

## MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD

### Meeting of March 1, 2023

A public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board was called to order by Ms. Kellett on March 1, 2023 at 7:34 p.m. Ms. Kellett announced in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Open Public Meetings Act, the Westfield Leader and the Star Ledger have been notified and the agenda posted in the municipal building as required.

#### 1. ROLL CALL

##### Members Present:

Ms. Kellett  
Mr. Nordelo  
Mayor Andrews  
Ms. Didzbalis  
Ms. Rappa  
Ms. Sen  
Mr. Taylor

##### Members Absent:

Deputy Mayor Gareis  
Ms. Pedde

##### Alternates Present:

Mr. Leber  
Mr. Pistol

##### Alternates Absent:

None

##### Also present:

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Nicholas Dickerson, Dan Levin, CGP&H Affordable Housing Agent

#### 2. MINUTES

None

#### 3. RESOLUTIONS

None

#### 4. COMMUNICATIONS

None

#### 5. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

A motion to go into closed session was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Didzbalis, and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

A motion to come out of closed session was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Didzbalis, and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

## **PUBLIC MEETING – Immediately following the Workshop – Council Chambers**

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

Ms. Kellett called a public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board to order on March 1, 2023, at 8:00 p.m. Ms. Kellett announced this meeting is in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act” as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to 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. ROLL CALL:**

#### **Members Present:**

Ms. Kellett  
Mr. Nordelo  
Mayor Andrews  
Ms. Didzbalis  
Ms. Rappa  
Ms. Sen  
Mr. Taylor

#### **Members Absent:**

Deputy Mayor Gareis  
Ms. Pedde

#### **Alternates Present:**

Mr. Leber  
Mr. Pistol

#### **Alternates Absent:**

None

#### **Also present:**

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Nicholas Dickerson, Board Planner, John Ruschke, Board Stormwater Engineer, Dan Levin, CGP&H Affordable Housing Agent

A motion to amend the 2023 Rules and Regulations to modify the five minutes for public questions to ten minutes was made by Ms. Sen, seconded by Mr. Pistol, and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

- 3.** Application #PB 22-003 – Continued from February 15, 2023  
Applicant: 201 Walnut Ave LLC  
201 Walnut Avenue  
Block: 484 Lot: 19.01 D-T Zone

Applicant is seeking Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval to construct a three (3) story multi-family apartment building, consisting of thirty-four (34) market-rate units, two (2) affordable housing units, and three (3) special needs housing units, for a total of thirty-nine (39) units.

Mr. Drill stated the hearing for 201 Walnut Avenue is being reopened to allow for a letter dated February 21, 2023 from CGP&H, the Township's Affordable Housing Agent, to be read into the record.

Daniel Levin appeared for CGP&H and was sworn in. Stated CGP&H is responsible to contract with the developers to administer the inclusionary affordable units.

Mr. Drill stated that Mr. Tuvel sent in a letter dated March 1, 2023, stating the applicant will comply with all the conditions in the revised list. Also in that letter, the applicant is seeking an exception regarding shade tree spacing on Hight Street & Walnut Avenue.

A motion to reopen the hearing for limited purposes, was made by Mr. Pistol, seconded by Mr. Leber, and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

Mr. Drill asked if anyone had questions for Mr. Levin regarding the CGP&H letter.

There were no questions for Mr. Levin from the Board, the Public, or the Applicant.

Mr. Levin was excused.

Mr. Drill asked the Board if they had questions regarding the exception for the shade tree shaping.

Questions from the Board members consisted of:

How many trees are they looking to remove with the exception. Also, how many are they keeping and/or adding.

Mr. Dickerson stated it would depend on the size of the trees. The exception is for Walnut & High Street. Chestnut Street will comply. It would not be appropriate to put trees by the site triangles.

Mr. Tuvel stated there is a large tree on Walnut Avenue that is staying, but not planting the additional one at the site triangle. On High Street, the existing tree will stay south of the driveway, but north of the driveway, would conflict with site distance.

Mr. Drill asked if anyone from the Public had questions on the shade tree exception, no one appeared.

A motion to close the record and move to deliberations and voting was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Didzbalis, and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

Mr. Drill read from the Jury Charge that he prepared dated February 24, 2023.

Ms. Kellett read each piece of relief/exception(s) the applicant was requesting (which will be attached to these minutes) as follows:

#1 – Members commenting on this exception were: Mr. Pistol, Mr. Leber, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Mr. Nordelo, Mr. Taylor, Ms. Sen, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Kellett

Straw Poll for #1A from Deliberation Sheets:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: Mr. Leber

#2 - (New Condition- Shade Tree Spacing) - Members commenting on this exception were: Mr. Pistol, Mr. Leber, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Mr. Nordelo, Mr. Taylor, Ms. Sen, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Kellett

Straw Poll for #2 from Deliberation Sheets:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

#3A – Members commenting on this exception were: Mr. Pistol, Mr. Leber, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Mr. Nordelo, Mr. Taylor, Ms. Sen, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Kellett

Straw Poll for #3A from Deliberation Sheets:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: Ms. Sen

Straw Poll for #3B from Deliberation Sheets:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: Ms. Sen

Straw Poll for #4A

Affirmative: None

Opposed: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

#4B – Members commenting on this relief: Mr. Taylor, Ms. Sen, Ms. Didzbalis, Mayor Andrews, Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Kellett

Straw Poll for 4B from Deliberation Sheets:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: Ms. Sen

#5 – Members commenting on the conditions were: Mr. Pistol, Mr. Leber, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Sen, Ms. Kellett

A straw poll was taken to determine how many trash receptacles the Board would require:

The poll was 7 to 2, in favor of four (4) trash receptacles, with language that they are not to be located in the SW & SE corners of the property.

A question was asked about Condition #4 regarding green space. Board member discussed aesthetics, environmental reasons, and traffic safety.

Comments by Board members on the application consisted of:

The Plan is designed appropriately, not out of character with the area. Rear of the development designed with different materials to blend in with the residential dwellings. The location of the development is consistent with the Master Plan and the Redevelopment Plan. Appreciate that the Plan is moving the Town closer to its affordable housing requirements. Proposal is going beyond the requirements for flood mitigation and appreciate that the neighbors were engaged and made to feel more comfortable with the process. A nice project for the Town, not a cookie cutter project. Blends different types of architecture. Willingness of applicant to listen to the Public. Applicant answered questions to make improvements and agreeing to the conditions. Flooding is a chief concern. Applicant has gone to great lengths to protect the property and the community from flooding. Thanked witnesses that the applicant brought forth, is happy with the design and that it is not increasing any flooding on any property. Thanked the Public for their questions and comments. Opposed to the Redevelopment Plan and feels it is unsound and unsafe. Feels there was conflicting testimony and perspectives throughout the hearing. It is important to be able to voice your opinion for Board members and the Public. Architecture is interesting and flood mitigation efforts were innovative. There were significant questions from the Board and the Board professionals. Every Board member had the opportunity to weigh in on the application. There was extensive testimony and documentation, along with all the conditions that have been agreed to by the applicant.

A motion to grant the approval, subject to all the conditions set forth, was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Mr. Pistol and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Leber, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: Ms. Sen

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 9:19 p.m.

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Molly Hurley Kellett, Chair