

Preserve Liberty Corner

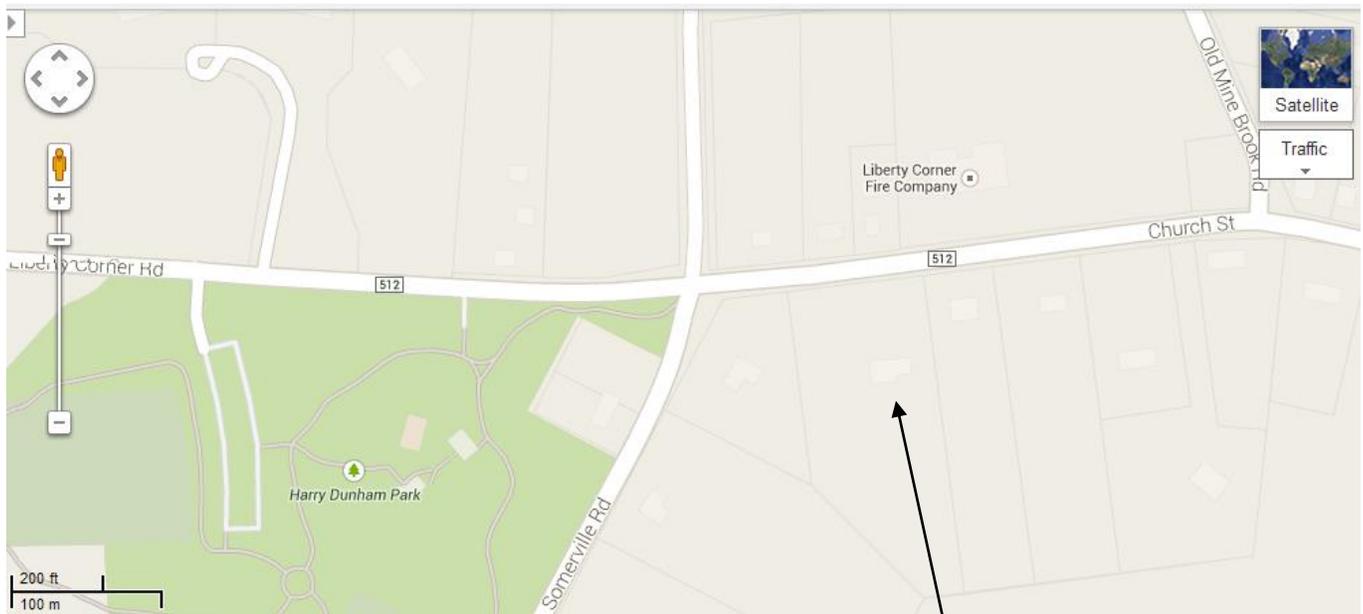
“Hills Fun Group” Meeting Minutes

Date: 9/7/2014, 7:30pm

Participants: John Zhang, Wei Zhou, Jane Zhang, Jennifer Cai, James Xie, Frank Zhao, Alice Smyk from BTCRD.org (Bernards Township Citizens for Responsible Development <https://btrcd.org/Home.html>). Alice is a trustee of the organization.

Meeting Minutes:

1. Preserve Liberty Corner project started two years ago in 2012. The Islamic Society of Basking Ridge’s (ISBR) proposed to convert a current residential property to effectively commercial use by building a nearly 4,500 square feet Mosque complete with a 107 space parking lot on Church Street (124 Church Street) in Liberty Corner.

