

## MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD

### Meeting of March 3, 2021

A public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board was called to order by Ms. Murray on March 3, 2021 at 7:32 p.m. via **Google Meet**. Ms. Lenahan 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 Via Google Meet:

Ms. Murray  
Ms. Kellett – recused herself from hearing  
Ms. Didzbalis  
Commissioner Gareis  
Mr. Nordelo  
Ms. Pedde  
Mayor Prunty  
Ms. Rappa

#### Members Absent:

Mr. Taylor

#### Alternates Present via Google Meet:

Ms. Sen  
Mr. Walton

#### Alternates Absent:

None

#### Also present via Google Meet:

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Jason Bottcher, Zoning Officer, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Frank Banisch, Township Affordable Housing Planner, Mike Edwards, Esq. Township Affordable Housing Counsel

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 3. PUBLIC HEARING on the adoption of the proposed 2021 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP). Upon the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Board may adopt the 2021 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

Mike Edwards appeared and reviewed the steps the Township has gone through regarding the Mount Laurel doctrine and adopting a fair share plan.

Frank Banisch appeared and was sworn in. Reviewed his qualifications for the Board. Presented a PowerPoint presentation titled *Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan*, dated March 3, 2021.

The PowerPoint Presentation included the following:

- Reviewed elements of the 2009 Master Plan which included a statement of objectives, a land use plan element and a housing plan element.
- Reviewed the Residential Goals of the 2009 Master Plan particularly focused on “Concentrate higher density residential uses in the Downtown to take advantage of transportation infrastructure and return adequate parking as a prerequisite to new development”.
- Described the Land Use Issues and the 2009 Master Plan addressing the downtown core, business park and village commercial areas. Also discussed the plan’s need to provide affordable housing for a wide range of age ranges.
- MLUL requires a reexamination every 10 years.
- The 2019 Reexamination Plan reiterated many of the 2009 Master Plan residential goals including using redevelopment and rehabilitation of underutilized properties.
- Reviewed the Fair Share and Mount Laurel doctrine requiring municipalities to address their “fair share” of affordable housing.
- Defined the terms: Fair Share, Realistic Development Potential (RDP) and Unmet Need.
- Reviewed the projects and credits in the Present Housing Need.
- Reviewed the projects and credits in the Third Round Need.
- Discussed the Third Round Projects as: Myrtle Street, South Avenue & Chestnut Street, 750 Walnut Avenue and North Avenue Gateway.
- Reviewed the Unmet Need: overlay zones as downtown core with highest density around the train station.
- Discussed the Housing Element as providing a wide range of housing for diverse income groups; will concentrate higher density in Downtown, will utilize redevelopment and rehabilitation for underutilized land and provide buffer zones between commercial and residential.
- Reviewed the various developments in Cranford regarding the acres, units and density of each.
- Reviewed various demographics regarding Cranford including: population, education, employment and household sizes.
- Reviewed the 2020 Affordable Housing Size/Income limits (moderate, low and very low).

Mr. Edwards stated that this proposed document has a lot of similar principles to the document adopted by the Planning Board in 2018. A few differences are the downtown core densities, park overlay added, 201 Walnut and 100-126 South Avenue added as RDP and the EF Britton site went from an RDP to Unmet Need.

Ms. Murray asked if any Board members had questions on the presentation, no one had any questions.

Mr. Drill asked Mr. Banisch about Slide #10 and the statute for the Fair Housing Act. Asked about date the amendment to the settlement agreement was signed and about the 15% and 20% set asides.

Mr. Banisch stated the statute is 52:27D-310 and the amendment was signed on Feb. 24, 2021 by the Township. The 15% set aside is for rental and the 20% set aside is for sale per COAH.

Ms. Murray asked if anyone from the Public had questions on this presentation, the following appeared:

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Asked about 750 Walnut Avenue and if there is a restriction of years for the commercial piece. Asked about rental bonus credits and condo type housing. Asked about parking in downtown and core density. Asked about several group homes being credit worthy.

Mr. Edwards stated the entire 30.5 acres is in the RDP calculation. There is no term of years that the restriction applies; however, the municipality has the right to satisfy that RDP on that site or any other site. The Town would need to change the zoning for that part of the site to have housing. The Town cannot have a zone ordinance to have family or rental; it is what the market demands. Not all group homes are credit worthy. To be credit worthy, it must be deed restricted and for a certain term. These are not credit worthy. Trying to secure the credits and negotiations are ongoing.

Mr. Banisch stated structure parking will make up for surface parking.

Brian Lopez – 29 Wade Avenue – Asked about steps to determine a property is credit worthy.

Mr. Edwards stated the unit would need to be deed restricted and recorded and normally that is for a 30-year period; then marketed to qualified individuals or households.

Mr. Drill reviewed the statutes the Planning Board would need to consider during their deliberations.

#### **4. DELIBERATIONS OF THIRD ROUND HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN**

Board comments consisted of the following:

Presentation was very thorough. There are legal requirements that need to be addressed. Keeping Cranford moving in the right direction for planning and meeting requirements of the state and the courts. This is an incredibly important document.

Hoping to move this forward. Amount of time and care in putting this document together is evident. Appreciate the work. Professionals have done a great job.

Ms. Murray asked if any Board members opposed adopting this element, no one was opposed.

Ms. Murray asked if anyone from the Public would like to make a comment on the Plan, no one appeared.

Mr. Drill read a draft of Planning Board Resolution No. 2021-007 into the record.

A motion to adopt the 2021 Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and Planning Board Resolution No. 2021-007, was made by Ms. Pedde, seconded by Mr. Nordelo and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Murray, Ms. Didzbalis, Commissioner Gareis, Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Pedde, Mayor Prunty, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Walton

Opposed: None

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made, seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 8:42 p.m.

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Kathleen Murray, Chair