

**BOROUGH OF RARITAN**  
**TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**March 21, 2017 - 8:30 a.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Raritan Municipal Building. He read the Open Public Meetings statement as follows: This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was sent to the Courier News and Star Ledger on March 1, 2017. In addition, copies of the notices were posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, on the Raritan Borough website and filed in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

**Present:** Tom Brown  
John Gausz  
Debbie Thomas  
Rick Miller

**Also Present:** Susan Rubright (Board Attorney)  
Stan Schrek (Board Engineer)  
Joe Forgione (Applicant)  
Andy Norin, Esq. - Drinker, Biddle & Reath, LLP (Attorney for Applicant)  
Brett Skapinetz (Dynamic Engineering)  
Craig Peregoy (Dynamic Engineering)  
Kevin Codey (JMF Properties)  
Angela Koselicki - Devereaux & Associates (Architect for Applicant)

Ms. Rubright asked if there were any changes to the TRC Minutes of March 3, 2017 other than a correction to Ms. Koselicki's professional affiliation. She added that Brett Skapinetz' had also been corrected.

**Motion** by Mr. Gausz, **seconded** by Mr. Miller and unanimously carried by voice vote to adopt the Minutes of the **March 3, 2017 TRC meeting**, with revisions as noted.

Keith Michaels of Michaels & Waldron Architects and Craig Peregoy of Dynamic Traffic Engineering introduced themselves.

Mr. Brown offered that the focus of the meeting would be on architecture. Mr. Peregoy indicated that neither he nor Ms. Koselicki had a chance to review paperwork that Mr. Brown indicated had been provided by Mr. Michaels. Copies of same were distributed.

Referencing the March 3 Minutes, Mr. Brown asked whether the items that the Committee asked Mr. Forgione to look into further had been addressed. Mr. Forgione confirmed that the items in question were to provide green space in front of the building, adjust the sidewalk and present a perspective that the Board could use to better envision what the building would look like. Mr. Brown related that everyone agreed that there was difficulty with optics which made it hard to understand what was intended. Mr. Skapinetz related (and Ms. Koselicki confirmed) that the perspective was available. Mr. Forgione stated they have continued to make best efforts with NJ Transit, as requested.

Mr. Skapinetz confirmed that he had submitted detailed responses to engineering and architectural comments contained in Mr. Schrek's review letter and that he had received a response yesterday from Michaels & Waldron. Ms. Rubright asked whether the response from Devereaux sent on March 10 included Mr. Skapinetz' comments. Mr. Skapinetz clarified that his response on the 9th which was sent to the Borough was separate. Ms. Rubright acknowledged that she had it and asked whether the sidewalk issue had been resolved. Mr. Schrek spoke to the proposal which would create a 2' green space and confirmed that he had no other engineering issues. Ms. Rubright asked whether they needed to address anything with respect to the traffic study or environmental impact. Mr. Schrek explained that he had asked that the traffic analysis be extended down towards the intersection with Anderson and Somerset and out to Thompson. He related that the traffic engineer understood and would be prepared to provide testimony on the same. Mr. Skapinetz spoke to the question of unsignalized access at Somerset and Anderson. He offered that a shorter route to Thompson was available but that he didn't see much impact.

Mr. Brown opined that the distance from the stop sign or from where parking is located on either side of the street on "every intersection in Raritan" requires a person to pass the stop sign in order to get line of sight. He called an unsignalized intersection at Second and Anderson, in particular, "a potential accident waiting to happen." Mr. Gara explained how this problem came to pass in relation to State guidelines that Raritan has to accommodate. Potential circulation problems were discussed, specifically with respect to the flow of traffic down Third Street and First Avenue. Mr. Brown reiterated his concerns about unsignalized intersections. Mr. Schrek explained that there was no requirement for parking next to an intersection. He explained that this would be an enforcement issue for the Police [unrelated to this application].

Ms. Rubright asked whether there was anything in the response from Dynamic that needed to be discussed. Mr. Schrek indicated that open items would be addressed as the plan progresses and reminded everyone that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss architecture. Ms. Rubright offered that it also served to resolve any technical issues. Mr. Brown offered that the primary concern was what would be visible on the south side of Third Street versus the development. He offered that although it would be fine in an urban setting, a discussion on alternatives needed to be discussed for this area.

