

Metuchen Planning Board Minutes
Virtual Meeting
December 3, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Eric Erickson, Chairperson, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present:	Ellen Clarkson, Vice Chairperson	Lynn Nowak
	Alan Grossman	Jonathan Lifton
	Melissa Perilstein, Administrator	Robert Renaud, Attorney
	Linda Koskoski, Councilmember	Christopher Cosenza, Planner
	Jonathan Busch, Mayor	Robert Mannix, Engineer
	Richard Green III	Patricia Cullen, Zoning Official
	Eric Erickson, Chairman	Denise Hamilton, Secretary

Absent: James Griffin

Mr. Renaud made the announcement that at the end of the presentations, the Board would be required to vote on whether or not to adopt the resolutions for the amended plans. Mr. Cosenza and Ms. Emily Givens (the Redevelopment Attorney), would be giving the presentations.

Ms. Givens stated that the Borough’s governing body introduced an ordinance to adopt the redevelopment plan and specific amendments to that plan will be presented. The proposals are consistent with the Master Plan and Board participation is encouraged. The recommendations will then be given to Council, who will hold a public hearing. Under the plan, each developer must enter into an agreement with Council before presenting to the Board. Site plans will continue to be reviewed by the Board as required under the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL).

PRESENTATION: Christopher Cosenza/LRK – Amended Redevelopment Plan for the Borough of Metuchen:

410 Main Street	Block 121	Lot 9
429 Main Street	Block 114	Lots 24-26 & 66
67 Pearl Street	Block 113	Lots 4 & 6
581 & 587 Middlesex Avenue	Block 113	Lots 39, 41 & 43

Mr. Cosenza shared his screen for the presentations. He explained that the plan designs are intended to promote the Master Plan’s goals and objectives. The four sites combined in total is less than one acre. The concept for 410 Main Street is to accommodate a mixed use building and add an additional 4th-story. Parking will be available offsite. 429 Main Street will have a traditional bank building at the corner with parking in the rear. 67 Pearl Street will become a 3-story mixed use building with limited commercial use. The concept for 581-587 Middlesex Avenue is a 3-story residential building with parking in the rear, and there is also room for garage space on the first floor. Drainage has been mitigated by a connection to the storm sewer system.

Mr. Muldoon added that to avoid potential water problems, the Middlesex Avenue building would not have a basement.

Public Potion:

Mr. Erickson opened the floor to the public for comments/questions.

A resident inquired about parking for the bank and number of employees anticipated.

Mr. Cosenza responded that there will be some reduction in parking spaces, however, he could not comment on the number of employees.

Mr. Muldoon added that the Manasquan Bank has multiple buildings with parking lots for their employees.

A resident inquired about parking maximum and green infrastructure measures.

Mr. Cosenza responded that plans are designed with parking which eliminates the need to have a maximum. Green infrastructure measures are being addressed.

A resident asked for the total number of new apartments to be built.

Mr. Cosenza responded that the total number of new apartments is between 46 and 48, and the redevelopment does not impact other sites.

Mr. Renaud added that a redevelopment plan must be adopted by Mayor and Council. Redevelopment in smaller parcels do not set a precedence. Zoning rules remain in effect and the plan pertains to only those properties mentioned.

A resident stated that the project at 410 Main Street project was aggressive with the proposal of 14 apartments onto such a long narrow lot and wanted to know why so many.

Mr. Cosenza responded that the number was addressed with a step back design for the 4th floor. The developer met with the Technical Review Committee, and members of the public present, prior to creating the proposal.

Mr. Muldoon added that the developer had minimized his original plan and worked with the Borough's professionals on the project.

The Board mentioned there was never a formal application presented.

Mr. Renaud stated that Board approval was not required since the design conformed to the Borough's Plan.

The same resident asked about tax benefits for the properties.

Mr. Cosenza responded that there are no tax abatements being granted.

A resident expressed support for the project and asked for specifics on the green infrastructure being implemented.

Mr. Cosenza mentioned that specific water fixtures, dark sky lighting, etc., were requested. EV charging stations were discussed for the properties with onsite parking. Both the Main Street and Pearl Street parking lots will have two prewired spaces each.

