

Morris Township Planning Board

THE HONEYWELL PROPOSAL AND THE APPROVAL PROCESS

We have been asked to answer a hypothetical question, in order to explain a process. The hypothetical question is: “What approvals would Honeywell need in order to move forward with its proposed development?” The answer describes the process that Honeywell would have to go through in order to begin construction of any new development (whether office, hotel, or residential). The answer is outlined below.

Amending the Master Plan

- An amendment to the Master Plan would be needed for Honeywell’s proposed development.
- Amending the Master Plan requires public notice (published in the newspaper, and given to all adjoining municipalities) and a public hearing, at which interested members of the public have the right to appear and be heard.

Amending the Ordinance

- If the Master Plan were amended, the next required step would be an amendment to Morris Township’s Zoning and Land Use Ordinances.
- The draft Ordinance amendments may be prepared by the Planning Board or, alternatively, the Township Committee.
- The Township Committee must introduce the Ordinance at a public meeting.
- When the Ordinance is introduced, a date will be fixed for a public hearing to consider the Ordinance on the merits. Notice of the public hearing must be provided, in a case like this, (a) in the newspaper, and (b) by certified and regular mail to the owners of all property within the proposed new zone district, and within 200 feet of the boundaries of the proposed new district.
- At the public hearing on the Ordinance, interested members of the public have the right to appear and be heard.
- If the Ordinance is adopted, notice of its adoption must be published in the newspaper.


General Development Plan Hearings

- If an Ordinance were adopted approving the zoning changes Honeywell seeks, it would also include a provision requiring the developer of the property to obtain general development plan (“GDP”) approval prior to the issuance of any site plan or subdivision approval.
- A General Development Plan, in terms of its specificity, is somewhere between a master plan and a site plan. It must identify all proposed uses, and show general locations for those uses. It must provide general plans for utilities, stormwater management, and other improvements. Other requirements for a GDP are spelled out in the Municipal Land Use Law.
- Public hearings would be required on a GDP with notice provided in the manner in which notice is provided for a preliminary site plan or subdivision. Property owners within 200 feet of the subject property would be notified by certified mail.
- Interested members of the public would have a right to appear and be heard at the public hearing.
- Notice of the Board’s decision on a GDP must be published in the newspaper.

Site Plan and Subdivision Applications

- Even if GDP approval were obtained, a developer could not begin to construct a building or any other improvement unless and until he (the developer) obtains preliminary and final site plan approval. If the developer wished to divide his land, he would also be required to obtain preliminary and final major subdivision approval.
- Both site plan approval and preliminary major subdivision approval require a public hearing at which interested members of the public have the right to appear and be heard.
- After all conditions to the resolution were satisfied, and all necessary approvals from other governmental agencies were obtained, development would be allowed to begin.

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