

**BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK**  
**MAYOR & COUNCIL REDEVELOPMENT MEETING**

221 South Fifth Ave.  
Highland Park, NJ  
December 8, 2020 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 that this meeting is called to order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was sent to the Home News Tribune, The Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on December 4, 2020, and was posted on the Borough website at [www.hpboro.com](http://www.hpboro.com) and on the bulletin board of the Borough Hall, 221 So. Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on December 4, 2020, and has remained continuously posted as required by law. Mayor Brill Mittler indicated the Borough was using the telephone-meeting format in an effort to mitigate the chance of exposure to COVID-19, as part of the Borough's on-going effort to slow the rate of transmission and avoid overwhelming the treatment centers. The public was invited to attend to participate by way of a call-in number and password: 1-929-205-6099, ID: 916 1426 7383 or <https://zoom.us/j/91614267383>.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, Council Members, Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, and Kim-Chohan  
Absent: Councilman Fine, Planner Jim Constantine  
Professionals: Special Counsel Joseph Baumann left at 7:42 pm, Borough, Administrator Teri Jover, Deputy Clerk Jennifer Santiago

**Minutes:**

August 25, 2020 Regular and Executive Session

It was MOVED by HALE and seconded by GEORGE that the minutes of August 25, 2020 regular and executive session minutes be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan  
Nays – None

There being (5) ayes and nay, the minutes were approved.

October 13, 2020 Regular and Executive Session

It was MOVED by CANAVERA and seconded by GEORGE that the minutes of October 13, 2020 regular and executive session minutes be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan  
Nays – None

There being (5) ayes and nay, the minutes were approved.

November 17, 2020 Regular Session

It was MOVED by HALE and seconded by GEORGE that the minutes of November 17, 2020 regular session minutes be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan  
Nays – None

There being (5) ayes and nay, the minutes were approved.

**Presentation:** None

**Discussion Items:**

Downtown Redevelopment Status Report

Ms. Jover said that she wanted to update the Council on the timeline for the Downtown Redevelopment, there were three stakeholder sessions, the November 17, 2020 Redevelopment meeting presentation as well as tonight dedicated to the plan and take input. The planning team, herself and Councilman Hale have been fielding comments, questions and ideas from the public and feeding them into the draft plan, they have been having meetings with the adjacent property owners and a meeting provident bank earlier today to talk about issues specific to their property with a few more slated in the coming week. In terms of the timeline, they are still looking at adoption in 2021 with tentative meeting dates because the 2021 dates have not been finalized. If it goes as expected: draft plan for review in early January prior to the proposed January 12<sup>th</sup> Redevelopment meeting, that would be shared with the Council and the public in advance of that meeting to give folks the opportunity to review and comment at that meeting, then looking at the February Planning Board meeting and get comments from that meeting with potential adoption in March by the Council. She wanted to make it clear since it was shifted in response to the input.

Councilman Hale said that there has been a robust discussion and as indicated, there are several other opportunities for discussion through March through this entity, the Council, the Planning Board

**Public Comment**

Mayor Brill Mittler open the floor to the public.

Peter Spool, 146 Grant Street, said that he had questions from the last meeting that have not been answered. He thinks that it is important to think about some of these things and include them in the plan. He said since there are retables' being added it is important to have the estimated increased annual tax revenue in terms of dollars and percentage of current tax revenues to show the amount of advantage there. He also thinks when talking about affordable units people would like to know the range, the minimum number of affordable units your willing to settle for when talking with contractors and builders. He said it was important to know what kind of level of income groups are being targeted and that it is important for the public to know whether this is a good plan or not, the devil is in the details always. It was indicating that the parking was going to be a this parking deck that is going to be a 1,000' from some of the units and that is a long way, one block is a reasonable amount to walk, 300-500', it is also important if you don't allow for any parking spaces on site, even for handicap people you will be discriminating against people and you cannot do that by federal law. He asked if there had been any traffic studies and if so what were the results especially with regards to the parking deck but also about some of the other units. Mayor Brill Mittler said that with regards to the Affordable Housing, the Ordinance requires 20% for market rate units and 15% for rental units and that is not to say there would not be any more then that but that would be the minimum required. She said in reference to the other

