

MINUTES  
 PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
 THURSDAY –MARCH 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	X			
Council Rep. Frank Mazzarella	X			
John Laezza	O			
Michael Kurzawski	X			
John Zamboni	X			
Kevin Koch	X			
Robert Tarantino	X			
Neil Curcio	X			
Matthew Casey	O			
Sean Fresco, Alternate 1	X			
Michael Altmann, Alternate 2	X			
Michael Cresitello, Planning Board Attorney	X			
Rich O'Connor, Township Engineer	X			
Lt. Pollock, Police Dept. Rep.	O			
Chris Buccarelli, Fire Dept. Rep.	X			
Lisa McCabe, Secretary	X			

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of February 7, 2013 was made by Mr. Zamboni and seconded by Mr. Koch. All Ayes

4. Master Plan and Development Regulations Periodic Reexamination Report

Mr. Cresitello stated that tonight is another workshop session. The Board originally had their first workshop session on February 7, 2013. We will open the meeting to the public however comments and questions will be limited to 5 minutes. There will be a special public meeting on March 19, 2013 at the ALJ auditorium. At that time the members from the public will have time to make any comments or state their concerns.

Mr. O'Brien stated that he is working with the township engineer, Mr. Richard O'Connor. Over the last month, they have made some changes based upon input from the Board. Master Plan is not a zoning ordinance. A zoning ordinance is a set of rules that is passed by the township council that governs each particular zone district and lays out standards for them. A master plan is an visionary plan that lays out what the town thinks that Clark should look like. One problem is a vacant 28 acres site that is an industrial facility. The township has been presented with the problem of what to do with this site. A reexamination report was conducted to decide what our vision is for this community. The Mayor conducted a survey of the households in Clark. 4,823 surveys were sent. Over 1200 responses were received by the Mayor. That is an astounding amount. The vast majority called for retail office and commercial uses to benefit the community. The LCI (limited commercial industry) was created and would be appropriate for this site and to include the surrounding properties with the exception as Mack-Cali office building. This district will prohibit large box stores. There will be or 2 larger stores (not like a Wal-Mart) and smaller stores.

There are two areas that need to be fixed in the master plan. One is the corner of Raritan Road and Westfield Avenue. A zone map was correctly done in the 2010, but the text did not match the map. The other is in the RTH zone; northern side of Westfield Avenue, one lot was missed.

Mr. Koch asked if there will be more specific requirements, such as setbacks, heights. Mr. O'Brien stated that they will be in the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Kurzawski asked if there will be more than one entrance to the gypsum site. Mr. O'Brien stated that they may be one or two on Raritan Road and one on Walnut Avenue, but no more than that.

Mr. Koch asked what the size limit of a big store will be. Mr. O'Brien stated that the large store will be no more than 80,000 square feet.

Mr. Zamboni asked if there is going to be design standards. Mr. O'Brien stated that there will be. Mr. Zamboni also asked if the town has a circulation plan element that would be in effective for off track improvement as a condition for a new developer. Mr. O'Brien stated that any new developer that comes in would be required to make off track contributions to traffic development in the area. So we are covered.

A motion to open the meeting to the public for questions was made by Mr. Koch and seconded by Mr. Tarantino. All Ayes. There will be a 5 minute time limit on all questions in order to be fair to everyone.

Debra McCleester, 921 Lake Avenue, asked if the zone change on the Gypsum property will affect any change COAH obligation. Mr. O'Brien stated at this point "no". He stated that COAH is not functioning at this moment. So until further guidelines, there is no obligation.

Maryann Desporta, 955 Lake Avenue, asked what type of store would fit the criteria of new store. She asked for examples. Mr. O'Brien stated that Kohl's is less than 80,000 square feet. Clark ShopRite is about 80,000 square feet. The large stores like, Wal-Mart, Target, Home Depot, Lowes, Kmart are all bigger.

Delia Collins, 72 Georgia Street, stated that at the last meeting it was brought up about removing the tracks behind the ShopRite, has there been any contact with the railroad. Mr. O'Connor stated that they did find out that at the time of the Shop Rite approval, the Villa Corporation bought a portion of the railroad property and was subdivided then. Ms. Collins asked if they will be bringing out contaminated soil from the gypsum site. Mr. O'Connor stated that would be determined when someone prepared a site plan and determined if remedial investigation and repair is necessary. Ms. Collins stated that between the Shop Rite fence and Gypsum, there is open drainage. Mr. O'Connor stated that it would probably be identified as State open water by the State of NJ and would be regulated. She also asked if the track will be removed. Mr. O'Connor stated that there are a lot of If's at this time. Until and application is brought forward, we don't know how those property owner would mutually participate. Ms. Collins asked if there could be some kind of community meeting place. Mr. O'Connor stated that type of building would be allowed, but it is private property and the owner can decide what he wants to build.

