

BOROUGH OF RARITAN
Planning Board REGULAR Meeting
MINUTES
September 28, 2022

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 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
Councilman Carra
Mr. Delacruz
Mr. Cunningham
Ms. Carra
Mr. Brown
Mr. DeCicco
Ms. Windrem
Ms. Sherwin

Also Present

Larry Cohen, Board Attorney
Stan Schrek, Board Engineer

Absent

Ms. Goetsch

MINUTES

Motion by Mayor Bray, **seconded** by Ms. Carra to approve the Minutes of **August 24, 2022** as presented, **by voice vote.**

ENGINEERING/PLANNING REPORT

Mr. Schrek spoke about bids related to Meehan & Ilene Place and advised that a public hearing would be held on October 4 regarding a TAP Grant.

In connection with MS4 (stormwater discharge) permitting, Mr. Schrek advised that several ordinances would need amending before the next permit cycle (April/May) and spoke about an article regarding same in the NJ Planner. He also spoke about disaster resiliency/climate change as it relates to the Master Plan and advised that there were several small applications coming in.

CONSTRUCTION/ZONING OFFICIAL

Mr. Gara advised that he met with a developer who would be bringing in plans for restaurants in connection with the old Nik's and Rick's on 5th. He advised that there would be a new coffee shop coming in by Angelone's and that finals were anticipated by the end of October for the Cannabis facility. Mr. Gara spoke about permits at Johnson & Johnson (Buildings 700 and 920 in particular) which he related broke records with respect to fees.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Schrek spoke provided an update on an ordinance regarding recreational marijuana in response to a question about same from Mr. Brown. Mr. Cohen advised that further discussion should be held in abeyance until the Master Plan Consistency review (anticipated in October).

TRC UPDATE

Chairwoman Thomas advised that the TRC met to discuss the parking study which would be discussed later.

DISCUSSION

AREAS IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT (BLOCK 80 AND BLOCK 53)

Both matters were tabled to an indeterminate date in the interest of further analysis to be done by Mr. Schrek and Mr. Gara.

Motion by Mayor Bray, **seconded** by Mr. Delacruz and unanimously carried to adjourn the hearings for Block 80 and Block 53 respectively, with new Notice to be provided. Mr. Cohen clarified that Notice would include owners in the study area; not within 200.'

ROLL CALL:

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

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT (BLOCK 116.01 – RARITAN MALL)

Mr. Cohen provided an overview of the process, including statutory criteria for determining whether a Redevelopment Plan could/would be adopted. Mr. Schrek advised that Council authorized the Board to undertake a preliminary investigation with Ordinance 2022-06-100 and read the criteria from the Local Redevelopment Housing Law aloud.

Mr. Shrek explained that the property was situated on a former municipal landfill that had been capped. Referencing criteria A, B, D, F and H, he explained how each was met, concluding that the area statutorily met the standards for being deemed an area in need of redevelopment.

Mr. Gara responded to questions from Mr. Cunningham about maintenance and violations on the property. Comparing it to the Lena, Mr. Schrek spoke about development challenges on the site.

Chairwoman Thomas opened the floor to questions of the public at 7:06.

Nancy Raab (49 Quick Ave.) asked whether the Dollar Store was included. Mr. Schrek advised that it was not. She asked about the car wash. Mr. Shrek explained that they had an arrangement with the Borough.

Mr. Schrek responded to a question from **Mike Patente** (Glaser Ave.) with respect to whether there were any superfund grants available for cleanup of the site.

Mr. Cohen responded to a question from **Erica Patente** about the process should the site receive designation as an area in need of redevelopment. Councilwoman Thomas spoke about the benefits of it being a redevelopment area, which would allow greater control over development.

John Rinko (Gaston Ave.) asked whether there had been any environmental impact studies done, referencing water levels in particular. Mr. Cohen explained that any Site Plan would require an EIS. Mr. Cohen explained how PILOT's work in response to a question from Mr. Rinko about taxation. Ms. Thomas asserted that the Board would be proactive with environmental impacts and offered that she was confident that all mitigation measures would be taken. Mr. Schrek affirmed this, adding that the developer is aware of the flooding issue.

Frank DelRocco (400 Rt. 202) asked whether these all apply to residents. Mr. Cohen advised that this referral is being made without the right of condemnation. He expounded on this.

The public question/comment period was closed at 7:19.

Mr. Brown asked Mr. Schrek whether the site “qualified” for another grocery store. Mr. DeCicco suggested that the County should be approached in the interest of preserving the area for open space.

Motion by Mr. Delacruz, **seconded** by Ms. Sherwin to approve the site as an Area in Need of Redevelopment based on Mr. Schrek’s report and the criteria, as outlined in testimony.

ROLL CALL:

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

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

PARKING STUDY

Mr. Schrek led a discussion of the parking study. He explained that the Board looked at past studies (2005 in particular) and identified areas that could be used, including proposal of a parking deck to be built for merchants. He explained that in 2008, a grant was obtained to build the lot on Thompson for this purpose but that residents are using it rather than merchants. He explained that shared parking agreements will be resurrected and spoke about parking counts as well as changes in use (Zoning).

Ms. Thomas offered that this would promote commerce and make it easier for prospective businesses. Further discussion ensued about the lot on Thompson St. She proposed that the TRC meet with members of Council. Mr. Brown asked whether there were any locations/vacant properties they could raze in order to construct a parking garage. He identified the PNC bank site.

A discussion about a TRC meeting date ensued. The Board concluded to meet at 9am on October 19th.

Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Gara about tattoo parlors. Mr. Gara recommended adding them as a permitted use. Further discussion about tattoo parlors ensued. Mr. Cohen suggested that they are normally contemplated under personal service and offered that this could be a matter for the TRC to explore.

RESOLUTIONS

Orlando Heights

Riverview at Raritan/Orlando Heights Realty (Block 116, Lot 13)

Bifurcated Use Variance

Mr. Cohen read Whereas clause 1-8 on page 4 into the record after explaining why the resolution had not been previously adopted. **Motion** by Councilman Carra, **seconded** by Ms. Windrem to approve the memorializing resolution, as presented.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: Chairwoman Thomas, Ms. Carra, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Brown, Ms. Windrem, Mr. Delacruz

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairwoman Thomas opened the public comment portion of the meeting at 7:46.

Mr. DelRocco asked whether reconsideration could be given to fighting the sale of recreational marijuana. Mayor Bray explained that this was under the jurisdiction of Council; not the Planning Board and that the

applicant has come to the Board for Site Plan. Mr. Schrek explained why the applicant was prompted to return the Board due to language in the resolution. Ms. Thomas explained that parking was different for recreational. Mr. DelRocco mentioned time zones.

The public comment portion of the meeting was closed at 7:46.

ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Cunningham, **seconded** by Ms. Windrem to adjourn the meeting at 7:47.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Probst

Nancy Probst, Board Secretary

APPROVED 10/26/22