

MINUTES
 PLANNING BOARD MEETING
 THURSDAY –FEBRUARY 7, 2013 - 7:30 PM
 315 WESTFIELD AVENUE, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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				
Council Rep. Frank Mazzarella				
John Laezza				
Mike Kurzawski				
John Zamboni				
Kevin Koch				
Robert Tarantino				
Neil Curcio				
Michael Cresitello, Planning Board Attorney				
Rich O'Connor, Township Engineer				
Lt. Pollock, Police Dept. Rep.				
Chris Buccarelli, Fire Dept. Rep.				
Lisa McCabe, Secretary				

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of February 7, 2013 meeting was made by Mr. Laezza and seconded by Mr. Curcio

4. New Business

A. Master Plan and Development Regulations Periodic Reexamination Report

The plan, prepared by Planner Kevin O'Brien of Shamrock Enterprises and Town Engineer Richard O'Connor, suggests a new "Limited Commercial Industrial" district for the Gypsum property and the ShopRite side of Central Avenue from Raritan Road to the Parkway circle. The vision presented in the plan is for a new town center – an environmentally friendly commercial center with retail and office space in "a park like

setting with tree-lined streets" and with "a central architectural focus such as a fountain, plaza, clock tower or landscaped boulevard." O'Brien said it should be a focal point for the community, describing "a pedestrian friendly area where people can park once, shop and not have to move their car every time they want to go to another store."

O'Brien added that the project "will have to be extremely well-buffered, in particular towards Walnut Avenue where we have a large residential area. A lot of considerations are going to have to be made in terms of access, in order to protect that particular area and to set this project back so we don't have any kind of activity between the storefronts and the roadway."

Mr. O'Connor said traffic is a primary concern for redevelopment of the property. "The township is taking traffic in this instance very seriously," said O'Connor. "We've retained Gordon Meth from RBA group to act as the township's traffic consultant in that regard. And as an application comes forward, the township will be taking advantage of Mr. Meth's expertise to ensure that the intersection improvements that are necessary minimize the impact on traffic, if not eliminate impacts on traffic on this area as a whole. We're very conscious of complaints that currently exist and the need to not exacerbate any of those issues as we move forward."

The Gypsum factory was built in 1947 and operated as a paper manufacturer until its shuttering in August 2009. It has been on the market for more than a year.

Mr. O'Brien also suggested that town revisit its plan for a section of Westfield Avenue that was previously zoned as a Downtown Village Improvement District in 2004. "No new development or investment in this area has occurred since this area has been rezoned," says the report. "The Township should consider additional measures to spur new investment in this area." The report suggests investigating whether the area should be designated as an area in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation. It specifically suggests the smaller commercial properties surrounding the former A&P and properties at the intersection of Brant and Westfield avenues.

Mr. Koch asked about the Conrail tracks between the ShopRite site and the gypsum site. Mr. O'Brien would encourage the builder to remove abandon tracks and make one site.

Mr. Zamboni asked about Terminal Avenue. Mr. Laezza stated that the 2010 Master Plan wants flexibility to have retail if L'Oreal should leave. They are here to stay. Kerry Industries will take over one L'Oreal building in 2015 when manufacturing moves to Mexico.

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

Debra McLeester, 921 Lake Avenue, asked what kinds of stores would be in the new center and what effect the new center would have on the Clarkton Shopping Center farther down Raritan Road, expressing concerns that that area could become vacant or abandoned because of the new development. O'Brien said he felt the new, larger

center would encourage a different type of tenant than is currently in the Clarkton Shopping Center because it could house larger shops. Mr. O'Brien feels that there is not going to be an impact because people like to go to Clarkton, because it is small and compact and easy to get in and out, and, away from Central Avenue.

Delia Collins, 72 Georgia Street, asked if the soil at the Gypsum site will need remediation and if it will need to be capped like the Hyatt Hills property was. O'Brien said the property is currently under DEP monitoring and that they are not of the opinion that the Gypsum site will require anywhere near as extensive treatment as Hyatt Hills required. He said the town will be working with DEP and the owner so that "whatever needs to be done, will be done."

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

The reexamination also included a rezoning for the Clark Power Equipment property on Westfield Avenue into the townhome zone adjacent to it. Mr. Laezza explained that this change is to correct an error in the previous Master Plan that mistakenly left the property out.

5. Old Business

6. Public Session

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

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

7. Next Meeting

March 7
March 19 - Special
April 4
May 2

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Koch and seconded by Mr. Tartantino.