

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING OF PISCATAWAY TOWNSHIP HELD ON DECEMBER 2, 2020.

The Regular Meeting of the Piscataway Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 P.M. on WebEx (online), Piscataway, New Jersey by Chairperson Smith.

Chairperson Smith stated: **IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROVIDED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

- *Posted on the bulletin board of the Municipal Building and made available through the Township Clerk;
- *Notice published in the Courier News;
- *Notice sent to The Star Ledger;
- *Notice made available through the Township Librarians.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Wahler, Councilwoman Cahill, Dawn Corcoran-Gardella, Rev. Henry Kenney, Carol Saunders, Dennis Espinosa, Michael Foster and Chairperson Brenda Smith.

ABSENT: N/A

Also present: Thomas Barlow, Esq., Laura Buckley

It was determined that a quorum was present by roll call.

Thomas Barlow, Esq., states that he would like to place on the record that we are doing this meeting through an online meeting platform in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In keeping with the guidelines that have been disseminated by the Department of Community Affairs, the Planning Board has tried it's best to comply with the open public meeting act and the Governor's guidelines in dealing with the current situation. In addition, the applicant whose matter will be heard this evening had the login information for the online meeting platform put forth in their notice; members of the public who wish to be heard will be afforded an opportunity as if we were in an actual, physical space. He believes we have done our absolute best to comply with the DCA guidelines and the open public meetings act.

- 4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 5. SWEARING IN OF PROFESSIONALS: James Clarkin, IV; PP**
- 6. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION TO MEMORIALIZE ACTION TAKEN ON OCTOBER 14, 2020: N/A**
- 7. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 14, 2020:**

MOTION was made by Ms. Saunders to memorialize the minutes from the October 14, 2020 meeting; seconded by Michael Foster. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Wahler, Councilwoman Cahill, Rev. Kenney, Carol Saunders, Dawn Corcoran-Gardella, Dennis Espinosa and Chairperson Smith voted yes on the motion.

- 8. DISCUSSION: REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BLOCK 5101, LOTS 5.02, 6.02 AND 7.02; PROPERTY ALSO KNOWN 1570 SOUTH WASHINGTON AVENUE.**

James Clarkin, IV, is sworn in to present the redevelopment plan. Chairperson Smith states that his credentials are acceptable. Mr. Clarkin shares his screen with the Board. He states that this is Block

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5101, Lots 5.02, 6.02 and 7.02 better known as 1570 South Washington Avenue. They went through the in-need study over the summer, he believes in August of this year. Since that time, it has officially been deemed an area in-need of redevelopment by the Township Council on September 29, 2020. Shortly there after, he was directed to start the redevelopment plan. For the record, he would like it known that this is a non-condemnation redevelopment plan.

Mr. Clarkin states that on the last page of the plan, there is an aerial photo that shows all three lots involved. The vacant property known as lot 5.02 is an irregularly shaped lot that is currently vacant and has been for a very long time. Lot 7.02 is also uniquely shaped, is also vacant, and is mostly wooded. Lot 6.02 has been developed for some time and has two businesses currently on the site. The first building (in white on the map) is currently being used as a rental car facility for Avis Budget. The other structure is CLC Trailers which is a trailer rental company.

Mr. Clarkin states that the site is 21.2 acres in size and is on the northwest corner of Centennial Avenue and Washington Avenue. The plan overview, page 3, shows the plan proposes light industrial warehousing as a permitted use within this area of redevelopment. It really fits in with the light industrial character of the surrounding neighborhood, the existing zoning which is LI and the Township Master Plan. As always, this redevelopment plan sets forth the physical and structural nature that they imagine and envision for this land. Pages 3 and 4 of the report go over the existing zoning for the area which the Board is already familiar with.

Mr. Clarkin states that on page 5 of the report, he would like to go over the plans and the objectives for the site; there are six. First is, they are really looking to create land use requirements specific to this redevelopment area to change the vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings in such a way that improves the area and benefits the Redevelopment area. They are hoping that through this plan they will encourage redevelopment to increase tax ratables and appropriate land uses within the Township. It fits in with the character of the area, the Zoning and the Master Plan. Mr. Clarkin feels that it is appropriate land use for this area.

