

EMERSON PLANNING BOARD
EMERSON, NEW JERSEY
MARCH 16, 2006

This meeting of the Emerson Planning Board was held in the Municipal Building on Thursday, March 16, 2006. Chairman Bair opened the meeting at 8:00 PM, and invited Mr. Della Volpe to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the clerk has notified all officially published newspapers of this meeting, and notice has been posted in the Municipal Office.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Robert Adams – Present
Chairman Steven Bair – Present
Mr. Owen Cassidy – Present
Mrs. Marcia DeSalvo – Absent
Mr. Gary Goursky – Present
Mr. Fred Madura – Absent
Mr. Mark Orecchio – Present
Mayor Steven Setteducati – Present
Councilman Brian Todd – Present
Mr. Mark Madaio – Attorney – Present
Mrs. Barbara Looney – Secretary – Present
Mr. Michael Sartori – Construction / Zoning Officer – Absent – attendance not requested
Mr. Ken Job – Borough Engineer – Absent – attendance not requested

MINUTES:

A motion was made to approve the minutes for the meeting held on March 2, 2006, as amended, by Councilman Todd, seconded by Mr. Orecchio, and carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Memo from Job & Job – dated 3/6/06 – Re: MacFarlane
- Memo from Bergen County Department of Parks – dated 3/7/06 – Re: Historic Preservation
- Memo from Job & Job – dated 3/15/06 – Re: Pascack Valley Shopping Center
- Memo from Councilman Hoffman – dated 3/15/06 – Re: 58 Kinderkamack Road, LLC
- Flyer from Bergen County Bar Association – Re: Symposium – 4/29/06

VOUCHERS:

- \$658.00 – Job & Job – Re: Pascack Valley Shopping Center

A motion was made to approve this voucher by Mr. Cassidy, seconded by Mr. Orecchio, and carried.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN – BURGIS ASSOCIATES:

Chairman Bair introduced to the Board and the public Mr. Joe Burgis, Borough Planner, of Burgis Associates. Mr. Burgis stated he is here this evening to present the Redevelopment Plan, based on the Board's designation of an area in need of redevelopment. Mr. Burgis reviewed the redevelopment area, along with existing land uses and existing development. The area, based on design criteria, has a shortfall of 300 parking spaces. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) guides us in the entire redevelopment process, along with the Borough's Master Plan and Zoning ordinances. Other guidelines include the County of Bergen Master Plan, State of New Jersey Development Plan, the Municipal Land Use Law, and COAH requirements.

The goals and objectives of the plan are as follows:

- Encourage new developments that utilize architectural and other site plan elements
- Mixed use developments with reduced setbacks and continuous frontage of buildings
- Discourage front yard parking areas
- Encourage lot consolidation to enhance development
- Support pedestrian-scaled and reinforce retail activity in the district
- Support a modest increase in uses in the district to promote and sustain redevelopment
- Enhance the physical appearance of the district through streetscape improvements, building renovations, and physical improvements

Mr. Burgis reviewed the following with regard to parking and vehicle circulation:

- Work with New Jersey transit to improve access to mass transit and relocate the train station
- Review and establish programs for commuter parking
- Encourage shared parking design, with common access and circulation between adjoining properties
- Improve the design and accessibility of off-street parking to encourage the use of rear parking areas
- Work with County officials to create on-street parking along Kinderkamack Road, roadway improvements while reinforcing a pedestrian friendly environment, and smart growth concepts
- Support the addition of a dedicated turning lane on Kinderkamack Road, at the intersection with Linwood Avenue, Ackerman Avenue, and Lincoln Boulevard
- The installation of a traffic light at the corner of Ackerman Avenue and Kinderkamack Road

An important element of the plan is pedestrian safety and circulation:

- Create an enhanced pedestrian connection between the business district and activity center, such as Borough Hall, Hillman Park, and other gathering places
- Establish landscaping to buffer the sidewalks from vehicles traveling on Kinderkamack Road
- Create a physical setting for pedestrian activity that is comfortable, convenient, and visually interesting

With regard to signage, Mr. Burgis stated it is important to establish a signage program to promote consistency and complimentary design throughout the district – the styles should reflect the character of the individual buildings they are placed on. The streetscape design includes enhancing the intersection of Linwood Avenue and Kinderkamack Road as the focal point in the district, and the use of street furniture and landscaping to further create a pedestrian friendly environment.

Permitted uses in the district are to include the following: retail stores, personal service businesses, eating & drinking establishment (except drive-ins), professional, financial, medical offices, multi-family dwellings above retail commercial and other principal uses, multi-family residential dwellings including buildings above at-grade parking areas, instructional studio spaces, financial institutions, and child care facilities / nursery schools.

