

CALL TO ORDER

This Meeting of the Redevelopment Committee of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, was called to order by Mayor Nicolas J. Carra in the Community Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 on July 1, 2024.

The Mayor announced this meeting was called pursuant to applicable portions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate Notice was communicated to *The Courier News* and *The Star Ledger*, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, on the Borough website and made available in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Carra, Council President Tozzi, Administrator Colvin, William Cunningham, Lou Gara, Charles McMullin, Adele Goetsch, Debra Thomas, Engineer Brosnan

MINUTES

- a. March 4, 2024
- b. March 25, 2024
- c. April 11, 2024

Mayor Carra and Committee members discussed carrying the minutes as they were not ready to be approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Agway – AINR Study/Owner Update
Kevin Sempervive stated that he was at the meeting to hear what the Borough was looking to do in regard to redevelopment and that they are committed to working together along the way. It was also suggested that the entire block be considered for redevelopment, not just one property. Discussion ensued on possible ideas for the area. Engineer Brosnan added that a study must be done based on the current conditions of the area, then a redevelopment plan process can get started. Bill Cunningham commented that the parallel streets, Tompson and Anderson, should also be considered as well. Discussion ensued amongst the committee members about the next steps in the process.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Downtown Redevelopment Plan – Angela Knowles
Mayor Carra stated that, as Mayor, he intended to revive the Downtown Redevelopment Sustainable Economic Plan that was started about three years ago. His intentions are to start implementing it as there was a grant received. He then introduced Ms. Angela Knowles, who is a licensed Professional Planner. Ms. Knowles stated that she went back and took a look at the pervious plan that was drafted and liked how the plan was laid out with a vision plan, a redevelopment plan, and then implementation. She continued by stating that she wanted to have discussions on what the priorities are at this point and where

the focus should be. One of the suggestions was to designate the entire southern portion of Raritan's Downtown as an area in need of rehabilitation. If the area gets approved, there could be a five-year tax abatement through local government agencies and the state, meaning any improvements to the structures wouldn't have to pay taxes on those improvements for five years. Ms. Knowles continued explaining that the process for rehabilitation is very similar to the one for redevelopment. Authorize the study, the study would get done, and then the rehabilitation plan would get adopted. She then asked the committee if the priorities were the same from three years ago, to which Mr. Cunningham responded stating they should revisit the questionnaire as the attitude in town has changed significantly. Discussion ensued amongst the committee and Ms. Knowles regarding aspects to take into consideration. It was suggested that the plan get re-presented restating all the goals and the vision with some updates. Recirculating the questionnaire sent to residents would benefit knowing and understanding what the public's vision would be. Ms. Knowles added that the purpose of this group is to promote the economic plan and having residents participate would be a big help.

b. Downtown - Area in Need of Rehabilitation Designation

Borough Engineer stated that parts of the area that have been designated are now part of a redevelopment plan and raised concerns about omitting those areas. Ms. Knowles responded, stating that there is no zoning change relating to the rehab area and no conflict with the areas designated for redevelopment. Discussion ensued about keeping the momentum going with this amongst committee members. It was suggested that the plan get re-presented restating all the goals and the vision with some updates. Recirculating the questionnaire sent to residents would benefit knowing and understanding what the public's vision would be. Ms. Knowles added that the purpose of this group is to promote the economic plan and having residents participate would be a big help. Borough Engineer, Joe Brosnan, added that the County is looking to do a traffic study similar to what they recently have done in Manville with their Main Street. He added that this could take some time, the project in Manville took almost two years. Ms. Knowles suggested sharing the plans the Borough has with the County to ensure communication with their intended vision. Discussion ensued about the next steps to get the process going.

MISCELLANIOUS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Copt: Mr. Copt asked if the Agway property was going to be used as residential to which Mayor Carra responded that they are looking for it to be mixed use. Mr. Cunningham added that currently, the property owner is looking for a zoning change for that property to change from commercial, to mixed use. There have not been any plans approved about how many units or how many stories will be allowed. Just because a developer has an idea and a plan on what they want does not mean that's what will be allowed.

Mr. Copt stated that the Master Plan does allow mixed used and up to two stories for that property. He suggested adding a non-binding referendum

Tom Brown: Mr. Brown raised concerns about involvement from residents, mentioning the people who were very involved, were on the EDC that was just disbanded. Ms. Knowles responded, stating that they would be reaching out to the residents and seeing what the response is.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Engineer Brosnan, seconded by Administrator Colvin, the Committee moved to Adjourn the Meeting.

Recorded Vote

All in Favor

Kimberly Mathewson
Acting Municipal Clerk

Approved: _____

Date: _____