

## Oceanport Reimbursed for Fort Vision Plan

Oceanport, Eatontown, Tinton Falls get funds for planning

Excerpts taking from article written by Kimberly Steinberg for the [ATLANTICVILLE.GMNEWS.COM](http://ATLANTICVILLE.GMNEWS.COM), January 7, 2010

*In 2006, Clarke Caton Hintz assisted Oceanport in the preparation of a Vision Plan for the redevelopment of the portion of Fort Monmouth within the Borough, in response to the imminent closing of the base initiated by the U.S. Department of Defense. The Vision Plan has been used to advocate Oceanport's interests as plans to reuse the base have been developed.*



Oceanport Avenue Main Street Square

Oceanport taxpayers received a check for \$195,723.19 as a reimbursement for extraordinary planning expenses associated with the reuse of Fort Monmouth that were already paid by the borough.

Councilman Joseph A. Irace explained that the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) within the Department of Defense (DOD) approved the reimbursement after a yearlong process of documentation and justification undertaken by the borough in conjunction with the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization and Planning Authority (FMERPA).

Rick Harrison, deputy director of FMERPA, said during an interview on Dec. 29 that Fort Monmouth's other two host communities — Eatontown and Tinton Falls — also received funds for their planning services and consultants.

"They submitted requests and got what they asked for. I know they must be very happy, especially in this tough economic time," Harrison said.

In 2008, Oceanport Mayor Michael J. Mahon discovered that planning expenses as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) base closure were eligible for reimbursement.

"...Oceanport had hired a planner back in 2006 and paid for it with local tax dollars. Undaunted, the borough initiated the (*reimbursement*) process through FMERPA and OEA project manager John Leigh," said Irace.

Borough Administrator Kim Jungfer and **Planner Michael Sullivan, of Clarke Caton Hintz**, assembled the supporting documentation and met with FMERPA and federal officials, intent on explaining the expenses.

Mahon said a reuse plan was developed through heavy involvement by residents, the Planning Board, a specially appointed committee, and elected officials.

“This vision plan became the borough’s contribution to the FMERPA plan developed by EDAW [planning firm] and submitted to the DOD and Housing and Urban Development [HUD] last year,” stated Mahon.

He said the plan is to return the money to the taxpayers in the 2010 budget.



Public Open Space

“Ideally, the funds will be used to offset an increase or to avoid one altogether. One possibility is to repay the pension deferral taken in the 2009 budget under the Corzine plan. The Finance Committee has been tasked with applying the reimbursement to the greater taxpayer benefit,” said Mahon on Dec. 29.

Mahon explained that the borough hired a planner to develop their vision for Fort Monmouth and a reuse that benefited the community to the extent possible.

“This step was prudent, given the unprecedented closure of a military base and the impact over the next 20 to 30 years. The potential for reimbursement of this expense was unknown at the time and only came to light in 2008,” Mahon said.

Trace added that the borough is actively pursuing reimbursement for other expenses associated with the fort’s closure, including infrastructure, property acquisition and development, and public safety — in particular, police.

“Again, with the support of our planner, the borough has submitted a project needs assessment [PNA] to the OEA, the DOD agency charged with managing

the economic adjustment of BRAC-impacted communities,” said Mahon.

The PNA submitted by Oceanport included costs associated with meeting infrastructure needs, affordable housing, public safety needs, school construction funding, and recreational facility improvements.

“These needs are solely in response to the BRAC closure and would not have been necessary if the fort remained open,” said Mahon.

When it shuts its gates in 2011, Fort Monmouth’s approximately 1,129 acres of land will be returned to its three host communities, with Eatontown receiving 450 acres, Oceanport receiving 419 acres, and Tinton Falls receiving the remaining 250 acres.



Mixed-use Village Plan