



THE END OF ELWOOD'S RURAL CHARACTER?



Small shops along the White Horse Pike in Mullica

Recently the Mayor of Mullica announced that the governing body might change the existing Elwood Village Center zoning at the request of a property owner along the White Horse Pike (Route 30) in Mullica Township, Atlantic County. This was the property made famous as the proposed site for a waste transfer station - a proposal blocked by the Pinelands Commission last year. The new zoning would allow for age-restricted homes at 6 dwelling units per acre. PPA believes that age-restricted dwelling units at a density of 6 units per acre is not compatible with the existing character of Elwood Village.

The village of Elwood is located between Wharton State Forest and Makepeace Lake Wildlife Management Area. Most of its land area consists of a greenbelt of forest and wetlands that make up the headwater tributaries of the Mullica and Great Egg Harbor rivers. The overall community pattern is primarily rural, with a small mixed-use node located at the crossroads of the White Horse Pike

and Elwood Road. This node consists of a handful of single story cottages, retail shops and basic service establishments that are clustered along the road frontage, with minimal setbacks, signage, or streetscaping. The balance of the township, radiating outward from this node, consists of late succession mixed pine/oak woodlands and forested wetlands, interspersed with agricultural land, with occasional cottages, farmhouses, barns and outbuildings dotting the bucolic landscape.

In 1987 a Mullica resident wrote: "Mullica Township, in the scheme of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, is of major importance since it is the only vital corridor that makes the whole plan function because it connects the North and South Forest areas." If you liken the Pinelands area to an hourglass, Mullica is the narrow portion that connects the top and bottom of the glass. Elwood Village sits in the center of the narrow por-



Mullica connects the northern and southern forest area

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tion, making the overall development plan for this area even more important.

This forest corridor allows for wildlife to travel from the northern forest of the Pinelands to the southern portion. The Comprehensive Management Plan in 1981 explained that the Elwood Corridor provides continuity for dispersal and genetic exchange among populations of plant or animal species, ensuring both the recolonization of populations and the maintenance of genetic variability. The Pinelands Commission added the Elwood Corridor to the Special Areas Map shown below.

The proposed zoning changes, would be in this forest corridor area.



The zoning changes being proposed are to accommodate the owner of the old Perona junkyard property. Recently this site was proposed for the waste transfer station. The property is a 20-acre parcel located in the Elwood Village "Center" portion of the village on Route 30. The landowner is proposing a mix of age restricted single-family homes, townhouses and a professional building. Both the housing and the professional building would be served by an on-site waste water treatment system.

The proposal does not include any offsetting preservation or down-zoning of other developable land in the Village, so it would bring a large net increase in the amount of development in the village area.

The current zoning allows for one single family detached dwelling unit on 2 acres of land and duplexes as

a permitted use on lots of 4 acres in size. Other permitted uses include agricultural, forestry, educational uses, places of worship, parks, playgrounds and playfields or recreational uses of land. The current Elwood Village Center also allows for light industrial uses, professional offices and medical complexes, nursing homes and adult day care facilities. The zoning also allows for senior citizen housing. All these permitted uses need to comply with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan standard which states "the character and magnitude of the use must be compatible with existing structures and uses."

Some Mullica Township residents may want a change for Elwood Village, but allowing the overdevelopment of land along the gateway of the township (Route 30) may not be in the best interest of the community. The Master Plan reexamination process allows for public input and residents should get involved.

Mayor Kathy Chasey has indicated that there will be a presentation about the zoning changes, **which will apply**

If we want to keep Mullica rural and sparsely populated so that we can better preserve our water supply, our environment and our way of life, we again have to organize and speak with one voice. The next regular meeting of the Concerned Citizens of Mullica is on September 15th at 9:30 in the morning at 800 Elwood Road in Elwood. All are welcome.

***Mary Hunt, Chair
Concerned Citizens of Mullica***



Intersection of Elwood Road

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to the 350 acre Elwood Village Center, before the Mullica Township Planning Board on **September 5, 2007, at 7:30 pm at 4528 White Horse Pike, Elwood.**

The changing of the Master Plan by way of a reexamination process also allows for two public hearings, which will be scheduled in the months ahead. After these hearings a new zoning ordinance needs to be introduced by the Governing Body and the second reading will also require a public hearing.

If passed by the Mullica Township Committee it goes to the Pinelands Commission. The staff will prepare a report to either certify, certify with conditions or disapprove the ordinance and master plan submitted. The review by the Pinelands Commission will center on the requirements within the Comprehensive Management Plan. As part of their process they will also hold a public hearing to take input from Mullica's residents. Watch for announcements of these meetings. Please attend!

What can you do?

- **Attend Concerned Citizens of Mullica meetings.** The next meeting is September 15, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at 800 Elwood Road.
- **Attend Township meetings on this issue.** PPA will post the meetings on our website (www.pinelandsalliance.org) and Mullica Township posts agendas before meetings (www.mullicatownship.org).
- **Tell the Mayor and Pinelands Commission what you think of the proposed zoning changes.**

Mayor Kathy Chasey
P.O. Box 317
Elwood, NJ 08217

Pinelands Commission
P.O. Box 6
New Lisbon, NJ 08064



Mullica Township Planning Board Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, September 5, 2007
Wednesday, October 3, 2007
Wednesday, November 7, 2007

These meetings are held at the
Mullica Township Town Hall,
4528 White Horse Pike, Elwood
at 7:30 p.m.



Mullica Township Committee Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, August 28, 2007
Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Tuesday, September 25, 2007
Tuesday, October 9, 2007
Tuesday, October 23, 2007

These meetings are held at the
Mullica Township Town Hall,
4528 White Horse Pike, Elwood
at 6:30 p.m.

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