

The Lincroft JOURNAL

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RESIDENTS OF LINCROFT ADDRESS LOCAL ISSUES

By Eloise Sitrin

At a recent public forum held by the Middletown Township Planning Board, the residents of Lincroft expressed their concerns about issues relevant to quality of life in their neighborhood and the township in general.

The public hearing held at Brookdale Community College on July 17, 2002 was the third in a series of forums intended to solicit "public comment and opinion on land use and other quality of life issues that affect the future of the township..." The two previous hearings, held at Leonardo and Port Monmouth, were attended in much smaller numbers than the Lincroft meeting, where nearly one hundred people gathered to hear and be heard.

Planning Board Member Judith Stanley stated that the Master Plan acts as a guide for development in the township. It "sets the tone for land use regulations." New Jersey law requires that the Master Plan be



(left to rt.) Members of the Lincroft Village Green Association at the meeting:
(back row) Jill Henry, Linda Lintz, Angelo Grigoli, Susan Dzugan (front row)
Marsha Grigoli, Winnie Scuteri, Mary Ellen Hintz

reexamined, but not necessarily changed, every six years. These meetings were part of the process of updating the Master Plan. Township Planner Anthony Mercantante further explained, "The Master Plan is the basis of zoning and sets forth policy direction."

Comments from the audience began with that of the need for teenagers to have a "safe and wholesome" place to go in addition to the parking lot at the Acme! Reducing the speed limit from 40 mph to 25 mph on Swimming River Road was discussed, as well as concern that it not "become a highway from a country road."

Lincroft Village Green Association member Mary Ellen

Hintz brought up the subject of widening Route 520 in front of Lincroft Elementary School. The lack of safe bicycle paths was men-

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tioned as well as concern that Lincroft Acres and the Stevenson tract are kept as undeveloped parkland.

It was commented that the police department should be involved in planning and in attending meetings because speed limits and traffic patterns are important issues in Middletown Township. The Planning Board members responded that the police department is involved in the planning process. Tree trimming around utility wires, burying wires underground and adding sidewalks were also discussed.

Planning Board Member William Warters encouraged the voters to allot a slightly larger percentage of the budget to open space. He said, a way to save the land from further development and thereby impact the volume of traffic, is to give the township the means to purchase more property through the open space tax, leaving less land available for purchase for commercial or residential purposes.

Other issues concerned the question of why new construction is begun while vacant buildings exist, and the over-development and improvement of Route 35. Deer carcasses along the roads are an indication of the need for more open space for the wildlife population.

Rumble strips to slow vehicle traffic in the township, the suggested addition of Garden State Parkway exits numbered 107 and 105A to redirect traffic away from Lincroft, reduction of speed limits, more pedestrian walkways and maintaining the "village feeling" were concerns voiced by some of the attendees. Other participants spoke of the need for better leaf clearing and closer adherence by businesses to recycling requirements.

The overall concern was for "enhanced quality of life for residents."

Community planning consultants firm, Heyer, Gruel & Associates, actively participated in the meeting, leading group discussion, recording and summarizing.

Those who attended were informed that "the hope is to have the Master Plan adopted by the end of the year." Future meetings will be scheduled in order to update the public on planning progress.

Additional comments may be sent to: *Township Planning Department at 1 Kings Highway, Middletown, NJ 07748.* The Master Plan may be perused at that office and at the township main library.

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