

**PLANNING BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
JUNE 12, 2019**

**CALL TO
ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

The Board saluted the flag.

ROLL CALL

On a call of the roll, the following Board Members and Officials should be present:

BOARD

Mr. William Hering, Vice Chair
Mr. Raymond Giacobbe, Mayor
Mr. Jeff Brooks, Mayor's Designee
Mr. Michael Pakay, Commissioner
Mr. Jeremy Mojica, Commissioner
Mr. Richard Watkins, Commissioner
Mr. Robert Simon, Commissioner
Mr. Alexander Shipley, Commissioner
Mr. Thomas O'Reilly, Commissioner
Mr. William Cladek, 1st Alternate Commissioner
Mr. Jeffrey Robinson, Commissioner Chair
Mr. James Polles, Esq, Board Attorney
Ms. Jacqueline Dirmann, City Engineer
Mr. Paul A. Phillips, City Planner
Mrs. Ann Marie Williams, Board Secretary

*Absent from this meeting were Commissioner Hering. Mayor's designee represented the Mayor.

MINUTES: Any necessary changes to the Planning Board minutes of February 26, 2019 shall be made at this time and approved by action of the Commissioners.

Motion: Commissioner Simon Second: Commissioner Shipley

Yes: Commissioners Brooks, Robinson, Pakay, Mojica, Simon, Shipley

Absent: Commissioners Hering

Abstain: Commissioners Cladek, Watkins and O'Reilly

Minutes were approved

Chairman Robinson opened the meeting with the regulations and reading of the agenda into the record. The following action took place.

SWEARING IN OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS:

Chairman called up the following individuals representing Fraytak Veisz Hopkins Duthie P.C for their Presentation: Courtesy review of FVHD # 5152d1 / doe#4290-080-19-3000 Drawing D1-04 – Site Plan for the Various Rehabilitation projects for Rahway High School.

George R. Duthie the principle architect stated his name and affiliation and was sworn in. He was joined by Al Digeorgio & Dr. Patricia Camp. Mr Duthie discussed in detail the plans for the outdoor classroom (i.e. field). Commissioner Cladek asked for clarity on the location and was advised it is a dirt lot at the High School on the North end of the site. Commissioner Brooks was advised that this would not take away any parking and Commissioner Shipley was provided with the explanation on the purpose of the project which is to create a supplemental place for the students to have PE, for use by sports team and when applicable the community. The student body is getting larger and this turfed/uncovered space which accommodates 50/60 people will allow for another station, is nearest the gym entrance and encourages exercise. Project is estimated to be done by the 3rd week of August.

No motion to vote as this was a courtesy review.

Chairman called upon Paul Phillips, City Planner who will be presenting the 2019 Master Plan Reexamination Report, together with the Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation for Block 162, Lots 8 thru 13.

Paul Phillips of Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes LLC, Board Planner stated his name and affiliation and was sworn in. Phillips explained that he has been working with the Administration and Cindy Solomon to update the Master Plan. Phillips covered the changes that happened historically but clarified that there hasn't been a full reexamination in over 20 years. His job as Planner ensures that the required elements are covered as per the Statute. Phillips went over the goals and problems and confirmed all has been addressed.

Floor was opened to the Commissioners for questions on what was referenced in the reexamination document.

Commissioner Shipley questioned whether the areas identified as in need of some kind or rehabilitation or redevelopment will actually happen, and the response was that it was a struggle because many properties won't qualify. The bulk of the areas being zoned as R2; however, most of what is there currently is not. Commissioner Shipley also agreed that the descriptions and explanations in the reexamination of the Master Plan were not bad. In response to the Commissioners concerns regarding the future of small businesses and downtowns, Phillips explained that what Rahway is seeing people in even stronger downtowns are experiencing. Thriving downtowns are more experienced, and destination based. Having an Arts District is key thing and should continue.

Floor was opened to comments from the public and there were none.

The Attorney read the resolution prepared in anticipation of the Master Plan Reexamination being heard.