Mr. Clarkin states that they are trying to reverse the observed conditions within the Redevelopment Area by leveraging public and private assets to improve the overall economic and physical conditions. Look to try to best utilize the best practices of planning and engineering to develop a site that fits within the existing neighborhood and zone. Also to provide a modern industrial warehousing uses and facilities in the Redevelopment Area and in the Township.

The land use plan states that they have selected four (4) principal uses for the property:

1. Warehouse; one warehouse structure as the principal use on the lot.
2. Light Manufacturing
3. Light Assembly
4. Fulfillment and Delivery Center

Mr. Clarkin states that you can see the permitted accessory uses of a typical parking facility are off-street parking and loading facilities, offices within a warehouse structure, guardhouses, signs and fences. Also there will be electric charging stations with Planning Board approval specific to the location, intensity, and operation of electric car charging stations. Solar energy systems and any other customary and incidental use to the principal or accessory use.

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There are three (3) prohibited uses; they want to make sure that there are no other uses than those listed. Also, no hazardous or dangerous materials can be stored. No permanent outdoor storage of materials or product; they want to make sure that product is moving and not sitting outside.

Mr. Clarkin goes over the yard and bulk requirements for the site (page 7). When you combine the three lots together it is over 21 acres; minimum lot area would be 18 acres, minimum lot width is 300 feet, lot area is 700 feet. Because of the corner nature of the property, there isn't a rear yard setback so they put a minimum front yard for Access Road as 65 feet and the front yard setback for Centennial Avenue would be 150 feet. Side yard setback is 40 feet with 80 feet combined. The structure can be no higher than 55 feet. Parking aisle width is 25 feet, minimum parking and loading setback is 20 feet, and loading space is a minimum of 12 feet by 60 feet.

Another important section of the plan is the parking (page 9), shows the circulation plan for the property. For the warehouse use it is 1 space per 3,000 square feet of gross floor area. For the other permitted principal uses, it would be 1 space per 800 square feet of gross floor area. Those other uses are a little more intense so they feel it would need more parking. The office space is 1 space per 200 square feet. Canopy solar and electric charging stations are greatly encouraged for the site.

Mr. Clarkin states in reference to signage, they are going to permit one (1) street sign per frontage; one on Centennial and one on Washington. It can be no higher than 10 feet, 100 square feet in size and setback a minimum of 25 feet from the property line. They are allowing two façade signs to the building which can not exceed a combined maximum area of 150 square feet. Directional signs that they typically allow, shall be no more than six (6) feet in height, 20 square feet in size and setback a minimum of five (5) feet from any property line. The signs can be internally or externally lit, but they are not allowing pylon or flashing signs.

Lighting and landscaping will get more into detail once the developer is in front of the Board with their site plan. The lights that they want are no more than 25 feet in height, nothing that is going to rotate, pulsate, or other intermittent frequency. As always, they want the lighting to be LED to use less energy and to be more efficient. Landscaping, they are looking for at least 5% of the parking area to be set aside for landscaping. Item b, page 10, where possible, existing wetlands shall not be developed upon and bolstered by proposed landscaping. They would like landscaping on the frontage of South Washington Avenue to screen any proposed parking areas that may be proposed in that area. Berming and landscaping should be provided along the frontage of Centennial Avenue for the same reason, to screen the parking. Shade trees shall be provided where parking spaces abut grass areas on the parking islands.

Mr. Clarkin states that looking at the environmental assessment, there was evidence of potential wetlands on all three of the lots within the Redevelopment Area. Any redeveloper that comes before the Board will be the ones to meet the NJDEP requirements so they will be the ones responsible for bringing it up during site plan. He believes this plan is consistent with the Township's Master Plan. This plan is looking to develop a key area in the Township and it promotes the envisioned land uses of the Township Zoning Ordinance, it will provide social and economic benefits where right now there are not many. It redevelops an older section of the Township and those three things really are in harmony with the Master Plan.

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This is located in the center of the Township and would not create any issues with surrounding municipalities. It is in the Planning Area-1 as per the State Plan Policy Map, this redevelopment plan is consistent with it. The remainder of the plan is really more of the typical things we include for legal reasons for the Township and the redeveloper to agree upon down the line for site plan approval. Mr. Clarkin believes he has covered the major elements of this redevelopment plan, really what they are looking for is warehousing on this larger site closer to Route 287. He states that the proposed bulk standards and parking requirements will fit well for this site.

