

APRIL 7, 2016
Council Chambers-Borough Hall
221 South 5th Ave.
Highland Park, NJ 08904
The Highland Park Redevelopment Agency
Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting

Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Redevelopment Agency was called to order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by Chairperson Baruh at 7:35 pm Mrs. Baruh indicated the location of the fire exits.

Roll Call

Present	Mrs. Baruh, Ms. McDonald, Ms. Levinson, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Fechter, Mr. de Villa arrived at 7:42 p.m.
Absent	Mr. Perlman, Ms. McDonald, Mr. Baumann, Mr. George
Agency Professionals	Mr. Baumann, Agency Counsel
Council Liaison	Mr. Phil George, Council Liaison

Approval of minutes of previous meetings

February 4, 2016

March 3, 2016

The minutes of February 4, 2016 and March 3, 2016 were tabled to the May 5, 2016 meeting.

Chairperson and Committee Reports

--Popov project

Mrs. Baruh said that the Redevelopment Plan was amended in order to facilitate the project. The amendment gives relief to some of the requirements that are required by the plan and it also sets forth on what the property owner must do in order to meet the parking requirement. He needs to enter into agreements regarding the parking arrangements. She indicated that the project was being headed up by Mr. Perlman and believed that his next step was to meet with Mr. Popov and his architect.

--Tantleff project

Mrs. Baruh said that the Tantleff project is a parcel of property that extends on the north side of Raritan Avenue between where South 1st comes into Raritan and almost to North 2nd Avenue, known as Block 173, Lots 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48. There are five (5) property owners and we have been working with one of the property owners, Mr. Lee the owner of Classic Cleaners, to get him to agree to sell his property. His property is on a list of properties that are suspected to be contaminated; he has hired a Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP). She indicated that she has spoken with his LSRP, Keith Gagnon, and spoke about the steps that need to be taken and he advised her that he has taken steps but very slowly because of Mr. Lee's budget. It was decided to apply for funding so the process of trying to clean-up the property can be done more expeditiously. She said that there was funding available through the NJDEP, Office of Brownfields, there is a Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Trust Fund. She said that she was told that the trust fund will fund in the following way, the first part which involves the site investigation and the remedial investigation. The site investigation usually runs in the neighborhood of \$35,000 to get an overall view of what is going on, the remedial investigation costs considerably more than that. The purpose of the remedial investigation is to determine the extent of the contamination.

Mr. Fechter asked for clarification on the purpose of the site investigation and the remedial investigation.

Mrs. Baruh said that the remedial investigation because it has to determine the extent, could involve having to gain access to other properties if there is still contamination at the edge of the property they are investigating and there is a need to gain access to your neighbor then there is a need for access agreements which needs to be negotiated.

Mr. Solomon said that if they are trying to just get a rough estimate to characterize the level of damage, but if you are trying to determine what was needed to remediate the site things like the groundwater flow would need to be mapped, and that will then determine how long it would take to wash the hazardous out so if the purpose of the remedial investigation is to specify what exactly would need to be done to obtain a no further action notice.

Mrs. Baruh said that could easily run into six figures in cost and finally you would have the remedial action, cleaning up the soil, groundwater and whatever else may be required to get done, and that part of the project can easily run into six figures. She said in order to apply for the funds work needs to be done with the LSRP and have been put in touch with Counsel for the property owners and asked that the Borough Council put together an agreement between the Agency and/or the Borough and the property owner to outline the bases on which the Borough or Agency is willing to undertake the process in seeking funding and are expecting a draft of that agreement on Monday. It is contemplated that it relates to his willingness to sell the property.

Mr. Solomon said that they were prepared to offer the property owner an actual price and he is not prepared to except an offer and there a lot things that need happen between now and that happening and he is still going to negotiate he can deal with Tantleff. He said that previously he not only wanted a nice price but he wanted to be moved to a location identical to what he currently owns making it not a reasonable request.

