

**BOROUGH OF RARITAN**  
Land Use Board Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
March 24, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The Board Secretary read the open public meetings statement into the record.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL**

**Present**

Debra Thomas  
Mayor Bray  
Councilman Carra  
Mr. Cunningham  
Ms. Carra  
Mr. Delacruz  
Mr. DeCicco  
Ms. Goetsch  
Ms. Sherwin  
Mr. Brown  
Ms. Windrem

**Also Present**

Rich Wenner, Board Attorney  
Stan Schrek, Board Engineer (arrived 6:41)  
Angela Knowles, Board Planner

**Absent**

Mr. Krajewski  
Mr. Singara

**MINUTES**

**December 23, 2020 Executive Session Minutes**

**Motion** by Ms. Goetsch, **seconded** by Mr. Delacruz to accept the Minutes, as presented.

***Roll Call:***

***Aye:***                    ***Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Mr. Delacruz, Ms. Goetsch, Ms. Sherwin***

***Nay:***

***Abstain:***

**January 27, 2021 Regular Meeting**

**Motion** by Ms. Goetsch, **seconded** by Councilman Carra and unanimously carried to accept the Minutes with one editorial revision, as noted.

***Roll Call:***

***Aye:***                    ***Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Councilman Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Mr. Delacruz, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem***

***Nay:***

***Abstain:***

## **ENGINEERING REPORT**

Mr. Schrek spoke in detail about the **TAP Grant** from 2016 aimed at improving connectivity between the railroad station and the Nevius Street Bridge. He advised that a presentation would be made to the Council next month and asked for the support of the Board ahead of that. He provided an update on **Block 81** (status of pedestrian access in particular) and advised that the project is getting close to completion. He further advised that there had only been minor activity on other sites. Ms. Thomas thanked Mr. Schrek, Mayor Bray and Councilman Carra for the striping on Mill Street and acknowledged the DPW on a job well done.

## **PLANNER'S REPORT**

Ms. Knowles provided an update on a TAP Grant that the Borough was awarded for Somerset Street. She advised that recently enacted legislation would require a Master Plan amendment for inclusion of a "Hazard Vulnerability Assessment," and provided detailed information about same. Ms. Knowles recommended that the Green Team take on the project. She spoke about funding available for same through ANJEC and Sustainable Jersey.

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Mr. Delacruz and unanimously carried to authorize the Planner to prepare a plan regarding budget and scope of the project.

### **Roll Call:**

**Aye:** *Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Councilman Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Mr. DeCicco, Mr. Delacruz, Ms. Goetsch, Ms. Sherwin, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem*

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

Mr. Schrek announced that Ms. Knowles was named an Associate by Van Cleef Engineering. The Board congratulated her.

## **TRC MEETING UPDATE**

Chairwoman Thomas advised that there were no TRC meetings scheduled and that there had been none held.

## **AD HOC COMMITTEE (Cannabis Dispensaries)**

Mr. Cunningham advised that Council has not acted on recommendations made by the Planning Board approximately 18 months ago. He provided a history of events and Mayor Bray provided an overview of where things stood with respect to Middle Valley Partner's application for a medical marijuana facility. Mr. Cunningham clarified that the zoning they looked at was for medical marijuana only and that they concluded that some areas of the Borough would be appropriate for the use. He offered that it would be a good idea to revisit the Subcommittee.

## **PEDESTRIAN BIKE & SAFETY**

Ms. Knowles advised that the committee had not met recently but that the plan was being implemented with the County and DOT.

## **HEARINGS**

**Pushpa Rawtani**

**Block 2, Lot 15 (600 Route 28)**

***Amended Subdivision***

**Ankit Rawtani** (son of the applicant) was sworn in.

Completeness was discussed. Mr. Schrek recommended granting of the temporary and required waivers in accordance with his February 19, 2021 correspondence.

**AS TO COMPLETENESS:**

**Motion** by Ms. Sherwin, **seconded** by Ms. Goetsch and unanimously carried to deem the application complete and grant the waivers, as discussed in accordance with Mr. Schrek's review memo.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** *Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Councilman Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Mr. Delacruz, Mr. DeCicco, Ms. Goetsch, Ms. Sherwin, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem*

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

Mr. Rawtani provided a history of the application, referring to a recently granted two [2] lot subdivision. Referencing page 2 of a Minor Subdivision Plan dated January 18, 2021 (as displayed), he explained that the instant matter was a request to further divide the property into 3 lots. Referencing page 3, Mr. Rawtani provided testimony on lot size/other revisions to the original proposal. He offered that an interpretation with respect to Lot C was being sought.