Chairperson Smith asks the Board if they have any questions. Councilwoman Cahill asks what if this permitted use that we currently know now is attractive, is no longer a really financial viability for the property potentially before it becomes developed? What recourse does the Board have then? Would we have to do another study for a new redevelopment plan? Mr. Clarkin states that if these four (4) principal uses that are listed don't work out, then the Board can have the redevelopment plan amended and come back in front of the Board for approval. Mr. Barlow states that a new study would not be necessary, just an amended redevelopment plan. We have amended them before if they (the Board) felt that the new plan was keeping more in line with the area in question. It was recently done with the hotel that was approved a few months ago; River Road and Centennial Avenue. A redevelopment plan can always be amended.

Councilwoman Cahill asks if there are any plans to change the lights; there is one currently in the middle lot. Where is the light near the Avis property? Mr. Clarkin shows on the screen where the two lights are located. Mr. Clarkin states with the access to the site, you will get more into that during the site plan application. He states that he would imagine that access would be at the existing light and then one further down, but that would brought up at the site plan hearing. The redevelopment plan does not go into the traffic and circulation plan. Chairperson Smith asks the Board if there are any further questions. Public portion open/closed.

MOTION was made by Mr. Foster to approve the redevelopment plan for Block 5101, Lots 5.02, 6.02 and 7.02; seconded by Ms. Saunders. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Wahler, Councilwoman Cahill, Rev. Kenney, Carol Saunders, Dawn Corcoran-Gardella, Dennis Espinosa and Chairperson Smith voted yes on the motion.

9. DISCUSSION: REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BLOCK 4102, LOT 2; PROPERTY ALSO KNOWN AS 141 CIRCLE DRIVE NORTH. 3

James Clarkin, IV, is here for the presentation of the redevelopment plan. Mr. Clarkin states that this plan is for block 4102, Lot 2, better known as 141 Circle Drive North. Mr. Clarkin shares on screen a picture of the proposed redevelopment plan; shows a wooded area. He believes this in-need study was done on the same night the prior study was done. The process was very similar, Council approved the study on September 29, 2020 and shortly there after he started this redevelopment plan. It is non-condemnation area for the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Clarkin states that the overview of this plan is very similar to the last redevelopment plan that they just heard. The surrounding nature and character of Circle Drive North is very warehouse orientated and light industrial orientated, that is why it is in the LI-5 zone. It is similar to the one we just did, but the key difference is that they are proposing light industrial, warehousing, and trailer storage as a principal permitted uses in this area. It fits in with the Zoning Ordinance and the Master Plan of the Township.

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Mr. Clarkin states that the trailer storage was at the request of the contract purchaser; it was wanted as a principal permitted use. The trailer storage would be for overflow he believes. On the last page, there is an aerial photo of the property which is 5.6 acres in size and is a single lot. There are other warehouses, manufacturing and a large data center in the area as well. The property has dual frontage of Possumtown Road and Circle Drive North. In his research, he has never found any development on this site to date.

In reference to the plan goals and objectives, there is not a lot of economic activity on this parcel, they are really looking to reverse this in such a way that it improves the area for both Circle Drive North and the Township. Increase tax rates and have appropriate land uses on the property. Mr. Clarkin state that they would like to develop financial and regulatory incentives including tax abatement to encourage public or private partnerships to redevelop the area. They would like to utilize the best practices of planning and engineering to develop a site that fits within the existing area and zone. Also, to provide for modern industrial warehousing uses and/or trailer storage facilities in the Redevelopment Area.

The main principal permitted uses are:

1. Warehouse
2. Distribution
3. Light Assembly/Manufacturing
4. Fulfillment and Delivery Center
5. Trailer Storage

The permitted accessory uses are very similar to what is allowed in the area:

1. Off-street parking and Loading facilities
2. Offices within a warehouse structure
3. Guardhouses
4. Signs & Fences
5. Electric Charging Stations
6. Solar Energy systems
7. Any other use considered customary and incidental to the principal use of the property

Mr. Clarkin states that the prohibited uses for this plan are:

1. Any use not expressly permitted
2. Storage and warehousing of hazardous or dangerous materials
3. permanent outdoor storage or materials or products

Once again, the way they approached this redevelopment plan is that they included two sets of bulk requirements. The first will be for the warehouse, distribution, light assembly and fulfillment center and the other for the trailer storage. The bulk requirements (page 6) list the minimum yard requirements. Minimum lot area is 5 acres; this lot has two frontages so there is not a rear yard setback requirement. Maximum height of 55 feet. Front yard setback (Possumtown) is 80 and the front yard setback for Circle Drive North is 60 feet.