Commissioner Robinson asked whether the board was prepared to vote on the Master Plan Reexamination tonight

**Motion: Commissioner Simon; Second: Commissioner O'Reilly
Yes: Commissioners Simon, Mojica, O'Reilly, Robinson, Cladek, Brooks, Pakay, Watkins and Shipley
Absent: Commissioner Hering
Motion Approved**

Chairman Robinson spoke to the Study of the Area in need of redevelopment investigation. Board Attorney Polles clarified what an investigative study's intent was; confirmed that the decision made would be a recommendation to City Council and reiterated that the Planning Board is not designating. Polles also clarified that the notice that must happen for this differs from that of a traditional application presented to the Board. This requires notice to be published twice which was done and in addition to that notice was mailed to the property owners of record both regular and certified.

Chairman called upon Paul Phillips, City Planner who will be presenting the Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation for Block 162, Lots 8 thru 13.

Phillips explained that this public hearing was being held to consider whether the properties noted meet the criteria to be considered an area in need of redevelopment. This was a direction by resolution which was passed February 2019 as is specified in the statute. The properties in question were reviewed for land use; tax maps. Property maintenance records and violations were reviewed as was zoning and Police Reports. Phillips explained that under the statute, the Planning Board holds the hearing and makes a recommendation on whether all, any or none qualify. The public has an opportunity to speak and the board makes a recommendation. It is the governing body that makes the determination.

Total property under review cover 1.4 acres. All are under the R2 single family residential zone. Phillips explained criteria's A through H. The 6 properties in question were discussed and Phillips confirmed which criteria point they fell under and the presentation was concluded.

Floor was opened to questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Brooks raised a concern regarding a property being under appraised and Phillips reiterated that this was only an examination; however, if the house were to be acquired, there are good faith negotiations and the appraisers review. Commissioner Pakay asked what Phillips would like to see there if the property were to be acquired. Phillips again reiterated that it isn't even a point to be discussed because there is not a determination. Phillips clarified to Commissioner Robinson that lots 5-7 are not part of the study because they are already in a redevelopment area. Commissioner Robinson also received clarity on the former St Marks Church and the home that was a part of the property.

Floor was open to questions from the public.

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Lakwan Anderson
308 Seminary Ave

Three concerns were voiced. 1) If there are no concrete plans, can a plan be put into place? 1a) no. 2) Regarding the police reports, the nature of the reports isn't accurate as they were calls and not police activity. 2a) no response as this was a comment. 3) If it reaches a level of condemnation, would they be reimbursed for relocation 3a) If the recommendation is made to Council to identify it as an area in need and Council adopts a plan; then, in due course the City would follow the law and make good faith offers. It is just the fair value of the land and improvements.

Steny Neron
288 Seminary Ave

He voiced concern on where the study leaves his property since they only qualify because of the adjacent properties. Phillips reiterated the steps that are involved in this type of study and advised that the City has no plans to date. Mr. Neron then asked whether the property owners would have a chance to redevelopment their properties on their own to which Phillips advised it would be dependent on what the redevelopment plans says and there is no plan to date. Last question was when this zone was determined to be a 1 family zone and Phillips advised that these properties could predate when the ordinances/zones were created so they could have been grandfathered in.

There being no more questions the public portion of the meeting was closed.

Commissioner Robinson asked whether the board was prepared to vote the Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation for Block 162, Lots 8 thru 13 tonight

Motion: Commissioner Simon; Second: Commissioner Brooks
Yes: Commissioners Simon, Mojica, O'Reilly, Robinson, Cladek, Brooks, Pakay, Watkins and Shipley
Absent: Commissioner Hering
Motion Approved

ADJOURN: There being no further business; the meeting shall adjourn.

Motion: Commissioner Simon; Second: Commissioner Brooks
Yes: Commissioners Simon, Mojica, O'Reilly, Robinson, Cladek, Brooks, Pakay, Watkins and Shipley
Absent: Commissioner Hering
Motion Approved

Meeting ending at 9:25pm