

METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

JANUARY 15, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Robert Renaud, Board Attorney, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present:	Ellen Clarkson, Vice Chr.	James Constantine, Planner
	Eric Erickson, Chr.	Robert Renaud, Attorney
	Jennifer Maier	Lisa DiFranza, Engineer
	Thomas Vahalla, Mayor	Sharon Hollis, Secretary
	Jane Leal, Alt. I	Chris Cosenza, Zoning Official
	Beatrice Moskowitz, Alt. II	

Absent:	Karen Alexander	Jason Kirin
	Kathy Busch	Reed Leibfried, Councilman
	Alan Grossman	

Annual Reorganization of the Board

Robert Renaud, attorney, chaired the meeting temporarily for the purposes of the Board to elect the Chairman.

Chairman: Eric Erickson

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Ms. Leal. The nominations were closed. Voice vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chairperson: Ellen Clarkson

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Ms. Leal. The nominations were closed. Voice vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Attorney: Robert Renaud

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson. The nominations were closed. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Secretary: Sharon Hollis

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson. The nominations were closed. Voice vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Planner: LRK, Inc. – James Constantine

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Moskowitz. The nominations were closed. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Engineer: Maser Consulting - Lisa DiFranza

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson. The nominations were closed. Roll call vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Dates for 2015 @ 7:30 p.m.

-	January 15, 2015
February 5, 2015	February 19, 2015
March 5, 2015	March 19, 2015
April 2, 2015	April 16, 2015
May 7, 2015	May 21, 2015
June 4, 2015	June 18, 2015
-	July 16, 2015
August 6, 2015	August 20, 2015
-	September 17, 2015
October 1, 2015	October 15, 2015
November 5, 2015	-
December 3, 2015	December 17, 2015
January 7, 2016	January 21, 2016

After a brief discussion to remove a few of the meeting dates, a motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson. Voice vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

TRC Appointments

Ellen Clarkson, Kathy Busch and Councilman Reed Leibfried

Beatrice Moskowitz was appointed as an alternate member to attend the TRC meetings in Councilman Leibfried's absent.

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson. Voice vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla to approve the extension of time to file the subdivision deed and to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by Ms. Leal. Roll call vote taken. Yes-Clarkson, Erickson, Maier, Mayor Vahalla, Leal, Moskowitz. Motion carried unanimously.

Arnolt Contracting, Inc. – Applicant is seeking amended site plan approval to permit parking lot egress back to Main Street and phasing purposes.

339 Main Street

Block 145

Lot 13.01

Mr. Wiley, attorney for the Applicant, explained the application. Mr. Wiley stated the Applicant obtained approval for an addition 32' x 42'. The Applicant had requested to make improvements to the existing structure and then an addition would be constructed in the rear. The Applicant would like to do the construction work in two stages. All the improvements would be constructed now except the sidewalk, which will connect to the addition, and will be in phase II. Since the Planning Board had approved the construction of the new building for The American Legion, on the adjacent Parking Authority lot at the rear of this property, the way it is designed there is really no way to get egress out of this property. The proposal now is to use the existing curb cut, already approved on Main Street, for two-way traffic instead of one-way.

Mr. Renaud interrupted Mr. Wiley and stated there are really two questions or issues here. The Board is really looking at one item of relief, which is condition K in the original resolution. Mr. Renaud read the condition "In the event the Applicant cannot utilize the proposed access from the parking lot at the rear of the premises into the Metuchen Parking Authority lot on lot 13.03 the Applicant shall be required to apply for and receive amended site plan approval with respect to the necessary changes to the site plan to permit the parking lot to exit onto Wernik Place". The Applicant needs relief from that condition. The second issue is the phasing issue, which can be covered during testimony.

Martin Jessen, Applicant and Engineer, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud. Mr. Jessen stated he prepared a new site plan and the only difference is the phasing, addition and connecting sidewalk have been colored in. Renovations to the existing building will start first. Then phase II sidewalk and addition may be constructed in one or two years. If the addition is not constructed the sidewalk will not be necessary. The Main Street driveway will be an ingress and egress as proposed. There is a 10' wide curb cut with 2' wide shoulders on both sides. The existing driveway width is 10'. According to the Borough Code, the minimum driveway width for one-way traffic is 15'. The Board granted approval last summer for the width to remain 10'. Now with two-way traffic, the Code calls for 20' wide, but we are asking for approval for the driveway to remain at 10'. Mr. Jessen stated that he did not want to construct the new driveway on Wernik Place because the American Legion is short 55 parking spaces and since their parking area is right next to our property line our parking lot may be used.

Mr. Constantine stated had you ever thought about making a right out of the end of your parking lot 30' or so, through your adjacent parking lots and driveways. That way you would have the ability to go to Calvin Place safely. This would allow you to meet the spirit and intent of the original approval. I walked it today and it seems that you could do that with the same sort of narrow 10' wide connection so that your traffic could flow out and come safely out up to the intersection of Wernik and Main and then traffic could make left turns at the intersection, which is what was on the original plan and what was approved. That solution would also be in the spirit of our Complete Streets Policy. A bench would have to be moved but no trees would be lost. This driveway would not have to be marked and could be used as needed. Mr. Constantine prepared a rough sketch on the existing survey of the property that was marked as Exhibit B-1.

The new proposal was discussed. Mr. Jessen requested a few minutes to speak to his Attorney, Mr. Wiley.

Mr. Erickson granted the request and the Board recessed at 8:04 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 8:06 p.m.

Mr. Wiley stated by constructing the new driveway the Applicant may lose two (2) parking spaces on the adjacent lot. Mr. Jessen agreed to adopt Mr. Constantine's plan, Exhibit B-1.

Mr. Renaud noted that a cross access agreement would be required for the driveway plan from lot 13.01 through lot 9.

During the Board discussion on the amended plan, it was pointed out by Ms. Maier that an elevator may be required for ADA access to the addition and if the addition was going to be constructed then the Applicant should speak to John Soltesz (Construction Official) to see if that would be a requirement.

The public portion was opened.

Since no one came forward, the public portion was closed.

Mrs. Clarkson asked if there would be a time frame on Phase II. After a discussion with Mr. Wiley, Mr. Renaud stated that Phase II should start within 24 months otherwise the Applicant would have to come back for an extension.

A motion was made by Mayor Vahalla to approve the application with the conditions discussed, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson. Roll call vote taken. Yes-Clarkson, Erickson, Maier, Mayor Vahalla, Leal, Moskowitz. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Constantine thanked the Applicant for doing the right thing.

Mayor Vahalla discussed possible Ordinance changes regarding payment in lieu of sidewalk and parking requirements and stated The Borough Council would be reviewing this at their next meeting.

On a motion made by Mayor Vahalla, seconded by Mrs. Clarkson, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Hollis".

Sharon Hollis
Planning Board Secretary