Comparing them visually to "cell blocks," Mr. Miller offered that perhaps the applicant's architect could speak to the "blockiness" of the proposal. Ms. Koselicki addressed comments that the elevations did not match the floor plans. She indicated that she superimposed the elevations around the site as they would exist and that the building would be broken up with entrances into courtyard areas and color. Mr. Miller offered that if this were a true rendering, it did not give one a sense of wanting to live there based on it. Ms. Koselicki offered that it was difficult to get a true perspective due to the length of the street. She offered that there had been sensitivity to this in

the design given the use of different brick colors, siding and the organizing of balconies and grouping of windows vertically together with curved corners at both ends of Third Street and a curved cornice at the top of the building intended to soften the look. Mr. Brown offered that if the intent is to make the transition from what will remain on the south side of Third Street then the Board would have to be sensitive to whatever is done. He offered that they would have to compensate elsewhere in order to reduce density on that side of Third Street and opined that it ought to mirror the peaks and valleys of the buildings on the south side. He opined that more straight areas like those at the top of the building would look more appropriate if peaked to match the other side of the street. Mr. Gausz offered that they should at least complement them. A discussion ensued about creating more undulation through the use of a change in material at the second story level or pulling back the upper floors for a little more relief. Mr. Forgione indicated that the desire was to create a strong base and offered that they could possibly reduce the cornice on top if that would help. Mr. Forgione spoke to the potential for elimination of the cornice and creation of some bay windows. The elevations and the necessity of the pitched roofs were discussed. The concept of creating something that softens the appearance and complements the properties across the street was discussed at length.

Mr. Forgione offered the possibility of lightening up the top of the building with bay windows and changing the color of the brick from smoky gray to red and then continuing it up. Ms. Koselicki offered that the Redevelopment Plan called for at least three colors and a strong cornice at the top of the building. Mr. Forgione opined that the strong base adds character and asked for the opportunity to incorporate different roof lines and continue the red brick in order to lighten up the height of building. Ms. Thomas offered that she liked the red brick. Mr. Brown offered that even if the peaks were faux and mimicked the appearance of what was on the south side that it would be more in keeping with the character of the town. Further discussion ensued about lightening

up the top, reducing the "urban" feel and designing it to be more in character with the neighborhood. Various methods for accomplishing this were discussed. Mr. Forgione offered that perhaps there was too much brick. He suggested beige Hardiplank at the top, set back a little from the brick to create the appearance of being set back. Ms. Koselicki offered that a brick cornice at the fourth floor with Hardiplank and lighter color would provide relief.

Mr. Brown spoke to the location of the main entrance and the placement of the amenities. Mr. Forgione explained the rationale for placing the amenities in the back with respect to vehicle movements and reduction of impact to neighboring homes. Ms. Thomas offered that there needed to be more of an "entrance look." The creation of a more inviting look was discussed. Mr. Forgione spoke to different techniques for giving the structure a more residential and open feeling.

The concept of moving the location of the trash off of Third Street and making modest changes in configuration in order to create a more accommodating and inviting entryway with a greater public benefit to open spaces was discussed. Mr. Forgione acknowledged the need for a more residential visual appearance along Third Street. He spoke at length to the secondary driveway entrance tied to the freight elevator... He spoke to the rationale for the placement of the garbage area, Mr. Forgione indicating that they have control over the haulers and that the area and trucks would not be visible from the road. Alternate locations for the trash were discussed.

Mr. Forgione offered that a single loaded corridor did not make for good building design. Mr. Michaels offered that wrapping a single loaded corridor around a garage with a group of units in a courtyard backing up to it could be helpful in this case. Mr. Norin offered that the garbage pickup is internal so it would not be visible from the road. He opined that from a quality

of life perspective this location keeps garbage trucks off the street. Mr. Forgione explained that there were no dumpster pads or refuse containers visible because the dumpster would be placed inside of the building. He further explained that freight elevators would be available since most of the movement involves small u-hauls. He explained that garbage chutes would be used putting the responsibility on management to continuously maintain the garbage systems.

Garbage truck movement was discussed. Mr. Forgione confirmed that the trucks go all the way inside to make pick ups. Ms. Koselicki spoke to the different components of the trash system for the building and the corridor system which were designed with tenant turnover in mind. Mr. Forgione explained that two year leases, which reduce impact on the corridors and transiency, were becoming the preferred lease term.

