

**BOROUGH OF RARITAN**  
Planning Board REGULAR Meeting  
**MINUTES**  
August 24, 2022

**CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Borough of Raritan Municipal Building. Chairwoman Thomas read the open public meetings statement into the record.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present**

Chairwoman Thomas  
Mayor Bray  
Mr. Delacruz  
Mr. Cunningham  
Ms. Carra  
Mr. Brown  
Ms. Goetsch  
Ms. Windrem  
Ms. Sherwin

**Also Present**

Larry Cohen, Board Attorney  
Stan Schrek, Board Engineer

**Absent**

Councilman Carra  
Mr. Decicco

**MINUTES**

**Motion** by Ms. Goetsch, **seconded** by Ms. Carra to approve the Minutes of **July 27, 2022** as presented, **by voice vote**. Mayor Bray abstained.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**40 East Somerset Street (Block 109, Lot 1)**

***Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan with Variances***

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Ms. Sherwin and unanimously carried to approve the memorializing resolution, as amended to reflect correct date of plan (1/19/22).

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairwoman Thomas, Ms. Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Brown, Ms. Sherwin, Ms. Windrem

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mayor Bray, Mr. Delacruz

**Baczewski**

**21 Vones Lane, Raritan (Block 1, Lot 11)**

***Minor Subdivision***

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Ms. Windrem and unanimously carried to approve the memorializing resolution, as amended to include language regarding returning to Bridgewater Township.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairwoman Thomas, Ms. Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Brown, Ms. Sherwin, Ms. Windrem

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mayor Bray, Mr. Delacruz

Digraziano

55 Quick Avenue (Block 36, Lot 5)

**Minor Subdivision**

**Motion** by Ms. Carra, **seconded** by Ms. Goetsch and unanimously carried to approve the memorializing resolution, with editorial revisions (spelling of Planner's name).

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairwoman Thomas, Ms. Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Brown, Ms. Sherwin, Ms. Windrem

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Mayor Bray, Mr. Delacruz

**ENGINEERING REPORT**

Mr. Schrek outlined revisions that had been made to the **La Grange Street Redevelopment Plan**, including language regarding specific sale. He read item #3 regarding condo law into the record and advised that a section had been added to page 15 regarding the inclusion of two affordable units. He advised that the Developer's attorney seemed to be okay with the changes and recommended that the Board adopt the Plan, with revisions as noted.

Ms. Thomas solicited comments from the Board. Mr. Cohen responded to a question from Mr. Brown about the "formula" for the selling price on the affordable units.

**Motion** by Ms. Carra, **seconded** by Ms. Goetsch and unanimously carried to adopt the LaGrange Street Redevelopment Plan, with revisions, as noted.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYE:** Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Delacruz, Ms. Sherwin, Ms. Windrem

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Carra, Mr. Brown

Mr. Shrek advised that he met with officials from Somerset County on behalf of Manville with respect to Planning opportunities. He suggested that Raritan follow suit. Thomas suggested they set something up after 9/13.

**CONSTRUCTION/ZONING OFFICIAL REPORT**

In the absence of Mr. Gara, there was no report.

**TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Chairwoman Thomas advised that the TRC had not met and that there were no upcoming meetings scheduled.

**APPLICATIONS**

**Janssen Pharmaceuticals – Building 920**

**1000 Route 202 (Block 2, Lot 17)**

**Preliminary & Final Site Plan**

**Attorney Tom Letizia** entered his appearance on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Letizia recapped the relief granted in their recent appearance and explained that the new proposal is for upgrades and modernization of the building that require Preliminary & Final Site Plan approval.

Mr. Letizia explained that a 13,700 square foot portion of Building 920 ("the Butler Building") had been demolished and that the approved Site Plan called for new floor area "lowering" to 13,950 square feet. He

explained that there would be a new multipurpose building ("The Pavilion") in the same location to be used as flexible conferencing and amenity space for employees. He confirmed that no variances or waivers were being requested.

**As to Completeness:**

Mr. Letizia reviewed Mr. Schrek's 8/19/22 memo. He advised that he believed Mr. Schrek supported all of the waivers except the one relative to Storm water. He acknowledged that if the project were to become a Major Site Plan, they would then need an EIS.

Mr. Schrek explained that there were four waivers for preliminary and four for final; all of which he would support; however, he confirmed that he did have some concerns with storm water relative to the EIS and that further analysis might lead to the need for additional improvements under the new (MS4) rules. He suggested that this waiver be granted with a condition to provide storm water information.