Accessory uses in the district include: off-street parking, outdoor eating areas, fences and walls, landscaped plazas, courtyards, alleys and other similar public amenities designed in accordance with the area and bulk regulations set forth for the district.

Prohibited uses in the area include: automotive service stations – auto body and repair shops, car washes of any type, drive-up or through windows serving restaurants, automotive and motorcycle sales and service businesses, contractor supply and storage yards, industrial, warehousing, and manufacturing uses, exterior storage of goods.

Mr. Burgis reviewed the area and bulk requirements for the Central Business District, East and West, such as lot area, lot width, lot depth, front, side, and rear yard setbacks, maximum building height, coverage and impervious coverage.

Design standards of the plan include the following: façade design, including first floor must be open windows or doorways, materials – such as primary, secondary, and accent materials – roof lines, building heights, awning & canopies, and signage.

The design feature for pedestrian circulation includes outdoor cafes, pedestrian walkways and plazas, with the use of landscaping and lighting.

Mr. Burgis stated there are a few sample concept designs, which include a unified comprehensive integrated parking design, with landscaping, to enhance the area. If the property owners work together we will create a greater number of parking spaces. A major concern is the train, when it stops, it fouls up the traffic movement east and west, and north and south. We are recommending that the train stop be relocated south of Ackerman Avenue in order to avoid the complete stop of traffic.

What we are trying to achieve here is a more attractive business district, and based on a block by block analysis, we pick up additional floor space – which is critical to property owners – and additional parking.

Mr. Goursky questioned the prohibited uses in the district, such as auto services – Mr. Burgis stated we are trying to create a pedestrian friendly environment, encourage people to park and walk around the district. Mayor Setteducati stated we want people to walk and shop – once the redevelopment of certain areas is complete, it will be beautiful – but we want to encourage property owners, with the increased foot traffic, and increase the ratables for commercial properties within the Borough.

Mr. Orecchio questioned the percentage of frontage being glass, including the door – Mr. Burgis stated the correct amount is 40 percent.

Chairman Bair questioned the southern portion of the plan – he would like to see residential properties – Mr. Burgis stated all retail uses should be in a concentrated area. Chairman Bair also stated he would like to see a restriction in 4 stories – Mr. Burgis stated along Kinderkamack Road the restriction is 3 stories, however, if a property slopes, and if you have a 4 story building behind a 3 story, there will be no differential. Mayor Setteducati commented on 2 to 3 story buildings grading back from Kinderkamack Road – Mr. Burgis stated that may happen in limited areas.

Mayor Setteducati stated however the Borough proceeds with redevelopment, there will be a COAH obligation – with regard to residential units – one unit for every 8 dwelling units is required,

and for non-residential sites – for every 25 jobs created, one affordable unit is required. The senior housing project, that will be underway soon, will also include a low-income senior housing component, enabling Emerson seniors to remain in the Borough, within walking distance to the business district. Mayor Setteducati would like to see underground utilities within the district to give an open air feel and different look, and investment into infrastructure to the Borough, such as road improvements, new library, recreation center, and Borough Hall. The relocation of the train station stop is viable along with commuter parking. Mayor Setteducati further stated how important the ratables generated from redevelopment will be – an impact on residential property owners.

Mr. Adams questioned the County's position on redevelopment – Mayor Setteducati and Mr. Burgis stated they have met with the County – this project will increase their ratables also, and they seemed receptive to the plan.

Chairman Bair questioned the relocation of the train stop – possibly further north – Mr. Burgis stated he preferred the southern relocation due to residential properties along Kinderkamack Road.

A motion was made to open public session by Councilman Todd, seconded by Mr. Adams, and carried.

Russell Huntington, attorney from Westwood, representing Hot Dog Heaven – who is very supportive and excited about this plan. Our only concern is parking – the plan seems to address onsite parking for each business; if property owners invest into the development, they may seek variances for parking. I urge the Board to create a parking pool so that property owners, who do not have enough parking on their site, contribute to a fund, to be relieved of the parking on their site. Some Boroughs build the parking areas as local improvements, and assessed the property owners with modest payments over the years. Mayor Setteducati he met with some property owners along Emerson Plaza West, who stated they wanted to keep their own parking spots, and have discussed with other property owners an opportunity for them to develop larger lots.

Toni Plantamura-Rossi – owner of Dairy Queen – pleased with the plan; if the County accepts the plan, what will happen with the widening of Kinderkamack Road – Mr. Burgis states the plan calls for one lane in each direction, with turning lanes at specific intersections. In my discussions with County, they understood the importance of one lane each way on Kinderkamack Road, and how important it is to the business district. Mrs. Rossi is concerned with an accident in front of the store, due to the 2 lanes merging into one, right before the driveway entrance to the store; would like a guardrail installed to protect customers due to the dangerous situation.