PRESENTATION: Christopher Cosenza/LRK – Amended Redevelopment Plan for the Borough of Metuchen:

443 Middlesex Avenue

Block 117

Lot 93

Mr. Cosenza explained that it is a through lot with frontage on both Middlesex and Highland Avenues. It is more than 400 feet deep and the house was built in 1896. The Middlesex Avenue side is in a single family use area with houses to the left and right of the property. Approval was granted in 1943 to convert the house into five apartments. Across the street is mixed use. The house is part of an historical site and the

intent is to preserve the structure. On Highland Avenue to the east are single family homes. The area is a mixed use zone. Highland Avenue lot will be divided into two parcels.

Mayor Busch mentioned that both the developer and a resident joined in the historical preservation the house.

Mr. Cosenza stated that the redevelopment is consistent with the Master Plan in regards to preservation and infill land redevelopment. It is being split into two development areas; 1) Parcel A will front on Middlesex Avenue with the building preservation, and 2) Parcel B facing Highland Avenue is the infill project with a two lot subdivision.

Public Portion:

Mr. Erickson invited comments from the Board. No one responded. The floor was opened to the public.

A resident inquired about the water table and flooding on Middlesex Avenue.

Mr. Mannix responded that drainage piping from the house would be connected into the existing storm system underground.

Ms. Perilstein stated that the DPW crew cleared the tree root that had previously caused flooding in that area.

Mr. Mannix stated that the drainage issues have been addressed and builders are required to follow the new rules in existence to avoid flooding. Sum pumps can no longer drain onto the street or to the neighboring properties.

Mr. Erickson invited additional questions from the public. No one responded. The floor was closed.

RESOLUTIONS:

No. 08-2020; Resolution of the Borough of Metuchen Planning Board Recommending Adoption of an Amended Development Plan for the Borough of Metuchen

410 Main Street	Block 121	Lot 9
429 Main Street	Block 114	Lots 24-26 & 66
67 Pearl Street	Block 113	Lots 4 & 6
581 & 587 Middlesex Avenue	Block 113	Lots 39, 41 & 43

The Board expressed support for the redevelopment of the properties. It is viewed as favorable that redevelopment is being considered from a Borough viewpoint and not just one specific site.

Motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Clarkson and seconded by Ms. Perilstein. Ms. Clarkson, Mr. Grossman, Ms. Perilstein, Councilmember Koskoski, Mayor Busch, Mr. Green, Ms. Nowak, Mr. Lifton and Mr. Erickson voted yes. Motion was approved.

No. 07-2020; Resolution of the Borough of Metuchen Planning Board Recommending Adoption of an Amended Redevelopment Plan for the Borough of Metuchen

443 Middlesex Avenue	Block 117	Lot 9
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The Board expressed appreciation for the win-win redevelopment plan to preserve an historical structure on Middlesex Avenue and to create two new lots on Highland Avenue.

Motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Clarkson and seconded by Mr. Green. Ms. Clarkson, Mr. Grossman, Ms. Perilstein, Councilmember Koskoski, Mayor Busch, Mr. Green, Ms. Nowak, Mr. Lifton and Mr. Erickson voted yes. Motion was approved.

Mayor Busch expressed appreciation for the effort made by Mr. Muldoon in spearheading the project.

ORDINANCE:

Tree Ordinance Establishing Specific Fees

Mr. Renaud stated that the Ordinance has made some changes and a Tree Removal Application will be included with the Board Application. There will also be penalties and permit fees, including fines for compliance failure. There are tree distinctions placing them in groups. Additional changes are included in the Ordinance.

Mr. Cosenza suggested amending the Ordinance to exclude the word "Council" under Site Protection, to which Mr. Renaud was agreeable.

Public Portion:

Mr. Erickson opened the floor for public comments. No one responded.

The Board requested the Tree Removal Application be included on the Board Application Checklist.

Motion to approve the resolution with the amendment was made by Ms. Perilstein and seconded by Mr. Green. Ms. Clarkson, Mr. Grossman, Ms. Perilstein, Councilmember Koskoski, Mayor Busch, Mr. Green, Ms. Nowak, Mr. Lifton and Mr. Erickson voted yes. Motion was approved.

Correspondence:

Minutes for November 5, 2020

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Green and seconded by Ms. Nowak. Voice vote, with all in favor, the minutes were approved.


Public Portion:

Mr. Ericson opened the floor to the public for comments. No one responded. The floor was closed.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Green and seconded by Mr. Grossman. Voice vote, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,


D. E. Hamilton