

MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD

Meeting of June 2, 2021

A public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board was called to order by Ms. Murray on June 2, 2021 at 7:35 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
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, Nick Dickerson, Board Planner, Ryan Cooper, Esq. Township Attorney

2. RESOLUTIONS

None

3. MINUTES

Motion to adopt the minutes of the May 5, 2021 meeting was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on roll call vote:

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

Opposed: None

4. COMMUNICATIONS

None

5. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Nick Dickerson, the Board Planner appeared. Stated he was asked by the Planning Board to do a consistency review on Township Ordinance No. 2021-10.

Reviewed his memo dated May 27, 2021. Stated the ordinance relates to a number of capital expenditures. Reviewed the following items:

- Roadway improvements
- Drainage improvements
- Replacement equipment for Police Department, Fire Department and DPW
- Improvements to 375 Centennial Avenue
- Construction at Orange Avenue pool

Looked at each item as it relates to the Master Plan and stated they are all consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.

The Board had no questions for Mr. Dickerson.

A motion that Township Ordinance No. 2021-10 is consistent with the Master Plan was made by Ms. Pedde, seconded by Ms. Kellett and passed on roll call vote:

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

Opposed: None

Ryan Cooper, Esq. appeared and stated he would like to give the Board an update on the Affordable Housing Plan. Because of the public interest and some confusion on these projects, he would like to give an update in open session. Any questions the Board would like to ask that fall under attorney-client privilege can be asked in executive session.

Stated that on April 12, 2021 there was a hearing on the HEFSP (Housing Element and Fair Share Plan) for the third-round affordable housing obligation for 2015-2025. On May 11th, the Court entered a conditional judgment of compliance and repose. As of now and till 2025, property owners and developers cannot sue the Town for being non-compliant with the Mount Laurel obligation.

Stated there does need to be some changes to the overlay ordinance, which will be coming to the Planning Board for consistency review.

Reviewed the three affordable housing projects that will satisfy the Town's affordable housing obligation:

- Hartz Mountain – 750 Walnut Avenue
- South Avenue and Chestnut Rehabilitation Area
- North Avenue Area In Need of Redevelopment

The Town has one year to adopt a redevelopment plan for each of those areas. First there is a redevelopment plan, then there is a redevelopment agreement with a developer.

Stated the 750 Walnut property was designated a condemnation area in need of redevelopment. The Township planner is working on a redevelopment plan and has discussed it with the Township Committee. They are currently negotiating that draft with Hartz Mountain. The draft was presented at a Town Hall and is available on Township website and TV35. There will be additional presentations when a new draft is available.

The South Avenue and Chestnut property is behind the 750 Walnut project. The Town planner is working on a redevelopment plan and that is anticipated to be discussed in closed session with the Township Committee on June 15th. The process will be similar to 750 Walnut. It will be 35 to 40 age targeted units on Chestnut between High and Walnut, possibly a group home, and on South Avenue, between High and Walnut will be a four-story apartment building with retail on first floor; similar to Riverfront. Process will be entering into a redevelopment plan which will come before the Planning Board for review, and there will also be a public hearing before entering into a redevelopment agreement.

For the North Avenue Area in Need of Redevelopment, the Township requested 'expressions of interest' from developers, which are submittals of ideas from developers. At the Township Committee meeting on April 27th, Mayor Prunty appointed a review team to score the proposals. The Township Committee will be given the scoring of the proposals at the June 15th meeting. The Town planner will prepare a draft of redevelopment plan, and there will be public comment and input on plan.

Mr. Cooper stated that by court order, the plans must be adopted by May 12, 2022.

6. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made in open session to go into executive session by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Didzbalis to discuss a matter where confidentiality is required for the Township Attorney and the Planning Board attorney to exercise their ethical duties as lawyers, namely, attorney client privileged legal advice regarding pending affordable housing litigation.

The motion passed on roll call vote:

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

Opposed: None

A motion to close the closed session and return to open session was made by Ms. Rappa, seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on roll call vote:

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

Opposed: None

7. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Ms. Murray stated that the Planning Board will be returning to in-person meetings beginning June 16th at the Municipal Building.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 9:10 p.m.

Kathleen Murray, Chair