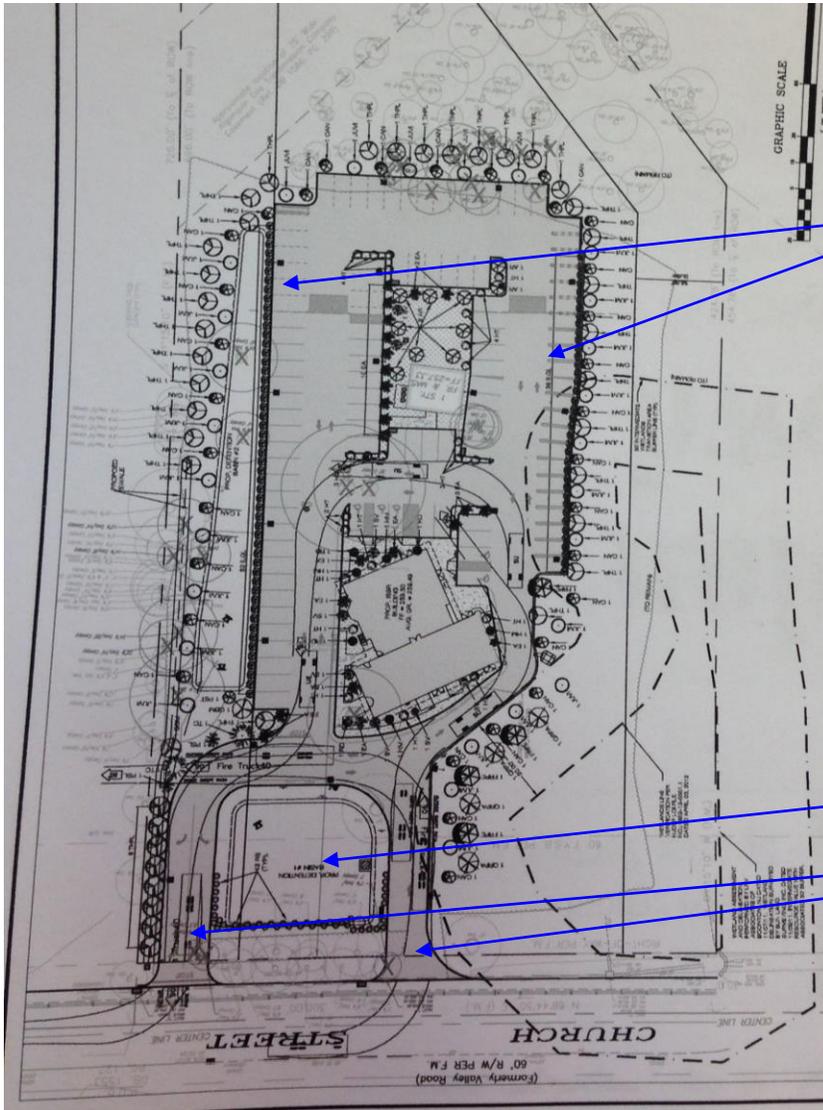


ISBR purchased lot, over 4 acres on a very wet land

2. This piece of property is among the residential buildings at Liberty Corner. Opposite of it is the Liberty Corner Fire Department. The property has a gas pipe line going through it and is a very wet land. It is only 2 feet above the underground water level. Based on the regulation prior to October 2013, any

residential land of over 3 acres is permitted for worship. However, in October 2013, the new law made significant changes and require 6 acres of land for conditional use. If it is built, the Mosque will open 7 days a week. The service happens 5 times a day before the sun rise and after the sun set.

3. Liberty Corner is a historical district. The roads are not allowed to be widened in any situation to preserve the historical district.
4. The ISBR land is proposed to be used for 10 years for worship purpose. It is also required for 30% of the property for parking lot, which translate into 107 parking lots on the 4-acre land. No one knows what will happen after 10 years.
5. The attached map shows the most updated landscaping plan from ISBR. Due to the wetland, it is required to have a retention basin. It is currently designed at the front of the property as well as on one side of the parking lot. On both sides of the front retention basin, there are two two-lane driveways on each side, one for entrance, and another for exit. The driveway is now in the buffer zone, which would require a variance and require additional approval by township). ISBR engineer is revising the design. They will submit a revised design on September 19. Then the attorney, engineer and traffic experts hired by BTCRD will quickly respond. The hearing of the revised plan will be held on September 30 at 7:30pm at town hall on Collyer Lane.