**Motion** by Mr. Delacruz, **seconded** by Mayor Bray to grant the waivers, as discussed for purposes of completeness.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**Robert Espasa, P.E.** was sworn and qualified.

Mr. Espasa marked **Exhibit A1** which he identified as an aerial photo of the entire campus and **Exhibit A2** which he identified as a landscaped rendering of the Site Plan dated 8/24/22 into the record.

Mr. Espasa identified the multipurpose building (which he testified would remain in the existing footprint), the courtyard areas, granite pavers, parking lots, southeast courtyard, existing vegetation and proposed landscaping. He testified that the existing asphalt sidewalk would be replaced with concrete in order to match the campus and that the "south loop" would be removed. Mr. Schrek supported the increase in pervious pavement.

Further improvements such as elimination of the dead end, relocation of ADA parking and the addition of a new walkway to the main entrance were noted. Mr. Espasa advised that one less parking space would be required but that there would be no change in this regard.

As to lighting, Mr. Espasa testified that they would comply with the addition of two new 10' pedestrian poles and bollard lights along the sidewalk. He testified that there would be no new utilities.

As to Storm water Management/roof drainage, Mr. Espasa indicated that he agreed with Mr. Schrek. He testified that although the proposal was not consistent with a major development, the totality of the work (prior project plus this one) would result in the need for an updated storm water management report. He explained that they would be replacing the ADA parking with pervious pavement as well. He also advised that outside approvals were pending.

Mr. Brown commented on the removal of the walkway. Ms. Thomas called the addition of a native plant garden "brilliant."

Ms. Thomas opened the floor to questions of the witness at 7:09. There were none.

Kenneth Crabiel, Architect was sworn and qualified.

Mr. Crabiel marked **Exhibit A3** which he identified as Elevations of the multi-purpose building dated 8/24/22 into the record. He called it compliant and confirmed that there were no design waivers being requested.

Referencing Exhibit A2, Mr. Crabiel explained that the southern façade of the building would be visible when traveling along the westerly side of Route 202. Referencing the "South Elevation," he testified that the height would be consistent with Building 920 and that the materials/color scheme would blend with the existing building. He discussed ways that massing was reduced and provided dimensional data on the highest points of the building and lower roof as 27' and 16' 9," respectively. Mr. Crabiel explained that the two-story building is "multi-height" with only one floor being used inside.

Speaking to the westerly side of the building and referencing Exhibit A3, Mr. Crabiel identified the courtyard and glass portico in particular. Referencing the remaining elevations and cross-referencing Exhibit A2, he spoke to the building entrance.

Mr. Crabiel testified that lettering on the sign would be backlit and that signage would be compliant with zoning regulations overall.

Mr. Crabiel marked **Exhibit A4** which he identified as the floor, roof and light plan into the record. He provided testimony on circulation, amenities and HVAC components. He testified that the fans would be located on the roof and identified the western end of the mezzanine where he testified, mechanicals would be located.

As to lighting, Mr. Crabiel identified the courtyard lighting and security lighting which he confirmed would stay on 24/7 in accordance with safety standards/minimum light requirements for same. There was a brief discussion on whether the lighting would be on a timer.

Ms. Thomas opened the floor to questions of the witness at 7:21. There were none.

Mr. Letizia proffered a closing statement. Ms. Thomas expressed her gratitude to the applicant for making the improvements.

**Motion** by Mr. Brown, **seconded** by Mayor Bray to approve the application for Preliminary & Final Site Plan, as presented with conditions, as discussed.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**NAY:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**DISCUSSION**

**PARKING STUDY**

The Board concluded to discuss the parking study at a TRC meeting (scheduled for Wednesday, 9/21/22, pending confirmation of Mr. Schrek's availability).

**REDEVELOPMENT**

A discussion ensued between and among Mr. Cohen, Ms. Thomas and Mr. Schrek about the process for adoption of Redevelopment Plans relative to the various areas identified as in need of redevelopment.

Mr. Brown asked what precipitated the study of Burns and First Street. Mr. Schrek advised that a developer

approached Council. Mr. Brown stressed that everything “emanates from Council to the Planning Board.” Mr. Cohen clarified that the Planning Board can also make recommendations to the Council as to areas in need of redevelopment. Mr. Cunningham added that Planning Board recommendations are not binding which prompted Mr. Cohen to expound on the process.