comments these are not concrete plans, this is a vision and at this time there is no developer and is something hard to grasp at this point because we have not really done a vision in a number of years. Mr. Baumann indicated that he can appreciate that this could be frustrating but it is a liner path and process and we are really just asking the public to engage in the process not the result, the result is generally described as economic development downtown Highland Park, that is where we are heading and how we get there remains to be seen, remains to be written. For example, we have an idea of where a parking garage might go, we don't have an agreement with the property owner to put a parking garage there today, we are trying to outline a plan, a concept some thoughts that he can tell you with absolute certainty will change, evolve, will take turns and binds, will take detours but the goal will be to generate economic development in the downtown and that process will begin now. He said people will suggest traffic studies, fiscal impact analysis', these things are expensive and done in the complete unknown of what will be built would be a complete waste of public funds, lets embrace the process with public participation, and will agree we want to improve economic development in Highland Park but there is still so much to be figured out, we are in the infancy of this process this is years not months, and those questions will be answered either to the degree that is acceptable to the governing body or not along the way and it will probably be piece meal or one site before another and probably won't be comprehensive. The mission, goal, the plan is economic development in downtown Highland Park and this is the general outline on how to get to that goal but we don't know much about the journey yet and we will be answering those questions as we go along. There are so many unanswered questions that we cannot answer and recognized that it is frustrating but they will come in time and we ask everyone to continue to participate, listen and challenge.

Mr. Spool recommended that when this comes to be voted on, he thinks that it is very important that before that to communicate to the residents what exactly is being voted on and what is still up in the air that this is not anything that you are agreeing on building a particular thing on a particular site but just a vision of what you hope to do in the future in these spots. He said that he does not think people understand that. Mayor Brill Mittler said that is a very good point and they would certainly make it clearer before the vote.

Mary Forsberg, 317 Denison Avenue, said that this proposal sets a very low bar for development, she is surprised that they are willing to talk to Provident National Bank but not willing to talk to any of the neighbors in the area that you are talking about citing a parking garage. If you put in a plan citing a parking garage in her neighborhood, the value of her property immediately goes down and that needs to be taken into consideration when talking about retailables in downtown. She thinks that the Borough is being very fast and loose with the neighbors.. She said that she has also asked for a lot of research and has not seen anything. She indicated that Matt Hale gave her examples that made absolutely no sense of Seattle, Missouri, no cities or towns like Highland Park have done anything like this, There is no impact for the schools for the possibly 450 new apartments that are being developed in Highland Park both on River Road and over in Buck Woods. No market analysis of whether anybody needs any apartments and she thinks there is a lot of vacancy in New Brunswick of some very nice apartment building, you have done no parking analysis which Phil George has talked about and he has apparently showed it to the Mayor but she hasn't seen it, nothing has been done about finances and she is worried the Borough buying all of these properties and flipping them, that has happened in Highland Park before and was not successfully. In the 2019 reports that were done, absolutely none of the hyperlinks in that work and there's no place on the Borough web-site that you can actually find them. Three percent of Highland Park people who surveyed, that is a very small survey of people's impressions, and she doesn't know anybody who responded to that survey or knew

about it and they were not asked if they would like a parking garage which is pretty sad. No analysis was done on what a four or five story building would mean in terms of a volunteer fire department, you have not done anything about the property assessments, in fact assessments in Highland Park are way behind schedule that are lots of new buildings that have not been properly assessed and how about new public employees if you have a parking garage are you going to create parking authority to manage it, are you going to hire paintball fire department volunteer paid fire department employees going to have to put police in the town for the festival street, her and her neighbors will be calling the police if people are throwing up in front of their houses.

Debbie Patrisco, 113 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, said she is for a vibrant downtown that represents the personality and uniqueness of Highland Park but what is being proposed in these four tracks seems overwhelming in a few ways. She is having trouble understanding why the Borough would purchase properties and doesn't that make us the developer in a sense because the town would be selecting which properties are bought and sold. She said that she doesn't know the nature of using taxpayer monies this way. Slides have been shown of a plan that the Borough is supporting so it seems like any interested developer could then just purchase the properties, develop them without involvement of our tax money up until the point of going to the planning board. Since 2005, Block 173 has been talked about, why not start with that, have some success, build on that and then move on. In those plans it does mention parking below or behind buildings. The other overwhelming aspect of this is the elimination of the town square idea and the current treatment of the Farmer's Market site. In the 2019 land use plan, it mentions the preparation of a parking management plan, everyone in town has a different view on parking, parking has been discussed for these four tracts but not holistically for the town. She echoed what Mary Forsberg said, are there going to be resident stickers, does this create a whole other layer of management and enforcement. Five story buildings will alter the feel and character of Highland Park, and she does not know if that will create a canyon feel when you are going down Raritan Avenue if you have them on both sides of the street in such a condensed area. Besides changing the character of Highland Park, there are practical concerns with Public Works, and traffic on the side streets. She said right now, when there is Arts in the Park or something where Raritan Avenue is blocked off, and cars go down Denison Avenue and if tract d were allowed to go forward that would be even more traffic on that street. She said that she does not know where tract d came from when you read everything on the website historically that area has never been labeled in need of redevelopment, she thinks this is a lot to take in and asked that they start with a smaller bite and she is still against the parking deck and would if any other flat surface borough owned spaces have been considered for parking solutions.

