

May 4, 2017  
Council Chambers-Borough Hall  
221 South 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Highland Park, NJ 08904  
The Highland Park Redevelopment Agency

**Call to Order**

The Highland Park Redevelopment Agency Meeting was called to order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by Randy Solomon at 7:32 PM. Mr. Solomon indicated the location of the fire exits.

Roll call

Present	Mr. Solomon, Mr. Perlman, Ms. Levinson, Mr. de Villa (arrived at 8:02 pm), Mr. Wong
Absent	Mrs. Baruh, Mr. Fechter, Ms. Welkovits, Council Liaison
Agency Professionals	Mr. Baumann, Agency Counsel
Council Liaison	Susan Welkovits, Council President

Poll of Attendance at Next Meeting – June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

Some commissioners will not be available due to a holiday. Mr. Solomon said the only real reason to have a meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> would be to move forward with Mr. Popov's resolution. Mr. Popov is not ready yet, but Mr. Solomon said that if he is ready by the next meeting, we should have a quorum. If he is not, Mr. Solomon said the next meeting might be cancelled.

Approval of minutes of previous meetings

Mr. Solomon said that minutes would be addressed at the next meeting. A packet will be sent out with all the minutes to be reviewed by the commissioners and approved at the next meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Perlman and seconded by Mr. Wong to table the minutes.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Wong, Levinson, Perlman, Solomon  
Nays – None

There being four (4) ayes and no nays, the minutes were tabled.

**RESOLUTIONS**

- HPRA R2017-08 Resolution of the Highland Park Redevelopment Agency Designating a Redeveloper for the Property Commonly Known as Block 173, Lots 36 and 37 on the Tax Map of the Borough of Highland Park and Authorizing the Execution of a Redeveloper's Agreement with Respect to Same

Mr. Solomon said that this resolution will need to be tabled as Mr. Popov's redevelopment agreement is not ready. Mr. Popov's professionals are working on preparing everything for the agreement.

Mr. Perlman asked what the status of the project was. Mr. Baumann explained that Mr. Popov wanted to expand his project to basically double the size. Mr. Baumann said the agency needs to have a redevelopment plan, which is the zoning amendment that already happened. The next step is for Mr. Popov to get a redevelopment agreement approved by the agency. A draft was sent to Mr. Popov, but his professionals are still working through the design of the project.

Mr. Solomon said that Mr. Perlman and the subcommittee have been meeting with Mr. Popov to try to get the design right. Mr. Perlman asked if there had been any updates since Mr. Popov went before the Rehabilitation Screening Committee. Mr. Solomon said that he did not have any further updates but Mr. Popov is likely going back and forth with Mr. Constantine, the borough planner.

Mr. Perlman believes Mr. Popov is working on parking for his building. Mr. Perlman asked when Mr. Popov would have to submit financial information to show that the project is feasible and can be completed. Mr. Baumann said that financial information will be included in the redevelopment agreement. Mr. Baumann said that there is less of an emphasis on the financial information because Mr. Popov is a private developer who is not receiving a tax abatement.

It was moved by Mr. Solomon and seconded by Mr. Perlman to table the resolution HPRA R2017-08.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Wong, Levinson, Perlman, Solomon  
Nays – None

There being four (4) ayes and no nays, resolution HPRA R2017-08 was tabled.

• HPRA R2017-09 Approval of Bills List

Mrs. Levinson asked why the application fees for the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund were charged to a line item for training. Mr. Bianchini explained that there was not a line item set up specifically for payments of this nature, so they were charged to training because it was determined to be the best match. This does not lower the amount of money that can be spent on training because you can overspend a subaccount so long as the control account maintains a balance.

Mr. Perlman noted that at the last meeting, Mr. Popov's trust fund was in arrears and asked if that was still the case. Mr. Bianchini replied that the agency received a deposit of \$10,000 and his account no longer has a negative balance.

It was moved by Ms. Levinson and seconded by Mr. Perlman to approve the resolution HPRA R2017-09.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Wong, Levinson, Perlman, Solomon  
Nays – None

There being four (4) ayes and no nays, resolution HPRA R2017-09 was approved.

## **CHAIRPERSON AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Solomon said that there were a number of projects going on in the borough but that he did not have many updates.

Mr. Solomon said that for the Tantleff project, the agency will have to start moving towards expending its funds for site investigation. Mr. Solomon said that nothing could happen until that occurs, but that he was unsure of the status of the funds. Mr. Bianchini explained that the application fees for the three sites were on the bills list and as soon as Mrs. Baruh comes in to sign the checks, they can be sent out. At that point, the Economic Development Authority would have to send the money to the agency. That process takes several weeks.

Mr. Bianchini explained that after the agency receives the funds, it can contract with a Licensed Site Remediation Professional to do the site investigations. Mr. Solomon said that the borough already does business with Excel Environmental Resources and that the grant applications were based on quotes from Excel.

