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The Master Plan provides a comprehensive guide for the future development and preservation of areas of Millstone Borough in order to enhance the overall quality of life for its residents. The key element in defining the difference between a Master Plan and other planning studies is the Master Plan's comprehensive approach to planning issues. It considers many factors having an impact on community life, with the focus on its physical, social, economic and aesthetic needs. Current pressures on this community emphasize the urgent need to devise a plan for the future which will ensure the preservation of the Borough's very valuable Revolutionary War history and create design standards for new development which will further reflect and safeguard the fundamental character of the original village. The Master Plan must consider all aspects of the community, and policy proposals should recognize the importance of taking into account the needs of all residents.

The Legal Requirement for Planning

The New Jersey Land Use Law (c.291, NJ. 1975) establishes the legal criteria for a Master Plan and each community must be certain that its plans comply with the legal requirements of the law. The following is a summary of these requirements:

Preparation and Adoption

Master plan policies and recommendations are based on a community's characteristics and goals at a certain point in time. As time goes by, conditions change, laws are amended, and the characteristics of the community changes. Master plans must be revised to reflect these changes.

The responsibility for the preparation of a Master Plan rests with the local Planning Board. A plan may be adopted (or amended) only by the Planning Board and only after a public hearing, and must be reviewed at least once every six years.

Content

The Master Plan must include a statement of objectives upon which the plan is based. It must include a land use plan indicating: natural conditions, extent and intensity of land to be used for varying types of future development, the location of existing or proposed airports and airport hazard areas and a statement of recommended population density and development intensity. A specific policy statement indicating the relationship of plan proposals to the plans of neighboring communities, the County, and other appropriate jurisdictions must also be included.

Enforcement and Implementation

The Master Plan, after adoption by the Planning Board, gives the community the legal basis for control over future development. The major means of implementation are as follows:

All of the provisions of a zoning ordinance, or any amendment or revision thereto, shall either be substantially consistent with the Land Use Element of the Master Plan or designed to effectuate such plan element (N.J.S.A. 40: 550-62).

The location and design of new streets created through the process of land subdivision or site plan

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approval may be required to conform to the provisions of the circulation plan element of the Master Plan (N.J.S.A. 40: 55D-38b (2)).

Where the Master Plan provides for the reservation of designated streets, public drainage ways, flood control basins, or public areas, the Planning Board may require that such facilities be shown and reserved in subdivisions and site plans in locations and sizes suitable for their intended use. The reservation powers are effective for a period of one year after approval of a final plan. The municipality must compensate the owner for such action (N.J.S.A. 40:550-44).

Whenever the governing body or other public agency proposes to spend public funds, incidental to the location, character or extent of a capital project, such proposal must be referred to the Planning Board for review and recommendation. No action shall be taken without such recommendation or until 45 days have elapsed (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-31).

Master Plan Development

The last comprehensive revision to the Millstone Master Plan was adopted in 1997. A subsequent reexamination report was developed in December 16, 2003. The current Master Plan update has been developed in two sections. The Assessment describes current regional changes and relationships with local, County and State planning efforts, and also describes the existing status of the various elements of the Plan. The 1997 Plan made recommendations, which took into consideration the then current needs of the community for each of the Plan elements, and contained suggestions for implementation. Since the adoption of the last Master Plan, the community has undergone an extensive planning process to plan for the eventual build out of the community. This new Master Plan is a culmination of these many years of extensive planning and negotiation with landowners, adjacent municipalities, county and state governmental agencies, and local non-profit agencies. During this extensive process, questionnaires were sent to residents and there were extensive public hearings to review alternative proposals. What results is a culmination of a very comprehensive process that has redefined what Millstone is and what Millstone can accomplish for the betterment of all the residents, landowners and businesses within the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Millstone Borough is situated along the Millstone River in the heart of Somerset County between Princeton and Somerville. Recently designated as a scenic corridor, the Millstone River valley is one of the last remaining nineteenth century landscapes within the state of New Jersey. Because of its location, it was once the county seat of Somerset County and the site of one of the few river crossings between New York and Philadelphia. Consequently, it played an important part during the Revolutionary War and has since been recognized as one of three communities within New Jersey where anyone who was anyone during the Revolutionary war was at one time during the war.

Millstone is a small community consisting of only three hundred and sixty acres. It is as small as many housing developments that are built in many communities today. Surprisingly, it also remains over sixty percent vacant. But, as the region has changed due to development pressures, so has Millstone Borough. Recently the community has been challenged as to how it will be built out. Part of this pressure is due to pressure from the Council on Affordable Housing, a State agency responsible for setting minimum standards for developing low and moderate housing in all of the communities within the State of New Jersey. Another pressure has been from two major local landowners who wish to develop the majority of remaining developable land within the Borough.

These conflicting interests (COAH and two developers) and several plans have been discussed and reviewed over the past three years. Many plans were discussed and rejected; some included a total of 360 dwelling units and over 400,000 square feet of commercial and office space. After much review and discussion, the Planning Board has adopted this new Master Plan fitting Millstone's Historic Village character. This Plan addresses a number of conflicting goals:

- Meeting the Borough's affordable housing obligation,
- Designing a buildout strategy that would create a ratable base to make the Borough sustainable,
- Limiting development to a scale that would be compatible with the existing community;
- Preserving the historic lands that tell the story of the Revolutionary War;
- Setting up partnerships that would provide public sewers for all of the residents within the Borough; and
- Establishing new environmental controls for flood plain and storm water management.

The plan that follows attempts to meet all of these goals. When finally implemented, it is the intent that Millstone will be built out and meet all of its COAH obligations past, present and future. Millstone will not only have a stable tax base that will last for generations. It is the intent of this plan that the developed and developable areas of the Borough will eventually be sewered. The result will be a slightly expanded commercial village that will fit within the existing historic district, a total increase of one hundred and fifty two homes that will be nestled into areas that will

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have the least impact upon the character of the Borough, a heritage park that will celebrate the historic significance of Millstone, and open space that will surround the Borough to the north and east. New environmental standards will help to protect the Borough residents from flooding due to the new storm water management and flood mitigation standards. This Master Plan was developed after many public meetings, surveys, and delicate negotiations. It is the culmination of the combined efforts of dedicated community members, land owners, professionals, Hillsborough Township, and supportive State and County agencies.