

## **MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD**

### **Workshop meeting of March 20, 2019**

**WORKSHOP PORTION.** Ms. Murray called the workshop portion of the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

**1. COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**2. RESOLUTIONS OF MEMORIALIZATION**

Motion to adopt resolutions to appoint Mark Rothman as Counsel for Hartz proceedings and Jonathan Drill as Counsel for all other Planning Board meetings, was made by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on voice vote with Deputy Mayor Dooley abstaining.

Motion to adopt resolutions to appoint James Brunette as a Real Estate Expert, Maurice Rached as a Traffic Consultant Expert and Robert Zelley as an Environmental Expert, was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on voice vote with Deputy Mayor Dooley abstaining.

Motion to adopt Maser Consulting as professional to handle the Master Plan Reexamination was made by Mr. Aschenbach and seconded by Ms. Feder and passed on unanimous voice vote.

**3. MINUTES**

None

**4. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

- 5.** Motion for the Board to move into executive session was made Mr. Cossa and seconded by Ms. Feder and passed on unanimous voice vote.

Motion for the Board to move into open session was made by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on unanimous voice vote.

### **PUBLIC HEARING - ROOM 107**

**1. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

Ms. Murray called a public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board to order on March 20, 2019 at 8:07 p.m. in Room 107 of the Municipal Building, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. Ms. Lenahan announced this meeting is in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing of the Board's annual schedule of meetings in the Westfield Leader and the Star Ledger with the agenda specifying the time, place and matters to be heard having been posted on a bulletin Board in the Town Hall reserved for such announcements and the filing of said agenda with the Township Clerk of Cranford. Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

**3. ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:**

Ms. Murray  
Mr. Cossa  
Deputy Mayor Dooley  
Ms. Feder  
Mayor Giblin  
Ms. Pedde  
Mr. Taylor

**Members Absent:**

Ms. Anderson

**Alternates Present:**

Mr. Aschenbach  
Ms. Didzbalis

**Alternates Absent:**

None

**Also present:**

Mark Rothman, Esquire; Kathy Lenahan, Administrator/Scribe

**4. Application # PBA-17-00004- Continued from March 6, 2019**

**Hartz Mountain Industries**

**750 Walnut Avenue**

**Block: 541, Lot: 2, C-3 Zone**

**Applicant is seeking to rezone the subject property to eliminate the office and warehousing uses in favor of multi-family residential use (§136-13).**

Scott Rubin, Superintendent of the Board of Education for Cranford appeared and was sworn in. He described his role and responsibilities as the Superintendent. Dr. Rubin also described his credentials and certifications. He was accepted as an expert in the areas of his profession as a superintendent along with budget review, budget testimony, planning forecasting and creating and collaborating on the strategic plan.

He testified to the following through questions posed by Mr. Rothman:

He relies on reports prepared by other professionals when coming up with a strategic plan. He also works with community stakeholders, the Board, and partners with demographers for projections. They are in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of a 5-year strategic plan. He is familiar with the 750 Walnut application. He has reviewed the applicant's planner report, looked at the fiscal report, demographics, etc. He considered the current state of school district, which includes the district's

strong special education programs, has won grants for support for students, and has many athletic and art programs. There are 3864 students, 532 full time employees and 8 buildings and are using all available space. Some schools have more than one service being provided in a classroom.

Districts have normal fluctuations in growth. Students are assigned based on their address. The proposed rezoning would overload Walnut and Livingston schools K through 5 and then Hillside at the middle school.

Mr. Rhatican objected to the conclusion Dr. Rubin made regarding the number of students predicted.

Dr. Rubin stated he did consider the May 2018 report from Dr. Ross Haber. The report predicts 353 students which is more than the current enrollment in any of the Cranford elementary schools. Based on the documents he has reviewed there is a 70-20-10 split.

Stated there is a lot of construction in town and already aware of Birchwood, Centennial and Walnut and is concerned about the proposed impact of additional students. Birchwood is projecting 99 students coming from that development.

Described a slide from slide presentation marked Exhibit School District 1. Was prepared by the Business Administrator and is data proposed for the 19-20 school budget. Described the State formula for each student. Per pupil cost is \$15,915.00, but that does not include all cost for the student. Described the various other costs to be factored into for each pupil. Also discussed the 2% annual cap on the tax levy. Stated there are only limited exceptions to the cap.

Dr. Rubin's opinion is that based on current programming, maintaining that programming, along with the schools already full to capacity, and the developments that are being built bringing new students into Cranford, to receive another 353 students from this project, does not know a way for the schools to accommodate the students projected from that proposed development.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

There are many factors in building a new school, depending upon what will be in the school, could be in excess of 50 million dollars. Class size with an additional 353 would be possibly 30 to 40. 353 students is the number from Dr. Haber's report. The over development he is aware of is the proposed 99 from Birchwood. 70-20-10 assumptions are assumed for the 99 students from Birchwood. Birchwood was not assumed in the current strategic plan. Cannot predict how many children could be special needs students. There are no approved plans for any additions but there has been discussions with the community. Walnut Avenue is the location for the SNAPPY program.