Frank Solimando – 111 Kinderkamack Road – concerned with commuter parking, and the backups on Kinderkamack Road; I have tenants who do not want to sign leases due to this, and it is causing a financial hardship; never notified of this evening's meeting – and further stated he lives in Florida; also concerned with the maintenance of the New Jersey Transit rail tracks.

Al Medina – Allstate – 111 Kinderkamack Road – needs to expand his business, and do interior renovations; feels he cannot sign a lease to continue at this location due to the plan.

Bob Belli – 57 Longview Drive – congratulated the Board in going forward with this – when he was on the Council letters were sent to property owners, and it went on deaf ears. We tried also to have parking on Emerson Plaza East for residents only, and were stopped by New Jersey Transit. A survey was done by the Police Department some time ago, and 65% of the vehicles that parked along Emerson Plaza East were not residents – it would be nice to have a parking area for Emerson residents only.

Rob Rossi – owner of Dairy Queen – also representing the Chamber of Commerce – questioned the next step after this – Mr. Burgis states once the Board closes the public hearing, make changes to the plan presented, and then a formal recommendation to the Governing Body. Then the Governing Body will adopt an ordinance adopting all the regulatory controls of the redevelopment plan. Once the ordinances are in place, property owners will submit a site plan application to the Planning Board – the Borough will be rezoning the business district. Mr. Rossi also questioned the possibility of financing – Mr. Burgis stated local banks might want to establish programs. Also, if the plan is adopted, property owners may be able to participate in various State funding programs.

After a brief recess, Chairman Bair called the meeting back to order. After Board discussion, a motion was made to approve the redevelopment plan and recommend to the Governing Body by Councilman Todd, seconded by Mr. Cassidy, and carried, based on the following:

- The plan should indicate that COAH requirements should be satisfied through the use of senior housing for Emerson residents
- Underground utilities should be required for the subject
- Consideration should be given to an enhanced area parking, or a parking bank
- Permitted uses at Section 290-65 shall be revised to provide at “South of Demarest Avenue”
- An adjusted total percentage of clear window and door glass in the first floor primary building frontage

Roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Orecchio – yes
 Mayor Setteducati – yes
 Mr. Adams – yes
 Mr. Goursky – yes
 Mr. Cassidy – yes
 Councilman Todd – yes
 Chairman Bair – yes

Mr. Madaio will prepare a Resolution for our next meeting. Mayor Setteducati stated this Board has put a tremendous amount of time into this plan, and it is very important to the Borough in terms of beautification, ratables, and the goal of having the finest downtown in Bergen County.

HACKENSACK GOLF CLUB – RESOLUTION

Chairman Bair stated the Resolution would be tabled until our next meeting.

HOME FOR THE ARMENIAN AGED – RECOMMENDATION

Chairman Bair stated the Recommendation would be tabled until our next meeting.

ANY BOARD MEMBER:

No comments at this time.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

A motion was made to open public session by Mayor Setteducati, seconded by Mr. Goursky, and carried.

Chairman Bair invited Councilman Hoffman to come forward to discuss the Tree Management Plan with regard to 58 Kinderkamack Road, LLC – Senior Housing. Chairman Bair stated he had many conversations with Mr. Job and the property was rezoned for this facility. There were no variances required, and a landscaping plan was submitted, and referred to the Shade Tree Commission, - we may not have waited for their response. In every Resolution this Board approves, there is always a condition that the applicant must comply with any requirements of the Shade Tree Commission. Councilman Hoffman stated the applicant still has not complied, and many of the trees on the site have been removed. The Secretary stated a copy of the entire site plan, including the landscaping plan, was submitted to the Commission back in May 2005. Chairman Bair requested the Secretary contact the applicant's attorney tomorrow, and fax them a Tree Management Plan application for their immediate attention.

A motion was made to close public session by Mr. Goursky, seconded by Councilman Todd, and carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mayor Setteducati, seconded by Mr. Adams, and carried.

RECONVENE:

A motion was made to reconvene the meeting at 10:30 PM in order to discuss the Stormwater Management Ordinance by Mr. Orecchio, seconded by Mr. Adams, and carried.

Mr. Madaio stated the Stormwater Management Ordinance must be adopted by April 1, 2006. After Board review of the ordinance, a motion was made to approve the Ordinance for recommendation to the Governing Body by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Orecchio, and carried, with all members voting in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Goursky, seconded by Councilman Todd, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Looney