For the trailer storage, the two front yards setbacks are 75 feet to provide adequate frontage on both roads. There are no height requirements since there will not be a structure on a surface parking lot. They increased the minimum off-street parking within a front yard to give a little more buffering. In reference to parking, the first three are identical to the previous plan. For warehousing, one space per 3,000 square feet. The other principal uses are one space per 800 square feet with the office use being one space per 200 square feet of gross floor area. The trailer storage must have a minimum of 75 trailer spaces and

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they are requiring electric charging stations; five (5) dedicated spaces for vehicles with an additional minimum of five (5) electric truck charging stations with dedicated spaces. Mr. Clarkin states that in reference to the signage, you have the monument signs one (1) per street frontage. Pylon and flashing signs will be prohibited. For lighting, the maximum mounting height shall be no higher than 25 feet, nothing that beams, pulses or rotates. All lighting should be LED.

Landscaping is a bit different since this lot is fully wooded. Berming, together with new landscaping, or a combination of tree preservation with supplemental landscaping shall be provided on the Redevelopment Area frontage of Circle Drive North to screen any proposed parking area. If a redeveloper finds that some of the trees are healthy, there would not be a need to cut them down; they would encourage that. The same language is used for the frontage on Possumtown Road. Whether it is a warehouse use or trailer storage, this is what would be required for berming and screening.

Mr. Clarkin states that during the in-need study, it was brought to the Board's attention that there could be some wetland areas on the property. The redeveloper would be responsible for meeting the NJDEP requirements during site plan. Once again, he believes that this Redevelopment plan is consistent with the Master Plan and it is going to redevelop a key area of the Township that is close to 287. These two land uses meet the intent and promote the Township Zoning Ordinance. It will provide social and economic benefits, where right now there are none. It also redevelops an older section of the Town. It is not near any other Municipalities, so therefore they don't have to worry about any future plans from other Municipalities. PA-1 planned area so they are consistent with the State Plan.

Chairperson Smith asks the Board if they have any further questions; none. Public portion open/closed.

MOTION was made by Councilwoman Cahill to approve the redevelopment plan for Block 4102, Lot 2; seconded by Ms. Saunders. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Wahler, Councilwoman Cahill, Rev. Kenney, Carol Saunders, Dawn Corcoran-Gardella, Dennis Espinosa and Chairperson Smith voted yes on the motion.

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE 2021 PLANNING BOARD CALENDAR.

Chairperson Smith asks if there are any questions or objections for the 2021 Planning Board Calendar. She asks if everyone has receive a copy, they have. No objections, Chairperson Smith asks for a motion to adopt.

MOTION was made by Ms. Saunders to approve the 2021 Planning Board Calendar; seconded by Mr. Foster. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Wahler, Councilwoman Cahill, Rev. Kenney, Carol Saunders, Dawn Corcoran-Gardella, Dennis Espinosa and Chairperson Smith voted yes on the motion.

11. DULY AUDITED BILLS TO BE PAID

MOTION was made by Ms. Saunders to pay the bills and seconded by Rev. Kenney. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Wahler, Councilwoman Cahill, Rev. Kenney, Carol Saunders, Dawn Corcoran-Gardella, Dennis Espinosa and Chairperson Smith voted yes on the motion.

12. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION made by Chairperson Smith to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Foster; All in favor.

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

NEXT PLANNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING – DECEMBER 9, 2020 AT 7:30 P.M.

NEXT SITE PB/WORKSHOP BOARD MEETING – DECEMBER 23, 2020 AT 2:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura A. Buckley
Planning Board Clerk for Carol A. Saunders, Secretary

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 2, 2020, same having been fully adopted by the Planning Board of Piscataway on December 9, 2020.

CAROL A. SAUNDERS, Secretary
PISCATAWAY TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD