

MINUTES  
 PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
 THURSDAY – AUGUST 22, 2013 - 7:00 PM  
 365 WESTFIELD AVENUE, AUDITORIUM

In accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975 c231, notice of this meeting was published and a notice as to the time and place of this meeting was deposited with the Township Clerk and posted on the bulletin board of the Clark Municipal Building at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

1. Roll Call

NAME	ROLL CALL			
Mayor Sal Bonaccorso	X			
Council Rep. Frank Mazzarella	X			
John Laezza	X			
Michael Kurzawski	X			
John Zamboni	X			
Kevin Koch	O			
Robert Tarantino	X			
Neil Curcio	X			
Matthew Casey	X			
Michael Altmann, Alternate 1	X			
Kevin O'Brien, Planner	X			
Gordon Meth, Traffic	X			
Frank Cerasa, Fire Official	X			
Michael Cresitello, Planning Board Attorney	X			
Rich O'Connor, Township Engineer	X			
Lt. Pollock, Police Dept. Rep.	X			
Chris Buccarelli, Fire Dept. Rep.	O			
Lisa McCabe, Secretary	X			

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Correspondence

- A. Application for Freshwater Wetlands General Permits 1, 6 & 7 Notice
- B. Letter from RBA Group, Inc. ref: Clark Commons

A motion to dispense with the reading of the correspondence was made by Mayor Bonaccorso and seconded by Mr. Laezza. All Ayes.

4. Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of August 1, 2013 was made by Mr. Zamboni and seconded by Mr. Tarantino. All Ayes

Matt Casey recused himself.

Michael Kurzawski and Robert Tarantino were not present at the last meeting on August 1, 2013, but have listened to the transcript of the meeting.

5. Site Plan

A. Clark Commons, 1255 Raritan Road/Walnut Avenue, Block 144, Lots 1 & 2

Mr. Stan Fink, Esq. backtracked to the last meeting that needs to be clarified. He called Mr. Krame and he stated that they are only looking for the 241,000 square feet as depicted on the plans. They are not asking for the extra 4,000 square feet.

Mayor Bonaccorso stated that they would have to come back to the Board if they need to expand.

Mr. Krame stated that they are under contract with Conrail to remove the tracks on the property including the ones on Raritan Road.

Mr. Zamboni asked if there have been any arrangements with ShopRite. Mr. Krame stated that they have no further information but the reason that they are purchasing the Conrail property is to give them the ability to connect the property to ShopRite. Mr. Krame also stated that the plans before the Board have nothing to do with being tied into ShopRite. The plans do not have access from one site to the other.

A motion to open the meeting to the public for questions of Mr. Krame was made by Mr. Tarantino and was seconded by Mr. Laezza. All Ayes.

A motion to close the meeting to the public for questions of Mr. Krame was made by Mr. Zamboni and seconded by Mr. Laezza. All Ayes

Mr. Fink called Mr. Scott Kennel, Traffic Engineer. A motion to accept as an expert was made by Mr. Mazzarella and seconded by Mr. Zamboni. All Ayes.

Also called was Mr. Jay Troutman, Traffic Engineer, A motion to accept as an expert was made by Mayor Bonaccorso, and seconded by Mr. Zamboni. All Ayes.

Both Traffic Engineers were sworn in.

Jay Troutman stated that they are planning significant roadway improvements. Scott Kennel is the project manager of the project.

Exhibit A-13 – Aerial Traffic Study

Mr. Kennel stated that extensive data has been collected from 2/10/12. The studies were done in the morning, Saturday afternoon and evening peak hours on Raritan Road and Central Avenue.

44 Hours of data has been collected from automatic counters.

The improvements presented by the developer's traffic expert, Scott Kennel, include the following:

**Central Avenue:** The road will be widened to six lanes in the area of the traffic light at Raritan Road to add an additional left-turn lane at both approaches. This will be done through gaining easements for property from Rite Aid and Bally's at one approach and Exxon and an adjacent office building at the other.

**On Raritan Road, with Rite Aid on right:** The road will be widened to add a dedicated right-turn lane for right turns onto Central Avenue.

**Raritan Road at ShopRite/Rite Aid light and old rail tracks:** This area will also be widened to add dedicated left-turn lanes in both directions to enter either the ShopRite or the Rite Aid/Bally's. The abandoned rail tracks will be removed. The light will remain.

**Hyatt Hills entrances and exits:** The main entrance/exit will be moved closer to Raritan Road to line up with the complex's main entrance/exit. The old entrance/exit will remain as a right turn in, right turn out.

**Clark Commons entrances and exits:** The complex will have four entrances and exits, one on Walnut Avenue and three on Raritan Road. The main entrance would be the one across from the adjusted Hyatt Hills Golf Course entrance with a traffic light. The other two entrances/exits on Raritan Road would be at each corner of the property but will be right turn in, right turn out only. The entrance/exit on Walnut Avenue would allow left and right turns in, but only right turns out.

**Raritan Road along the complex and Hyatt Hills:** This area will also be widened by one additional lane and a traffic light will be installed at the main entrance/exit on Raritan Road, across from Hyatt Hills. The Hyatt Hills entrance will be moved several feet closer to Walnut Avenue to line up with the complex's main entrance/exit. There will be dedicated left-turn lanes on each approach for entering either the complex or Hyatt Hills.

**Traffic signal timing:** Several residents at the meeting questioned whether having so many traffic lights in less than a half mile of road would really help traffic. Kennel replied that traffic signals in the area will be coordinated to allow for better movement through Raritan Road.

**Road restriping on Raritan Road at Walnut Avenue light:** The board requested that Raritan Road at Walnut Avenue be restriped by extending solid lane lines at the light further back to discourage drivers exiting the complex's corner exit from crossing over multiple lanes to turn left onto Walnut Avenue, heading into Cranford. To make

that left from Raritan onto Walnut, drivers should exit the main entrance/exit with the light, said Kennel.

**Road restriping on Walnut:** Walnut Avenue will be restriped to allow for left turns into the complex's entrance, across from Suburban Road. Sidewalks will also go down Walnut Avenue.

Mr. Zamboni asked how many manual days were counted. Mr. Kennel stated that there were 15-16 days and 24 hour recording devices. There was not count done during holiday time during November and December.

Mr. Zamboni also asked if there was any thought into putting a traffic light or blinking light at Walnut and Suburban. After review of all the data, Mr. Kennel doesn't feel the need for a traffic signal.

Mr. Kennel referred to Exhibit A-11 and stated that the circulation aisles are 30 feet. There will be sidewalks throughout the site. There are 1288 parking spaces where 1205 are required.

There has been not negative feedback from the Clark Police Department. The final traffic plan is subject to Township and County approval.

They received a review letter from RBA Group dated August 21, 12013 and the applicant will comply with the report.

Mr. Curcio feels that the exit near Walnut Avenue on Raritan will have a lot of foot traffic in the area.

After discussion, the Board and the applicant agreed that the driveway by the fountain will remain right turn only out. They will work with the Board and the County to extend the white line on the left turn only lane. The lane that the exiting traffic will be in put a solid white line to keep from people trying to make a left onto Walnut.

Mr. Kennel said these improvements will more than accommodate any increased traffic from the development and that traffic conditions will operate equal to or in some places better than current conditions. Mr. Kennel noted that the intersection of Central Avenue and Raritan Road currently operates at an F level of service, according to traffic classifications, and widening and adding the additional left-turn lanes will increase it to level E.

"This is a package of roadway improvements that in my opinion goes beyond the applicant's fair share and makes conditions better than they are today in several areas," said Kennel, noting that many of these improvements were not required by the traffic impact assessment, but rather are being undertaken voluntarily by the developer.

All of these road changes must also be approved by the county, a process that will begin now that the project has been approved.

Mr. Zamboni asked if they will have police officers directing traffic during the holidays. Mayor Bonaccorso stated that there is a traffic light there so an officer would not be necessary.

A motion to open the meeting for questions of Mr. Kennel was made by Mr. Mazzarella and seconded by Mr. Curcio. All Ayes.

Michelle, a resident of 155 Walnut Avenue asked if trucks will be coming in and out of the site from Walnut Avenue. Mr. Kennel stated that Walnut is a County road and truck traffic is permitted. They don't feel that Walnut Avenue will be the entrance for truck. They plan on them entering the site from Raritan Road. Lt. Pollock stated that all the roadways that come into Walnut Avenue are light traffic so there really isn't many ways for trucks to get in the area.

Delia Collins, 72 Georgia Street, asked about the connection with ShopRite property. Mr. Cresitello stated that is not part of the application.

Maryann Desporta, 955 Lake Avenue stated that she is happy with the proposed changes to the roadway. Mr. Kennel stated that the Exxon side of Raritan Road will be widened. She asked what happens if they cannot get permission to widen the road. Mr. Kennel feels that the property owners should welcome the improvement. Rite Aid will lose a few parking spaces. The township has the right to take the property for safety. She also asked if any of the restaurants are fast food restaurants and will they be near the Walnut Avenue driveway. Mr. Kennel stated that they do not have any tenants yet but the only building shown with a drive thru is near the main entrance.

Kevin Campbell, 7 Berkley Place, Cranford, asked if the exit on Raritan near Walnut could have the island raised to 4" instead of only 1" to keep people from driving over it. Mr. Kennel stated that it is designed to accommodate the larger wheeled vehicles. Mr. Kennel also stated that there will be a sign stating no left turn from this driveway. Mr. Campbell asked where the snow would be removed to. Mr. Kennel stated that it would be handled by the site management.

Tyler Bigelow, 8 Florence Drive, asked what will prevent Florence Dr. and Suburban during holiday season. Mayor Bonaccorso stated that it won't and if it did, they will handle it and put signs up. He feels that they would probably park at Hyatt Hills since it would be more convenient. Mr. Bigelow asked if the speed limit could be dropped on Walnut Avenue. Mr. Laezza stated that the County has say on Walnut Avenue. He also asked what the distance between Central Avenue and Walnut Avenue is since there are going to be 4 lights there. Mr. Kennel stated that it is ½ mile and the lights will be synchronized.

A motion to close the meeting to the public for questions of Mr. Kennel was made by Mr. Zamboni and seconded by Mr. Altman. All Ayes.

Mr. Fink asked if any of our professional had any open issues. Mr. O'Connor stated that he had nothing.

Mr. Gordon Meth, RBA Group, Planning Board Traffic Consultant was sworn in. He concurs with the analysis from Mr. Kennel. The improvements of Raritan and Central will have a 20% improvement. Mr. Meth stated that the intersection of Raritan Road and Sunset Drive almost warrants a traffic signal.

Mr. O'Brien, Planner to the Board, stated that his letter of 7/29/13 has been addressed and taken care of.

Mr. Krame thanked the township and the professionals.

A motion to open the meeting to the public for comments was made by Mr. Zamboni and seconded by Mr. Tarantino. All Ayes.

Kevin Campbell, 7 Berkley Place, Cranford, stated that he has concerns about the exit onto Raritan Road near Walnut Avenue. He feels that this exit should not be here at all. He is also concerned about drainage. Mayor Bonaccorso stated that there is going to be a 110' x 80' detention basin on the site.

Delia Collins, 72 Georgia Street, asked if the applicant will be the owner/manager or will there be separate onsite management. Mr. Krame stated that there will not be an onsite management company and he plans to be the owner/manager.

A motion to close the meeting to the public for comments was made by Mr. Mazzarella and seconded by Mr. Tarantino. All Ayes.

Mayor Bonaccorso stated that there have been very good questions from the residents and the Board. This project will give significant revenue with ½ million going to the school system. There will be no extra Police, Fire or Department of Public Works needed. A help to the traffic issue would be that there probably would not be any early morning traffic. The weekends would not be an issue. The only concern would be 4:30-5:50 PM on the weeknights. He feels that in the future, if ShopRite ever agrees to combine the sites that would be a home run. He thanked Mr. Krame for purchasing Conrail and trying to work with ShopRite. AS far as the taking of different property, we will take them through eminent domain if we have to make the project work. He is in favor of the application.

Mr. Fink gave his summary of the application and asked the Board for approval of the application with the merger of 2 lots. He also stated that there are no variances or waivers required.

Mr. Mazzarella stated that there are tremendous benefits to the community. He also stated that he is in support of the application.

Mr. Zamboni reminded everyone that the majority of the surveys that were submitted by the residents were for retail. He also stated that the project will bring ratables into the town. The applicant has been very flexible with the comments made by the professionals, the planning board and the public. He is also in favor of the application.

Mr. Laezza stated that this application has been ongoing for some time. He has read the traffic reports & the storm water management reports. He also stated that permits are not issued until all third party approvals have been met and granted. There will also be a developers agreement put together by the developer, the planning board and the township before any permits are issued, other than a demolition permit. The residents should be aware that there are a number of other steps to be taken.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the wetlands will incorporate into the storm water management system and will have to go to NJDEP to do this under a series of permits. The storm water management has exceeded all the town ship and state requirements. As far as impervious coverage, the applicant hasn't used all that he is entitled to.

A motion to approve the application was made by Mayor Bonaccorso and seconded by Mr. Mazzarella with the conditions that were outlined with the lot merger. Ayes: Bonaccorso, Laezza, Mazzarella, Kurzawski, Zamboni, Tarantino, Curcio, Altman.

6. New Business

7. Old Business

8. Public Session

A motion to open the meeting to the public was made by Mr. Curcio and seconded by Mr. Mazzarella. All Ayes

A motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Mr. Zamboni and seconded by Mr. Tarantino. All Ayes

9. Next Meeting

September 5  
October 3

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Bonaccorso and seconded by Mr. Tarantino. All Ayes