apartments above the first floor (38-27) while a majority also supported a prohibition of apartments above the first floor (38-26). A clear majority was also against townhomes (58 – 13). A copy of the tabulated survey is attached in Appendix C.

D. Current zoning

The current B-1-20 Neighborhood Business Zone regulations have been attached in Appendix D.

E. Property review

Characteristics of the existing Meyersville properties are shown in Addendix E.

F. Traffic Study

The Long Hill Township Police Department (Lieutenant Mazzeo and Officer Winstock) graciously assisted this study by supplying area traffic counts. Manual car counts were conducted on Wednesday, 18 March 2009 of the entire intersection. Peak hour traffic was calculated from the data and compared to the 1993 data. The data is included in Appendix F.

Very notable was the 41% drop in AM peak hour traffic, from 1,131 vehicles in 1993 to 671 vehicles in 2009. PM peak hour traffic also dropped, but only by 13% from 819 vehicles to 712. Among the reasons for the drop are: large scale construction on Routes I-287 and I-80 during 1993, the loss of ATT World Headquarters in Bernards Township as a major employer, and the current economic downturn.

G. 1994 Meyersville Development Plan

The Meyersville Element of the Master Plan served as the initial starting point for the community discussion about Meyersville. A number of points made in the Report are still valid today. A copy of this document is on file in the Township Clerk's office and the Planning and Zoning Administrator's office in Town Hall.

IV. PLAN GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

This section of the development plan presents the planning goals and recommendations for the future of Meyersville. The goals provide general guidance to the Township in addressing the hamlet while the recommendations provide specific details on how the goals can be implemented.

B. PLAN GOALS

This land use plan for the hamlet of Meyersville establishes the following planning goals:

1. To preserve and maintain the current low density, semi-rural character of the hamlet by limiting future commercial development to the present Hamlet Business Zone and by limiting the provision of new streetscape improvements in the area to those deemed necessary to the health, safety and welfare of local residents and businesses.
2. To establish a Meyersville Hamlet Zone (MH) that would set specific standards for the Meyersville Business District applicable to the unique properties and specific physical characteristics of Meyersville.
3. To create zone standards that preserves the current low density, semi-rural character of the hamlet.
4. To encourage existing businesses in the area to continue to improve their sites and to generally improve the visual appeal of the hamlet.
5. To cooperate with Morris County in improving the Meyersville Circle to make it as safe as possible through additional or modified signage and if necessary, redesign of the traffic circle.
6. To encourage the continued cooperation of merchants, property owners, residents and government in the future planning of Meyersville.
7. To allow live/work units for artists, artisans, professionals and Internet entrepreneurs.
8. To emphasize the Great Swamp National Wildlife refuge as a destination through appropriate signage and Meyersville as its southern gateway.

9. To insist on environmental best practices throughout the hamlet for both new development and redevelopment and encourage the use of LEED and other green building technology

10. To recognize and promote the safety of the large number of recreational bicyclists in the region through traffic plans and signage.

C. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This Plan offers the following specific recommendations as a means of achieving the aforementioned planning goals:

1. When sidewalk improvements are necessary for safety reasons, use alternative sidewalk materials whenever possible to minimize the visual impact of the sidewalks on the rural character of the area. Encourage pedestrian walkways where prudent to connect public areas. Safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists is a critical concern in this area.

2. Replace the "cobra" light fixture near the center of Meyersville with fixtures that will reinforce the low density and semi rural character of the hamlet. Additional streetlights at other locations are not recommended unless required for public safety. Lighting standards should be consistent with Township standards for energy efficiency.

3. Maintain existing street tree plantings and replace when necessary throughout the hamlet. Provide new tree plantings where appropriate in a manner consistent with the character of the hamlet.

4. Install new traffic safety signs at the Meyersville Circle which are consistent with locally established traffic patterns should be installed after consultation with Morris County. Generally, the signs should provide greater clarity and direction for vehicular movements. New stop signs may also be appropriate.

5. Meyersville area roadways should not be widened and should maintain a consistent width and speed limit in the area, subject to safety considerations.

6. Create new zoning standards for the Meyersville Hamlet zone to encourage uses that will preserve the low density and semi-rural character of Meyersville as well as serve the area community.

7. Establish minimum and maximum front yard setback standards that consider the current physical development of the hamlet.

8. Require that all new development or renovations in the hamlet provide an architectural design that is compatible with the low density and semi-rural character of the area.
9. Review the list of permitted uses and adjust them as necessary to insure business establishments are in scale with the hamlet.
10. Continue to allow residential uses on the second floor of commercial buildings.

V. EPILOGUE

The Planning Board extends its gratitude to their colleagues on the Environmental Commission chaired by Dr. Leonard Hamilton for securing the ANJEC grant which allowed the Township to embark on the rewriting of the **Meyersville Hamlet Element**.

The Board also wishes to express its gratitude to Mayor George Vitureira who started the process of reexamining Meyersville by inviting Rutgers University to study our community and make invaluable suggestions.

We also express our thanks to Lieutenant Michael Mazzeo and Officer Lisa Winstock of the Long Hill Police Department and Joan Donat and Donna Ruggiero of the Long Hill Tax Office for their invaluable assistance in providing data.

This **Meyersville Hamlet Element** is the product of innumerable hours of time contributed by many, many members of the Long Hill Community. We thank each and every one of them for their guidance and wisdom. Without them, this document would not have been possible.

VI. TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEMBERS

The Planning Board thanks the many concerned citizens who gave their time, dedication and knowledge to the preparation of the **Meyersville Hamlet Element** of the Master Plan. We also give our thanks to the selfless volunteers and staff who make up the following bodies:

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

George Vitureira, Mayor
Mead Briggs III, Deputy Mayor
Jerry Aroneo
Nanette Harrington
Michael Mazzucco

PLANNING BOARD

Richard Albers, Chair
Chris Connor, Vice Chair
Mead Briggs, III, Committeeperson
AJ Batista, Esq.
Thomas Behr, Ph.D.
Donald Butterworth
Lisa DeMizio, Esq.
Thomas DeGenaro
Kevin Dempsey
Leonard Hamilton, Ph.D.
George Vitureira, Mayor

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Thomas Behr, Ph.D., Chair
Sandi Raimer, Esq., Vice Chair
John Fagnoli
Edwin F. Gerecht, Jr., Esq.
Maureen Malloy
Joseph Pagano, P.E.
Guy Piserchia
Felix Ruiz
Michael Smargiassi

STAFF

Richard Sheola, Township Administrator
John R. Pidgeon, Esq., Township Attorney
Dawn Wolfe, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Kevin O'Brien, P.P., Township Planner
Barry Hoffman, Esq., Board Attorney