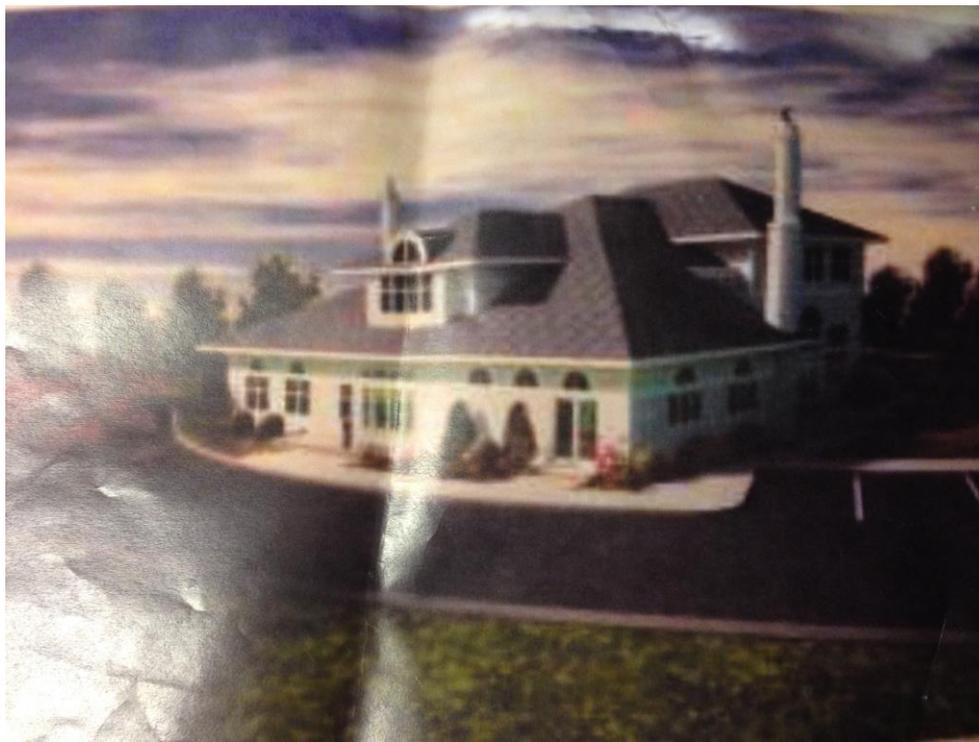


Parking Lots (107 spots)

Retention Basin

2-lane driveway

6. Picture of the future 4,500-square foot Islamic Mosque



7. Piscataway Islamic traffic engineering study: BTCRD studied the traffic pattern at the Muslim Center of Middlesex County before and found out that the parking space needed for ISBR is much more than what they planned. Without increase of parking space, cars may park on Church Street, Harry Durham Park, or even near fire station. So the current plan reflected the latest of 107 parking lots.
8. The Bernards township website clearly stated that the land use policies should strive to maintain the character of the community, protect the integrity of existing neighborhoods and prevent intrusion of incompatible new development. Please go to Bernards township website for more details:

The table of contents has hot links to the detailed pages. Chapters II and V are most relevant.

http://www.bernards.org/planning%20board/Document/MasterPlan/Cover_TOC_Tables_Figures.pdf

Also here is a link to where you can find our township ordinances (Chapter 21 is most relevant):

http://www.bernards.org/town_hall/ordinances.aspx

The key differences are that the Master Plan is a guideline whereas the ordinances are the actual rules/laws that are used for all governing aspects of the town.

9. The township Planning Board has 7 members. ISBR brought their planner and attorney. To make sure that issues are well represented, three of the residents formed BTCRD.org and hired their own lawyer, site engineering and land use experts. ISBR's attorney is Robert Raymar, who does not specialize in land use law and is from Hellring Lindeman Goldstein & Siegal in Newark. BTCRD's attorney is Mr. Robert Simon, who specializes land use law and is from a local law firm, Herold Law. They have been working closely with Robert Simon to raise issues regards ISBR's site plan. Donations are welcome to cover the cost of the shortfalls.
10. What we should do: **We need to participate in the next few rounds of our township's public hearing** on the ISBR's proposal. The next one will be on September 30, 2014 at 7:30 PM. Please also save the date on October 4, October 30 for the public hearing. It is very important to show a variety of the residents to the planning board. And it is also very crucial to show the number of people who has concerns, therefore to state that the majority of the community residents don't approve the application. Participants at the public hearing will be given a chance to speak. You should prepare to speak up any of your concerns at the public hearing. Usually it is at the end of the meeting: If you are told not to repeat the same concerns, don't worry, just repeat in your own words.
 - a. The build of this Mosque is controversial to our Bernards township master plan. Pls see the website link above.

- b. Traffic pattern, lack of capacity on the roads: Church street and Somerville Road.
- c. Potential street parking, or parking in the Harry Dunham Park
- d. Impact of our living environment and to our community
- e. Safety for children walking in the street
- f. Bikers
- g. Public safety
- h. Very close to the fire station
- i. Garbage/littering,
- j. Natural environment,
- k. Maintaining the character and protecting the unique quality and character of the villages of Liberty Corner.
- l. Preservation of the Township's historic sites and districts. Or any other environmental related issues you could think about.
- m. Over use of this piece of property
- n. It won't serve the community at large
- o. and many more...
- p. A representative Islamic service schedule will look like this:

08 September 2014		
Salah Timings**		
Salah	Iqamah	Start Time
Fajr	5:45 AM	5:14 AM*
Zuhr	1:15 PM	12:58 PM
Asr	5:45 PM	5:27 PM
Maghrib	7:21 PM	7:21 PM
Isha	8:45 PM	8:36 PM
Jum'ah	1st: 01:15 PM 2nd: 02:10 PM	
*Sunrise at 6:32 AM		

Please Remember Do Not Make Any Comments on the Religion or Islamic Mosque Itself!! If we do so, we will loose the battle.

- 11. We will collect people's names that are confirmed to go to the hearing on September 30, October 4 and October 30 to ensure a good representation from our community.
- 12. Other suggestions: Please subscribe our township newspaper *Bernardsville* newspaper to get updated information on the most recent township news and issues.
- 13. Visit the site <https://btrcd.org/OtherLinks.html>, click a tab called "Other Links" to review the details and progress of this issue.