Questions from Mr. Rhatican to Dr. Rubin ascertain the following:

He is familiar with the annual fiscal report that goes to the State. Dr. Haber performed a district wide demographic study. Exhibit marked School District 2 dated March 2018. Dr. Haber was retained to look at full day kindergarten. Report included looking at Birchwood but not 750 Walnut. Dr. Haber was retained to look at 750 Walnut. Relying on Dr. Haber's number of 353 students for the 750 Walnut projection. Worked on strategic plan last year and was approved and implemented at start of this year. Does not know if out of district cost would or would not be

needed for students at 750 Walnut. Does not know if they are sharing spaces at Walnut Avenue school. Part of Dr. Haber's report was a facilities utilization report.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of the witness with the following appearing:

Tom Roetker – 347 South Union Avenue – Asked about the typical class size K-5 in the schools. Asked about State mandating class size and about the budget and the cap.

Dr. Rubin stated they try to keep the class size around 23. Kindergarten maxes out at 23. Board policy is 15 to 23. Stated does not mandate class size.

Dr. Haber appeared and was sworn in. His credentials were presented to the Board and he was accepted as an expert witness in the field of demography.

He testified to the following through questions posed by Mr. Rothman:

He is familiar with the proposed 750 Walnut project. He was hired by the Cranford School District. During the 17-18 school year he prepared a report and did consider Birchwood in that report, but not 750 Walnut. He prepared a report in late Spring of 2018 which focused on the potential impact of 750 Walnut. Exhibit marked School District 3, titled "Potential Impact of 750 Walnut", dated May 2018. Discussed the report and stated that he did not consider Woodmont or Riverfront because of their location as transit villages. He looked at the comparable districts with newer developments. Also considered there would be 139 affordable units in 750 Walnut. Projected 353 school age children. Discussed the factors he uses to get his projection. Discussed his margin of error with his projections.

Discussed the 2006 Rutgers study. Stated he used that study till 2009. Found applying that data was under projecting. Discussed the comparable communities he used such as: Chatham, Madison, New Providence, Westfield, Summit, Ridgewood, Glenridge, Berkeley Heights and Springfield. Average yield per household was .56 school age children. Describe what a DFG is (district factor group). Has published 300 to 400 reports using this methodology of the DFG. His approach has been accepted by State agencies.

Described the steps in his Facilities Utilization Study. Surveyed the principals, obtained floor plans for all of the buildings. Compared what was provided and then met with each principal, asked for feedback and prepared his report. From the report he can then determine the needs of the building in the future. He found that the buildings are all fully utilized. District is showing some degree of growth.

He can make recommendations for facilities expansion or improvement where needed. In this instance for 750 Walnut, facilities expansion would be required. Looked at different scenarios. Potential of 353 new students, the district would need to increase class size or expansion.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

People move into a community for many reasons, one reason is quality of schools. Discussed the Rutgers study being under projected. Migration ratio is movement of students from one grade to another. Discussed transitional grades. 353 student number is coming directly from the 750 Walnut project. Built desirability into the number. Looked at similar developments in similar towns.

Questions from Mr. Rhatican to Dr. Haber ascertain the following:

He read the reports by Mr. Hughes. Can't recall which study Mr. Hughes referenced. He was referring to Exhibit School District 4 as an updated report. He has not seen the comprehensive annual report for the fiscal year ending June of 2018 for Cranford. Chart 1 page 2 of the addendum references 3821 student enrollment. High school enrollment beginning school year 2018-2019 (chart 4 page 3) is 1198 students. Over the next five years there is a decrease of about 10% at high school. Over the next five years he predicts a decrease of 8 students. Is not familiar with the Cranford Crossing project. Does not know the number of units in the Woodmont or Riverfront projects. Did look at data specific to Cranford. Looked at community in a micro sense instead of statewide data. He did 2 different reports, one in spring and one in fall and looked at different parameters for each one. Showed a list of the comps and marked it Exhibit School District 6. Is aware that 750 Walnut would be garden apartment units. His chart (SD 6) yielded a .09 school age children per one-bedroom apartment. Does not know dates of when schools were built in Cranford. Is aware that there have been expansions at the schools. 353 is the number of school age children for the 750 Walnut project. Some of those children could be home schooled or go to private schools.

Mr. Rhatican referred to a report title School Age Children in Rental Units in New Jersey, was marked as Exhibit School District 4. Exhibit School District 5 is a comprehensive annual financial report.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of the witness with the following appeared:

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Asked about projection of 353 students and the plus or minus 3%, would be a discrepancy of 11 students. Asked about the affordable housing units being a conservative estimate. Asked if someone rented a 3-bedroom unit, is it possible they would have more than one child. Asked about the schools being fully utilized and about putting more classrooms in a school.

Dr. Haber stated 11 students is correct and it is likely that there would be more than one child in a 3-bedroom unit.

Ms. Murray stated the Board does not normally hear a new witness after 10:30 p.m. and is proposing to end the hearing with the additional witness returning on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**8. PUBLIC PORTION**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made, seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 10:55 p.m.

---

Donna Pedde