

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
MAYOR & COUNCIL REDEVELOPMENT MEETING

221 South Fifth Ave.
Highland Park, NJ
February 26, 2019 at 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Redevelopment Entity was called to order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:00 pm Mayor Brill Mittler indicated the location of the fire exits.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, Council Members, Matthew Hale, Stephany Kim-Chohan, Susan Welkovits
Absent: Councilman Fine, Councilwoman Foster-Dublin, Councilman George, Planner Jim Constantine
Professionals: Special Counsel Joseph Baumann, Borough Administrator Teri Jover, Deputy Clerk Jennifer Santiago

PRESENTATIONS: None

MINUTES:

December 11, 2018

Mayor Brill Mittler indicated the minutes of December 11, 2018 would be carried. All of Council agreed.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution R2019-02 Executive Session – 31 River Road

It was MOVED by HALE and seconded by KIM-CHOHAN that Resolution R2019-02 be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Hale, Kim-Chohan, Welkovits
 Nays – None

There being three (3) ayes and no nays, Resolution R2019-02 was approved.

Mayor and Council went into Executive Session from 7:09 PM – 7:53PM.

Regular session was reopened at 7:53 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Brill Mittler open the floor for public comment, there being no one present public comment was closed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Gateway project update

Borough Administrator said she spoke with Deb Tantleff and EXCEL Environmental regarding Classic Cleaners and they have a big proposal to get in to do the next phase of the investigation there. If it is as they expect a lot of it can be addressed as the development occurs. She indicated that the funding source would be the same as the first phase and she was optimistic because the

Borough had purchased property in the area it puts them in a better light. There will be more to report if the application is accepted.

Special Counsel Baumann said that the Borough might want to think about going out with a competitive process if the Borough is going to go through all the work of assembling these properties and if that was something the Borough was interested in Deb Tantleff should be informed. Borough Administrator Jover indicated that she would set up a meeting with Ms. Tantleff.

Boro Square update

Borough Administrator Jover indicated that it looked like the Pramer application was on the agenda of the Planning Board for February 14, 2019 for a subdivision. A subdivision is needed in order to close on the property. She indicated that there would a public process to talk about the future of those sites, in terms of the plan we will work with Jim Constantine, and then potentially proposals with development community or whatever approach the Borough ends up taking to find a good fit.

Councilwoman Welkovits said in reference to changing the zoning for the Pramer property and asked if the Borough was going to acquire the property next to Pramer and rezone both at the same time. Borough Administration Jover said that the zoning would not be changed, the properties are in the redevelopment area. The Borough would do a redevelopment plan just like for River Road but this would be the Borough's with community involvement.

Councilman Hale indicated that he gets asked a lot when did the Borough become flippers. Special Counsel Baumann indicated that problem with Redevelopment in Highland Park and many other towns is that developers are not willing to spend the money to assemble properties without some certainty that they are going to succeed. Generally speaking individual parcels are worth less individually than as a whole. The Borough plan would be to buy the properties individually, assemble and put in back into the marketplace at more than paid for so at the end of the day will not cost the taxpayer anything. This process attracts more interest, and higher quality developers. He indicated that in his experience no town has ever lost money in this process.

Mayor Brill Mittler said about 4-5 years ago the Borough put together some redevelopment plans throughout the municipality and established \$5,000,000.00 in notes allowing us to go out and make those purchases within the boundaries of the bond and that is what the Borough has been doing. There is a strategic plan to each of the parcels, for example the Gateway project there was a developer interested but when she went to speak with each of the individual property owners she was getting much higher prices and people not willing to talk unless they knew their neighbors were going to sell, but when the Borough went to speak to the property owners, because we don't have to wait to get a mortgage, etc. Councilwoman Welkovits added that the Borough had to apply for the funding for the clean up as a potential partner as well.

HEARING OF NEW AGENDA ITEMS: None

ACTION ON ANY OTHER BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago
Deputy Clerk