Lois Lebbing, North 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, said we all want a vibrant Highland Park, less taxes, we have dreams, but we do not want to hear of a metropolis going in, dub twin towers here in three or four spaces. She asked if that could be cut down, start with Block 173, which is her block, the gun shop, so you put one apartment let the parking be for the apartment at Bergen and when that apartment is so filled you can then put your second tower at Bergen's and Uby's. How do we thank Urby's they have been here for 65-70 years, four generations and we are kicking them out, buying them out, did you save a building and maybe you did but you did not save McKinney Oil or something similar so that they can stay in town, and with a survey of 3-4% of the population, your hearing is not sufficient but does not think it is going to mean anything to the Borough, but why not ask for suggestions what can be improved over this plan or into this plan. There are plaques in the Borough Hall that say we have two noble prize winners to draw people here, or Red's Marina, there are visible eye sores with bumpy streets and sidewalks that are still in need of work near the Irving school and the Triangle. She said that she has been told that the fire

department is hemorrhaging volunteers and she hopes that she wrong, and asked why we can't go smaller and especially not five stories, three stories maybe overlooking the avenue with two stories in the backyard so the neighbors have sunlight, it is too intense which your pie in the sky plan is and to invite a developer with such intensity, this is a metropolis. If someone wants to get rid of their land near Charlie Browns parking lot they can donate it for a park for a town square named in memory of their deceased relatives. It does not have to be a parking deck if you do one building at a time, smaller at some of these places which then can be constructed. She said that she does not know if there is much chance of changing anything especially looking at the last page of the land use element plan that talks about possible potential amendments, to have elimination of public notice through minor site plans granted. She said if you want to stay on Council and the Redevelopment entity we want our taxes lowered true.

Councilman Hale said that he wanted to make it clear that there is no plan to take Mr. Ubry; there is a discussion that we have if there is an agreement that is reached but we have not put that in a place where we are saying we are going condemn Mr. Ubry;s. They have been here for 40 years, they are good folks he has talked to Mr. Ubry on a number of different occasions and we would love if that worked but there are no plans to take that property so when I hear that is out there he wants to correct that, that is not part of this plan, that is part of a vision. Again this vision of this as said again and again this is the frame of the details, and the details that are being asked for there will not only be the public comment prior to this redevelopment plan, the idea of other specific redevelopments will go through a very similar process of public comment where there will be the number of affordable housing, the size of the units, the places they will park, all of that when there is a specific plan either for one of the units, all of the units, individually or all together all of which is still possible, those are when the details are taken. He understands that this for many people is a big step and it is a big step, and we are learning from the comments they are getting and doing our best to provide as much information but sometime in discussion like saying that we are going to take Mr. Ubry's place is thrown out there as if it were fact and it's just not.

Melanie McDermott, 330 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, said that she was glad for the opportunity to just throw out a few questions and concerns. She appreciates the economic and shared economic goal of the ten thousand foot approach but thinks it would be very confidence building to understand what gets locked in what might get locked in and at what stage of the process and to understand for example certain decisions like purchases of property, certain decisions like what sorts of incentivizes or tax breaks might be offered to certain developers to make the whole package work will get locked in at some point between where we are now and the individual site approvals. When will the public have the chance to weigh in. She would like to ask about the Planning Board because she understands the Planning Board would vote on whether or not this plan is consistent with the Master Plan, and in her mind there are a few ways in which it is not. Certainly in respect to the importance of the residents of a central downtown with a town center and its going in the opposite direction of that, it's a parking deck not a walking town in the center of town so those are just some concerns. Also linked to this procedural and time sequencing thing, she said that the case has not been made why the four tracks are inextricably linked and others have spoken to this but in her view a and b are no brainers, they've long been on board, and she understood that the tract a owner, the major one, had looked at on-site parking as part of her proposal ages ago, so the borough needs to make the case to the town why c and d have to be linked. C means taking away the farmers market, sub note to that she would oppose this plan with all her heart if the festival street could not be linked to it in a way such that North 3<sup>rd</sup> were permanently set off from traffic. She opposed it is those particular features weren't in place.