**TILLMAN STREET  
BLOCK 53, LOTS 1&2**

*Borough Council Resolution 2022-05-084 adopted on May 17, 2022 authorized the Land Use Board to undertake this study.*

Mr. Schrek explained that this property was identified in the Fair Share Plan as a property required to consider and must meet at least one statutory requirement to be deemed an area in need of redevelopment. In providing an overview of the study, he referenced page 4 in particular where he reviewed the criteria for designation under the Local Redevelopment Housing Law. He advised that the property meets standards under sections A, D and H which he read aloud and referred to correlation with the Master Plan.

**FIRST AVENUE & AND BURNS STREET  
BLOCK 80, LOTS 15,16,17,18, 19, 20, 20.01 AND 20.02**

*Borough Council Resolution 2022-05-083 adopted on May 17, 2022 authorized the Land Use Board to undertake this study.*

Mr. Schrek provided an overview of his report. Referencing the zoning table therein, he pointed out that all lots in the study are substandard/are no longer consistent with zoning. Citing criteria A, E and H, he concluded that the area meets the statutory requirements of an area of need of redevelopment [stipulating that it would be a non-condemnation] plan. With respect to proper utilization (section E), Mr. Schrek advised that the lots cannot be expanded.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that changing the regulations would put a lot of existing homes at risk. Mr. Schrek reiterated that many already don't comport under current zoning. Mr. Cunningham expressed concern with the findings (criteria H in particular). Mr. Cohen spoke about the purpose of the statute. Mr. Cunningham asked whether the lots were under common ownership. Mr. Cohen asserted that each owner has the right to be heard and that the presumption that it came from Council because there's interest in development stands. A discussion regarding the enabling law ensued.

Mr. Schrek pointed out that the existing duplexes are non-permitted uses in the zone. Mr. Cohen explained what the meaning of the term “Area in Need” is in response to a question about same from Ms. Sherwin. In concluding, he indicated that a redevelopment plan would trump existing Zoning. Ms. Thomas spoke about the benefits of partnering with the developer. Mr. Brown spoke about what he felt the redevelopment plan should focus on.

**RARITAN MALL  
BLOCK 116.01, Lot 11.01**

*Borough Council Resolution No. 2022-06-100 adopted on June 21, 2022 authorized the Land Use Board to undertake this study.*

Mr. Schrek provided an overview of his report. Citing criteria A, B, D, F and H, he concluded that the area meets the statutory requirements of an area of need of redevelopment.

Ms. Thomas explained the procedures for public hearing. The Board concluded to schedule public hearings on all three matters for the regular meeting in September.

**Motion** by Ms. Goetsch, **seconded** by Mr. Brown to hold public hearings on all three matters at the regular Planning Board Meeting on September 28.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Chairwoman Thomas, Mayor Bray, Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Carra, Ms. Goetsch, Mr. Delacruz, Ms. Sherwin, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

Mr. Schrek encouraged the Board members to call him should questions arise.

Mayor Bray advised that a letter of solicitation from Deluccia Commercial Brokers received by a resident of First Street prompted concerns from residents.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Thomas opened the floor to questions/comments at 8:05.

**Susan Mosca Grosso** of 122 Sherman asked whether the sale fell through on the bar next to the tennis courts. She expressed concerns about maintenance of the property. On an unrelated matter, Ms. Mosquegrosso suggested that the trees in the dog park need to be trimmed. Mayor Bray spoke to her directly about her concerns.

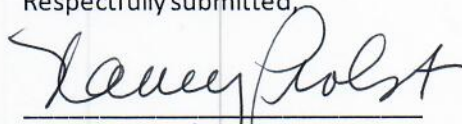
Citing concerns about traffic issues, [Councilwoman] **Joyce Melitsky** of 43 Gaston Avenue asked how the Board could consider another housing development. Chairwoman Thomas explained that traffic is an ongoing consideration of the Board in their deliberations. Mrs. Melitsky cited problems with traffic cutting through Raritan and with difficulty exiting out onto First Ave/Street in particular. Ms. Thomas made reference to the effects of development in neighboring communities on traffic. Mr. Schrek spoke about Covid data as it relates to traffic issues.

The public comment portion of the meeting was closed at 8:11.

**ADJOURN**

**Motion** by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Ms. Sherwin to adjourn the meeting at 8:12.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Nancy Probst, Board Secretary

APPROVED 9/28/22