The Chairwoman solicited comments from the Board at 7:13. In response to a question from Mr. Cunningham about having multiple driveways on Route 28, Mr. Schrek advised that other than the addition of a sight triangle on the plan, he would take no exception since a DOT permit was necessary.

Mr. Schrek advised that he and Larry Cohen discussed the need for a side yard variance and concluded that a variance was not necessary since Lot C is conforming.

Mr. Rawtani testified that the plans have been revised to show the sight triangle and that the DOT approved the applications subject to assignment of lot numbers and a condition that the homes be built as single family residences. Mr. Rawtani testified that enabling correspondence from the DOT was forwarded to Mr. Gara.

The Chairwoman opened the floor to comments/questions at 7:16. There were none.

**Motion** by Mr. Delacruz, **seconded** by Mayor Bray and unanimously carried to approve the application for a three [3] lot subdivision subject to conditions, as enumerated by the Board Attorney and as discussed.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** *Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Councilman Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Mr. Delacruz, Mr. DeCicco, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem*

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

**DISCUSSION**

**Borough Resolution No. 2021-03-060 authorizing the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation for the redevelopment of Block 116.01, Lots 25, 26.01, 27, 27.01 and Block 112, Lot 3**

Mr. Wenner provided an extensive overview of the process, including condemnation v. non-condemnation proceedings in particular. Ms. Knowles identified the properties and spoke about the criteria for finding an area in need of redevelopment in accordance with Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. Chairwoman Thomas asked whether the attorney present for Raritan Crossing, LLC would like to add anything.

**Susan Rubright, Esq.** offered that she wanted to encourage the Board to authorize the Planner to undertake the preliminary investigation for the redevelopment of the subject property in accordance with the criteria set forth in the statute.

Ms. Sherwin clarified that the subject property is the strip mall with the old Verizon store and the Urgent Care.

At the behest of Mr. Brown, Mr. Schrek and Mayor Bray clarified which properties were included. Referencing comments made earlier, Mr. Brown questioned the use of late rent resulting from the pandemic as criteria for justifying redevelopment. Ms. Knowles responded. Mr. Brown offered that he was surprised to see that the property was being looked at for demo and redevelopment after the owner spent so much money on rehabilitating it.

Ms. Rubright explained that this was not a time to analyze factors but rather, to authorize undertaking of the study. She spoke briefly about some of the criteria and responded to questions from Mr. Brown about the benefit of having it declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment in contrast to just developing it. Ms. Rubright offered that the Redevelopment Act is being used successfully as a mechanism throughout the State and that the Borough has used it as well. She reiterated that this was not the appropriate forum/time for analysis/debate.

Mr. Wenner concurred with Ms. Rubright. He clarified that at this time, the Board was charged only with carrying out the directive of the Governing Body which was to authorize the Planner to undertake the study. Ms. Thomas provided further clarification. She opened the floor to questions of the public at 7:35. There were none.

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Ms. Carra and unanimously carried to authorize the Board Planner to undertake preliminary investigation for the redevelopment of Block 116.01, Lots 25, 26.01, 27, 27.01 and Block 112. Lot 3.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** *Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Councilman Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Mr. DeCicco, Mr. Delacruz, Ms. Goetsch, Ms. Sherwin, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem*

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Ms. Thomas provided information on the mandatory Board Member training course.

A discussion ensued about having the Board attend an upcoming Council meeting where a presentation on Downtown Revitalization by Adam from FHI was scheduled to be made. Mayor Bray suggested that it could be a combined meeting during the next scheduled Council meeting on April 13. Ms. Knowles spoke about content. Ms. Thomas polled the Board for anticipated attendance. Mayor Bray indicated that Eric would send meeting information to the Board.

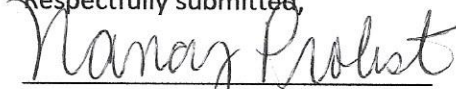
**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Chairwoman opened the floor to public comment at 7:40. There was none.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Mr. Delacruz, **seconded** by Ms. Sherwin and unanimously carried to adjourn at 7:40.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Probst, Board Secretary

APPROVED