You have already heard how unpopular the festival street is with folks on North 3<sup>rd</sup>. She is worried about it getting picked away and this plan needs to be net revenue positive to the town and she has not heard anything about assessments about the number of school children likely to move in and what will that mean for the capacity of our schools.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that as done with any development, we stay in touch with the school board and the superintendent of schools to get an idea of how the anticipated number of children for many developments might impact our schools. It is her understanding at this point having had a recent conversation with the school board and the superintendent that there is still capacity at the school for more children. She just wanted to make it clear that anything they do would include discussion with the schools. Net positivity is always what they are looking for, at this point without having the details on the number of units per locations, are they for sale units or rentals, all the details that will come later in the process it's a bit difficult to anticipate revenues on an ongoing basis. She said that if they move and have that borough square at North 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue we will do whatever we can to do to keep that street closed to traffic and that will include working with the NJDOT.

Mr. Baumann indicated that a plan has not even been drafted yet, these are pictures so far that all they are, the Planner is drafting a plan for each of these sites. We are going to try and roll out the plans for these different sites but they're not necessary tied to one another as described. The property described as the Zappa site could be developed perhaps on its own we just need to make sure that to the extent that they're going to have to off-site parking we've accounted for that somehow temporarily or permanently. Why those sites are linked are primarily because of parking, the ability to have off-site parking to maximize development to increase the number of wallets in the downtown, In terms of the process, once the plan is drafted in 2021 we are going to introduce the plan and then that plan will go to the Planning Board, they will comment on it as described reflecting on both whether it complies with the Master Plan and give us any other comments they would like and then the governing body would approve those planner plans, and we have not firmly set whether we are going to have one plan or four all still to be determined. After all that process is done and now we have the zoning in place, our current expectation is the public lots owned by the Borough we are going to put out in the public domain as a competitive process for developers to build on those sites and there will be an RFP that will define what we want there and developers may bid for incentives as described, they may ask for different components, but with that competitive process we will be able to pick and choose what happens on the site that we control and the sites we don't control which is primarily where the parking garage we have a negotiation that has not even really begun with that property to figure out how that might work. We have generally spoken to that property owner over there, they have certainly seen what's happening in the public but really have not had a lot of in-depth discussions and that still has to happen. This is the process as we see it and the public's ability to weigh in there is going to be dozen if not more public meetings between now and when we actually have a project where the public will be able to weigh in on every aspect, financial, school children, design, traffic, etc.

Hannah Shostack, 146 North 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, said she would like to register her agreement with a lot of the comments that have been made so far, as far as the parking lot is concerned she is a little mystified as to creating a pedestrian and garage conflict in a residential neighborhood. This does not make any sense to her, she has lived in Highland Park since 1983 and has seen people injured by cars this has been a major issue all over town and seems to her that this makes absolutely no sense. She said that people will be coming and turning on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to avoid the festival street

and you will be creating problems at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Raritan by doing that. Other parking studies she has looked at in Princeton suggests that people will try to find street parking before they will park in a garage so you will have people turning on 2<sup>nd</sup> avenue looking for parking and the last resort will be the garage creating all kinds of problems at that end of town. She has researched the revenues that Princeton gets over a million dollars a year into the municipal court system for parking enforcement and that is really high, even if we put meters in the residential areas, you are not going to offset the cost of a garage, other places that have built parking garages have used meters and parking enforcement as offsets. She can't imagine in Highland Park you are going to hire more police and how that is going to work. Without a fiscal analysis to make us understand why this is profitable it has an air of unreality about it, same thing lack of fiscal analysis that we've seen with regard to why you have a redevelopment law in the first place which authorizes tax abatements, eminent domain, development agreements, without seeing any of this financials or statistics, it all sounds great but it sounds a little bit like a fantasy. She asked if they were going to see what the plans are and what the fiscal analysis is before you vote on anything because how else do you know what you're looking for from the developers otherwise we are sitting ducks and not prepared to negotiate same with all the public service cost that this is going to impose on us, such as firemen and equipment. Mayor Brill Mittler said that they would definitely be looking at the fiscal analysis of anything that they do.