Mrs. Baruh said the good news was that the property owner is willing to discuss with Agency and has been in touch with the developer and let her know what direction we were going in. She said that there were a couple of interesting complications, just the application to the NJDEP requesting the funding for the e first two stages of site investigation and remedial investigation would be funded at 100%; however there is a 3 million dollar cap, and the type of reimbursement you can get for the remedial action depends on the proposed use of the property when it is cleaned and the best you could hope for is 75% reimbursement and that is when the property is used for recreational and conservation. There are defined terms and she has been in conversation with the NJDEP about where a library fits in. In doing reference there is the possibility that a large amount of that will not be reimbursed and it could also mean approaching the NJ Legislature to have the language amended. She said that she met with two members of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and Senator Bob Smith, the Mayor and the Borough Administrator to discuss possible sources of funding and Senator Bob Smith indicated that the best that we could do is a redevelopment bond. She said that the Borough was willing to consider this avenue. She said that in terms of the NJ Economic Development Authority they have various programs based on recovering taxes that the property regenerates so it is important to have retail property that generates sales tax.

Mr. Solomon said that the Agency can work with the developer and she can put any kind of deed restriction and she can sell to whomever and that is something the Agency could negotiate with the developer but the Borough could not pass an Ordinance being that specific.

Mr. Fechter said that is there is a sales tax stream that comes through. What does the Borough qualify for through the NJ Economic Development Authority.

Mrs. Baruh said that the gentleman from the NJ Economic Development Authority were not so enthusiastic about our situation simply because they don't believe that we will produce enough revenue. She recommended that people look at the NJ Economic Development Authority website. She said that the redevelopment bond is something that can be considered as well. She said that they were going to pursue the trust fund monies in any event, even if there are no monies available.

Mr. Solomon said that they are so gun shy about spending money whereas other towns would have already given the money to pursue.

Mrs. Baruh indicated that the Borough was willing to step up to the plate and if the Borough were to buy the land they would in turn sell it to the developer. She said that part of the challenge is that we are looking at 2-3 contaminated properties but we are in the early days of this and she wanted to also get a better understanding of the numbers.

--Borough Square project

Mrs. Baruh said that the idea is to develop the redevelopment area centered over the farmers market parking lot extends from the Borough parking lot to both sides. Borough Square is the name of the drawing done by Main Street Highland Park, application was sent in and they have not heard back yet. She indicated that she had a meeting with the Kaplan organization who may be interested in Borough Square.

Mr. Solomon said given that the Borough owns one of the parcels in questions and will be seeking County monies to put into the project believed they believed it would be appropriate to go out for an RFP. He said that it was a pretty standard operating procedure and suggested this be something that the Agency Counsel could do.

Mr. Solomon indicated to talk to Kaplan and on a parallel track we are writing to hear from Main Street to give technical assistance and let both of these thing progress.

Mrs. Baruh said that she would think that the best way to get an RFP together is with the planners from Main Street and allowing them to do a lot of this leg work.

Mr. Solomon said that he did not know what Main Street's scope was in what they were proposing to do for the Agency but thought that possibly this was something that Mr. Baumann or Mr. Constantine could do with a cost, and suggested allowing Main Street to do as much as they can and see how far we could get go from there so we can make an educated decision about our course of action.

Mrs. Baruh said that according to Jeff Buhler at Main Street he expects that his folks will be on board with the Agency 9-12 months.

Mr. Fechter asked if the Agency has already applied for their support. Mrs. Baruh indicated that the Agency has and thought that we would have heard something by now and asked Stacy Kaplan in Communications to follow-up.

Mr. de Villa suggested letting Kaplan know that we are considering an RFP and welcome him to submit an RFP. Mrs. Baruh said that she was meeting with the Kaplan's on Monday and would give them a heads up on what the Agency is looking at doing.

Mr. Solomon said that the space has to be built and the property acquired for that space and then the space does not generate revenue. The money from the County would be the gap funding to cover the cost purchase and construction cost. He suggested asking Mr. Kaplan if he was aware of the funding stream, and if he were the developer would he be willing to accommodate the desire for public space and work with the Agency to try and obtain the County monies. Mrs. Baruh indicated that she would talk to Mr. Kaplan about that.

Mrs. Baruh asked Ms. Levinson if she had met with the Parking Review Task Force yet. Ms. Levinson indicated that she has heard nothing as of today.

Mrs. Baruh said that the next really big thing is to see what kind of agreement we can with Mr. Lee and Mr. Baumann is working on the draft.

--Other Borough Initiatives

Mrs. Baruh introduced the Agency intern, Michael Leff, senior at Torah Academy of Bergen County. She said that he will be receiving school credits as the Agency's intern.

Public Comment

Mrs. Baruh open the floor for public comment, seeing no one the public portion was closed.

Action on any other business

It was moved by Mr. Solomon and seconded by Mr. Fechter with voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Santiago

Jennifer Santiago
Agency Clerk