

**Borough of Metuchen
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2024**

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

ROLL CALL

Present:	Alan Grossman	Chris Cosenza, Board Planner
	Eric Erickson, Chair	Robert Renaud, Board Attorney
	Jason Delia, Councilmember	Thomas DiMartino, Zoning Official
	Linda Koskoski	Joanna Roberts, Board Secretary
	William Love, Mayor’s Designee	
	Jonathan Lifton	
	Lauren Cohn,	
	Shannan Foat-Gelber, Alt. 1	
Absent:	Ellen Clarkson, Vice Chair	
	Mayor Busch	

NEW BUSINESS

Emergency Services Center and Outbuilding Project – The Town Council would like the Planning Board to review and make any recommendations on the design and construction of the proposed Emergency Services Center and Outbuilding to be located at 1 Safety Place which will house the Metuchen Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, and the Office of Emergency Management. A report shall be prepared and submitted to the Town Council at the conclusion of this meeting.

Safety Place and Essex Avenue Block 132, Lots 10-27 and 40-52

Mr. Renaud discusses that the Borough is coming before the Planning Board for a capital projects review for the new Emergency Services Center and Outbuilding Project for its review and recommendations. This use is permitted in the R-2 Zone. Mr. Renaud introduces the Borough attorney, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Murphy will have the architect and engineer from H2M who designed the plans present a PowerPoint presentation. Richard Schommer, the engineer for H2M and Meghan Burnham, the architect of H2M, are sworn in.

Mr. Schommer pulls up the front rendering of the site with an aerial view as well. The current First Aide Squad is housed here. There are a bunch of small lots that will be merged into one lot. The parking area will be expanded and the existing building will be demolished. Facing Excess Avenue (Route 27) will be the new Fire House which will be a little over 12,000 square feet and the back outbuilding will be a garage at 3,600 square feet. There is a training pad in the back, a dumpster pad which will be fully enclosed, ADA spaces, as well as EV spaces. There is a culvert that runs through the site underground through under the railroad. There is a generator pad. There is a stormwater basin to collect the excess runoff. The basin is off to the right in the wooded area. The

landscape plan shows proposed plantings and buffering between the site and the neighbors. The goal is low maintenance with native type grasses. There is a lighting plan with all modern LED lights with downlighting just in the parking area and doorways.

The Board asks where the vehicles would exit the building; if the EV parking spaces will be open to the public and they will not; the stormwater plan description which is a basin in accordance with the NJ Stormwater regulations and will get piped away and discharged and follows the same pattern it does today into the culverts. There will be a stormwater operations and maintenance plan submitted and recorded.

Ms. Burnham, the architect, reviews the proposed buildings. The firehouse was designed to face Essex Ave so that all trucks would exit directly out onto Essex Ave. Three of the bays are double stacked and one additional bay is a single stack. The firehouse has a decontamination room, lockers for gear, sleeping quarters, a fitness area, a day room with a kitchen, a meeting room and administration offices are located in the back. There is a mezzanine level with a training area, mechanical room, and storage.

The firehouse is brick with a rounded bump out in the front to the right which resembles the municipal building with four garage doors to the left. The brick surrounds all four sides of the building. The back has three garage doors as there are only three double bays. Some of the energy features are LED lighting and energy efficient mechanical systems. The roof will be adequate to hold solar panels for the future. All materials had longevity in mind.

The building in the back will be a prefabricated garage with four bays. One for a police vehicle and the other three for fire and EMS.

The meeting is opened to the public for questions.

George Girgus of 101 Essex Avenue is concerned about noise level and how this project will impact the neighborhood.

Grace Mendoza of 87 Essex Avenue would like to know when the project starts and how long it will take to complete.

Timothy Jones of 23 Rose Street is one of the properties that backs up to the project asks why there are so many parking spaces, has concerns about drainage, traffic patterns and asks about will added traffic lights.

The meeting is closed to the public.

Mr. Murphy points out that the Office of Emergency Management will also be part of this new building.

Mr. Cosenza indicates the proposed capital improvement project is consistent with the master plan and the construction of this is necessary to consolidate multiple emergency services agencies into newer updated facilities.

The Board comments on a blinking light at the new building and it is confirmed that there is currently a blinking light at the location.

The meeting is opened to the public for comments.

George Girgus 101 Essex Avenue is concerned about the activity and the noise. Also, the impact on the residents' valuation and would like the town to consider enhancing the area.

The meeting is closed to the public for comments.

Mr. Lifton motions to approve the review of the proposed Emergency Services Center and Outbuilding and Mr. Grossman seconds the motion.

Vote on Motion

Mr. Grossman	Yes
Councilman Delia	Yes
Ms. Koskoski	Yes
Mr. Love	Yes
Mr. Lifton	Yes
Ms. Cohn	Yes
Ms. Gelber	Yes
Mr. Erickson	Yes

CORRESPONDENCE

Adoption of February 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Gelber motions to approve the February 15, 2024 meeting minutes and Ms. Cohn seconds the motion. All ayes.

Adoption of March 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Cohn motions to approve the March 7, 2024 meeting minutes and Mr. Love seconds the motion. All ayes.

ADJOURN

Ms. Gelber motions to adjourn and Ms. Koskoski seconds the motion. All ayes.

/jr