Bill Caruso, 7 School Street, asked who is paying for the Master Plan review. Mr. Cresitello stated that the Township of Clark has retained the engineer and the planner. He also asked if the traffic impact study is being paid for by the Township. Mr. O'Connor stated that there is no traffic impact study as part of the Master Plan. A traffic consultant will be retained to review whatever traffic submission is going to be made at the time of an application. Mr. Caruso stated that he is in the commercial industry and feels that the way this is being structured, the cart is before the horse. Why can't anyone know who the perspective buyer is going to be? We have no idea what their plan is. He also feels that smaller stores will not be interested in coming to the site if there is not a big box store there.

Mr. Zamboni stated that a fiscal impact statement will be required.

Stephanie, A resident from 1555 Raritan Road, asked about the traffic on Raritan Road. She is confused as to why a traffic impact study was not done. Mayor Bonaccorso stated that there is not an exact plan yet; this is just a zone change. He feels that once there is a plan, the Township will make sure that the traffic impact study will done. He imagines that if there is shopping in the area, their will have to be significant roadway improvements, on the building expense, to make the area, no worse than what it is. Mr. Cresitello stated that the process is to adopt a new master plan. Once that is done, the governing body will introduce ordinance to effectuate the specific zone changes that are recommended. Then, the ordinances come back to the Planning Board, they go back to the governing body, there are more public hearings and then once the zoning is in place, then, the owner of the property has the right to come before the Board and make a site plan application. As part of that, there will be all different kinds of studies done.

Nancy Sheridan, 26 Sandalwood Drive, asked what the town gets out of rezoning this property. There is a lot of downfall to approving the change. People that live on Raritan Road have already lost some of their property. We have to see what is best for this town.

Virginia Palumbo, 13 Sunset Drive, asked how they are going to make Raritan Road wider. Mr. Cresitello stated that no one has said that the road is going to be made wider. She stated that where she lives, it can take her 15 minutes to get onto Raritan Road. With a shopping center there, there will be tractor trailer delivers and so many more cars. This plan does not have the people in Clark in mind.

Hannalore Joback, 205 Walnut Avenue, stated that Walnut Avenue is like a raceway.

Tony Dagastino, 73 Maebelle Drive, asked if there is any chance that a parkway exit will be put in in Colonia to help alleviate the traffic. Mayor Bonaccorso stated that he has been told over the years, "no". The problem is that they would need approval from the Union County Freeholder Board, Rahway, Woodbridge, and Middlesex County Freeholders to agree. The only possible way that this would happen is for some reason, this would be beneficial to them.

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

5. New Business

A. Parkway Exit

Mr. Zamboni stated that maybe when a site plan is in place, maybe a developer could try and have an exit off the parkway for their site.

6. Old Business

7. Public Session

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

Bill Caruso, 7 School Street, stated that his is conserved about the quality of life for the Clark people. When a developer comes into town, he doesn't care too much because he doesn't live here. He is here to make money. He asked how many square feet of buildings could be on a 28 acre site. Mr. Kurzawski stated that this is not for question at this time. Mr. Caruso stated that this is the biggest piece of property in Clark and we need to do this wisely.

Debra McCleester, 921 Lake Avenue, stated that over the weekend, there were fireman on the roof of the Miele's building, and wondered what was going and stated that there is asbestos on the property. She wondered how the asbestos is going to be removed safely and if a phase II study has been done yet. Mr.

O'Connor stated that they would have to get a permit through the building department. The Planning Board had retained T&M as their engineer for this application.

Delia Collins, 72 Georgia Street, asked if Cranford would have anything to say about the traffic impact on their traffic on Walnut Avenue. Mr. O'Brien stated that it is a County Road so the County has to be informed about any development along with Cranford. They both have received the draft master plan and can comment on it. She also asked if there are any improvements in the master plan on Westfield Avenue from Exxon into Rahway. Mr. O'Connor stated that those properties remain the same. She also stated that Scotch Plains has a group that works on improving their downtown and wondered if there is any thought about Clark having any type of committee. Mr. Cresitello stated that would be up to the Council.

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

8. Next Meeting

March 19 – Special Meeting, ALJ Auditorium – 7:30 PM  
April 4  
May 2

9. Adjournment

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