

These minutes have not been approved and are subject to change at the next regular meeting of the Board

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD
OF THE BOROUGH OF METUCHEN

January 19, 1978

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. by Mr. Samuel P. Owen, who chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr. Conlon. He indicated that the meeting was held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. On roll call those present were Messrs. Barnickel, Morris, Owen and Wernik. Mr. Owen indicated that due to the lack of a quorum no votes would be taken, and that the only matters on the agenda were a further discussion of the revisions to the zoning ordinance and a meeting with property owners along Hillside and Highland Avenues with respect to same.

Rowand Clark, Esquire, indicated that he represented the property owners present, who wished to address the Board concerning the zoning along Highland Avenue, Hillside Avenue and Inn Place. He reviewed with the Board its powers to adopt an interim ordinance. Mr. Owen indicated that the land use portion of the master plan was adopted in January of 1977 and that the Board was presently working on revisions to the zoning ordinance. He stated that there have been very few changes in the ordinance since its adoption in 1962. The chairman indicated that the Board would welcome the comments of the audience.

Martin Sloan, 23 Washington Place, asked if there were any plans to expand the existing business zone in neighborhood eight. Mr. Owen indicated that none were contemplated. Sidney Franklin, 43 Highland Avenue, stated his objection that there were parking meters along Highland Avenue, in the residential zone. Mr. Owen indicated he would confer with the Parking Authority on this matter. Mrs. Frances Harhan, 33 Hillside Avenue, stated there were also meters along that street. Mr. Lawrence Silberstein, 36 Highland Avenue, indicated that neighborhood eight was designated as a residential zone, in the Master Plan, as far as he could tell. He stated that there was a professional building on Highland Avenue, and that the owner of that building, Northwest Construction Company, had acquired three other lots in the area of the building, most recently on his property line. He was therefore concerned that the buffer between residential and commercial uses should continue, as additional commercial uses in the area would diminish the property values of the residences. He pointed out that there were other vacant lots in the business zone in other locations in the borough which would seem to lend themselves to development, without interfering on the residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Owen stated that when the zoning ordinance was adopted in 1957, the premises were zoned for central business and neighborhood business uses and that there have been no changes in the zoning for many years and none was presently contemplated. Mr. Barnickel stated that the Board was not bound

by the provisions of a Master Plan, which is intended merely as a guide for future development within the borough. A discussion then ensued concerning the Master Plan's suggestion that Robins Place be extended to intersect with Middlesex Avenue, with high-rise housing provided in the neighborhood. The Board did not feel such development was feasible and takes such factors into account when it reviews the Master Plan every six years, as required by law. He stated that from the Master Plan the Zoning Ordinance is then adopted. The Board and members of the public then discussed the recent subdivision approval of the Eosso property, and it was determined that a primary concern was that the business zone not be extended any further than it now exists. Mr. Arthur Norris, 93 Highland Avenue, indicated that perhaps the property should submit in writing their desire of where the zone line should be placed, which could then be further considered by the Planning Board. Mr. Clark cautioned the Board of expanding a commercial use in one area and thereby sacrificing the viability of the other business in another commercial zone.


Mr. Silberstein indicated that the owners accept the Planning Board's statement that the line will not be extended but he reminded the Board that its function was to serve the community interest, to maintain the integrity of neighborhoods and prevent urban sprawl and congestion. He stressed the urgency of the matter in assuring the public that there would be no encroachment of the business use upon the residential use.

The owners were also concerned about being made aware of pending applications before the various boards. Mr. Owen and Mr. Barnickel explained the process of notice and service and publication, and invited the members of the public to attend meetings, as they were doing this evening, to make their views known to the board. Mrs. Genevieve Silberstein indicated that a residential home has no place in a business area.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Board thanked the audience for its participation and interest and indicated that the comments would all be taken into account as the Board continued its deliberations into the proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


EILEEN M. ROBINSON, Secretary
Metuchen Planning Board