Mr. Solomon said that it was important to understand what the jurisdiction of the agency is regarding the Rehabilitation Screening Committee and regarding developments that are in the central business district but are not in the area in need of redevelopment.

Mr. Solomon said that the Screening Committee recently had its second meeting. Mr. Solomon and Mrs. Baruh were in attendance. Mr. Solomon reminded the agency that the Screening Committee was the group made up of representatives from the agency, planning board, zoning board, and main street. The group is chaired by Council President Susan Welkovits.

Mr. Solomon said that at the last meeting, the committee reviewed two concept plans. The first was for a residential subdivision on the corner adjacent to Buck Woods and near the Housing Authority. Mr. Solomon said that the applicants want to rehabilitate the existing structure and subdivide until the new house. Mr. Solomon said that he thinks the plan is characteristic of Highland Park and that the architect, Mr. Steven Buzbee, is well known in the borough for his work. Mr. Solomon said that there was not anything regarding this proposal that needed to be considered by the agency.

Mr. Solomon said that the second application was for the site of Jerusalem Pizza, where the owner is proposing a four story, mixed use development. The original design included a new entry and egress curb cut on Raritan Avenue. This was fairly small and constrained. Mr. Solomon said the applicant had since worked with Mr. Constantine to revise this plan. The revised plan that went before the Screening Committee had parking in the rear and rear entry through a right of way that would be negotiated with the Temple behind the building.

Mr. Solomon said that the existing curb cut would be closed with the new concept plan. The new plan also allows the building to have more commercial space and more parking. Mr. Solomon said that there was also a discussion about whether to do 13 or 20 residential units. Mr. Solomon said that according to affordable housing rules, 15% of units should be affordable, making 13

and 20 the amount of units needed to get the most affordable units as possible without spending more money and bringing in more obligations for residents. Mr. Solomon said that the committee seemed to be in favor of density and support a 20 unit building that would have an overhang over some parking spaces.

Mr. Solomon said that the Jerusalem Pizza property was not in an area in need of redevelopment and the owner was likely going to request an amendment to the redevelopment plan or to create a new development plan specific to that site. This would help make sure that any issues with compliance can be resolved in advance of construction.

Mr. Perlman asked if any adjacent buildings were also involved in this project. Mr. Solomon said that the adjacent building is owned by the same person but that the building was in good shape and not being redeveloped. Mr. Solomon said that there was an existing building behind the property but that building would come down.

Mr. Perlman asked if the applicant had already spoken to the congregation behind his property to discuss a parking agreement. Mr. Solomon said that the applicant happens to be a member of the congregation and that he feels confident he will be able to work something out with it. Mr. Solomon said that Mr. Constantine feels he can make a proposition that would reconfigure the property so that it will have more parking than it currently has. Mr. Solomon said that if the owner were to build 20 units, a few parking spots could be lost because there would need to be pillars to hold up the overhanging section of the building above the lot.

Mr. Solomon reminded everyone that the Screening Committee is purely advisory and non-binding. Mr. Solomon said the consensus of the committee was that there would need to be one parking spot per unit. Ms. Levinson said that it can be hard to find parking in the area when shopping.

Mr. Solomon said that there could be one or two additional spaces on Raritan Avenue from removing the existing curb cut. Mr. Solomon stated that there was also a discussion of possibly having shared parking between residents and commercial vehicles, but that the proposal was not final and some things still needed to be figured out.

Mr. Perlman said he assumed this project did not comply with existing zoning regulations and that since you cannot spot zone, the only way to fix this would be to have a redevelopment plan. Mr. Solomon asked if a development comes before the agency if there is a redevelopment plan that's created for the particular site that is not in the area in need of redevelopment. Mr. Baumann replied that for an application to come before the agency, the property has to be in an area of rehabilitation and there has to be a redevelopment plan. If a property has both of those things, the council could require a redevelopment agreement to go before the planning board for a site plan application. Mr. Solomon said that if the agency's jurisdiction is not spelled out in the redevelopment plan, the applicant could go straight to the planning board. Mr. Baumann suggested requiring a redevelopment agreement for every plan.

Mr. Wong asked what the role of the agency was once a plan goes before it. Mr. Baumann said that the agency is able to require things from the owner, unlike the Screening Committee, which

is advisory. The agency can take many of the Screening Committee's recommendations and put them into a contract.

Mr. Baumann said that it is important for the groups represented in the Screening Committee to be briefed on the committee's activities so that projects do not get delayed by miscommunication. Mr. Solomon asked that the meeting notes from the Screening Committee be sent out to the agency and that they be included in the packet. Mr. Bianchini agreed to do so.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Solomon opened the floor for public comment. There being no public comments, public comment was closed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. Solomon and seconded by Mr. de Villa with voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dan Bianchini*

Dan Bianchini  
Agency Clerk