Mr. Brown summarized the proposed architectural changes that had been discussed including a reduction in the size of the driveway, addition of an open area where the center court is and an overall alteration of the design aimed at softening it in order to create a more residential feel. Mr. Forgione spoke to the addition of Hardiplank. Mr. Miller commented that the straight line across the top needed to be broken up. Mr. Brown added that they should be looking at a way to mitigate the lack of setback and to add more depth in order to complement the sidewalks and lawns on the other side of the street. Mr. Gausz commented that the parking garage had not been discussed. Ms. Koselicki related that they agreed at the last meeting to try to do a perspective showing the parking garage. She added that one really does not see it when passing down under the bridge. One can see it from the corner at the traffic light, so they modified the elevation and matched colors of brick, adding windows into stairwell tower of the garage in order to tie in and create a more residential look.

Mr. Brown asked whether the rendering reflected a real setback. Mr. Skapinetz confirmed that it was a 20' setback. Ms. Koselicki explained that they were proposing to add ornamental trees along that route. Mr. Gausz opined that it no longer looks "like a huge mass of concrete." Ms. Brown commented that it would be visible regardless of the location. Mr. Gausz offered that it appeared that they had done as much as they could. Ms. Rubright read a section of the redevelopment plan regarding the garage appearance. Treatment of the street face of the garage was discussed at length. Ways to soften the appearance were discussed. Mr. Forgione offered that they did not want it to look like "a house without windows." Mr. Schrek cautioned that any variation from redevelopment plan needed to be vetted. Ms. Rubright again read from the redevelopment plan in an effort to differentiate between what "should" be done and what "shall" be done. Police and Fire comments were discussed.

A discussion ensued about whether the application could proceed to hearing the following day given the events of today's TRC. Mr. Forgione asked whether they would be deemed complete at hearing. Mr. Schrek confirmed that they would be. Ms. Rubright indicated that waivers could be granted at the hearing given the lack of completeness determination. Mr. Forgione offered that they could have the elevation changes done by the April meeting if they could get it to the point of completeness tomorrow. A discussion ensued on further steps necessary in order to deem the application complete. Mr. Schrek assured them that it could be deemed complete given the minor nature of the waivers. Further discussion ensued on the appropriateness of beginning the hearing tomorrow without inclusion of the revised architectural. Mr. Forgione indicated that he would rather have a "clean" report. Mr. Miller offered that it didn't make sense to start tomorrow and said that they could begin at the first meeting in April.

Mr. Norin offered that plan revisions needed to be submitted ten days prior to hearing. Ms.

Thomas offered that an incomplete presentation could lead to negativity "right off the bat." Mr. Miller suggested that information on the issue of pedestrian access to the train station should be provided as well. Mr. Brown called for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Norin asked whether there were any other substantive issues. Mr. Schrek expressed concern over the rear entrances. One of the engineers from Dynamic acknowledged his comment. Police and Fire comments were acknowledged. Mr. Skapinetz offered that they were "typical" and commented that some were architectural. Design in accordance with the fire code was discussed. Ms. Koselicki offered that they would be designing the building for a NFPA13R, which is the current code requirement. The Board members present stated the strong preference for NFPA13 to avoid "Avalon Bay" type fires.

Comments from the County Planning Board were discussed between and among the engineers. Mr. Brown offered that he was still interested in traffic circulation, particularly with respect to the school. Mr. Norin offered that Dynamic did address a lot in their report. Mr. Brown offered that what was addressed was not "realistic" as to what is really going on there. Impacts on neighborhood traffic were discussed.

Mr. Norin asked whether the Board would announce that the hearing would be carried. Ms. Rubright explained that the Notice of Cancellation would be posted. Mr. Norin confirmed that they would not be re-noticing and clarified that the posted Notice would say that the meeting would be carried without further Notice. Mr. Miller offered to be available for residents who came to the meeting in order to explain that the hearing would be carried.

Mr. Schrek explained that the traffic engineer would provide turning movement diagrams. Mr.

Miller offered that he would take the names of anyone who came for the hearing. The April 12 meeting date was confirmed. Mr. Brown adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Probst*

Nancy Probst, Planning Board Secretary

APPROVED 4/12/17