Marian Sackowitz, 617 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue said that she wanted to reiterate some of the points that are in agreement with some of the previous speakers, she does understand that this is a difficult project to redevelop Highland Park because we don't have big tracts we have a lot of things that already exist that we have to work around, but when she is looking at this plan it is very dependent on the parking deck and if the parking deck is not viable the whole concept of the off-site parking disappears, so the parking deck is the key to this thing. A parking deck to her is cold, unappealing and somewhat dangerous. Maintenance and security of this parking deck will be a problem, this is going to be expensive to build and what happens if one or two of these properties are developed and not all which means we might not have the revenue coming in to support the parking deck. Figuring out the details of the parking deck is vital to the going forth with this project. She would not mind if the town had multiple proposals one with the parking deck and one with on-site parking for the developments which may have fewer units but might be more viable. We are going down a path on a certain set of assumptions and the key assumption is that parking deck and if that does not work we have wasted a lot of time and money. We are saying that there is going to be a high demand because of the proximity to the train station and some public transportation, that assumption was used on the Y property and both properties on the Y property had a very difficult time getting going. There is a lot of new development in New Brunswick, a lot in Highland Park on Cleveland Avenue, some research needs to be done before we go further to see if there is really going to be a demand, and can any of these tracts survive without the others. .

Steven Hambro, Esq., 317 Grant Avenue, said he was asked to speak on behalf of Dr. Sudhit Parikh, of Parikh Real Estate, he has also represented Julia Im JKI Enterprises LLC, who are property owners adjoining Dr. Parkikh is at 18 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, he owns a building which houses the Park Eye Center and he has a medical practice in the rear of the building, he has some major concerns about 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue being closed, he has a practice there that is a lot of elderly folks there has to be access to the facility, to the practice, and he has reached out to Teri to try and set up a meeting with Jim Constantine and we have not yet set scheduled same to address some of these concerns and hear more about what exactly is being planned. He did not hear the entirety of this presentation so if someone could address the issue of the long term plan and the closing

down of that street and preventing access to those businesses which were a part of the redevelopment and got approval under redevelopment previously maybe 10 years ago and those properties were developed in accordance with development agreement, or redevelopers agreements. He said that there are some concerns and there are other folks who are concerned that he has spoken with relating to the density of the development that is being proposed so if someone could address that he would appreciate it. Ms. Jover said that there was no presentation tonight, there was a timeline update for Council and went straight into public comments, but plans on showing him, Dr. Parikh and Julia those maps and kind of weeding into it with more detail. The proposed plaza on North 3<sup>rd</sup> while we are proposing at this point to be a closed street off of Raritan Avenue would not block the driveways associated with Dr. Parikh facility and she knows there is an in and out driveway She asked Mr. Hambro to check his email with some available dates to see if any of those dates work for him to meet with Mr. Hale and Mr. Constantine to discuss his concerns.

Mayor Brill Mittler indicated to the Borough Administrator that Mr. Hambro missed the big presentation and asked if that was on the Borough 's web-site. Ms. Jover indicated that it was on the Borough's website under what's happening. She said that she is putting all information on public meetings, slides, etc. video links and such there while she builds out a more permanent section of the web-site and that has been shared with a lot of the folks that have reached out including Mr. Hambro. Mr. Hambro said that was great and indicated that Teri has been great in responding. He said that he had looked at some of the video and it appeared to be a long term festival type events where the entire avenue would be closed so he was not sure that was planned just for weekends, holidays, non-business hours. Ms. Jover said that where the graphics are kind of shaded as like a textured treatment, the part close that joins Raritan Avenue that starts basically near Provident Bank to Raritan we are imagining would be permanently closed for community use on an ongoing day-to-day basis the full street could be closed potentially for larger festivals but that would be done very exclusively and with a lot of forewarning for any of the businesses and scheduled but would generally be open because the entrance to the garage which would be across the street at least as currently configured from the properties he was speaking about would need to have access.

Carl Prey, said that the one thing in all of this that is not just being planned and discussed but seems to be already in place, the purchase of property by the Borough, so that's sort of something that is coming after more planning and all but as they understand it the Borough is already buying properties some of which would be used for this and takes it off the tax rolls so there goes retables and things. He said that he was curious of how they were making decisions on what to buy and what was already bought and what are the impacts on that right now.

Mayor Brill Mittler said several years ago in open discussion Council passed an ordinance to allow the Council to purchase properties for redevelopment or other uses for the municipality and any time a piece of property that is deemed worthy of the Borough owning it whether property that could become a teen center as happened not long ago or purchased for redevelopment, it is discussed among the Council in open meetings, then a vote is taken on whether or not to use that ordinance or amend the ordinance to include whatever piece of property is involved. That is the process for the purchasing of properties that have occurred since the ordinance was passed. In determining what properties we think that the Borough should own, there is a good deal of discussion at open council meetings about the pieces of property and because it is part of an ordinance the discussion happens in three sessions, a work session where there is no formal action taken, the vote on first reading and then another council



meeting a vote on second so if you are interested in why the Borough is purchasing a specific piece of property and each case is different, the discussions are held at those meetings and you can find them on the agendas on the Borough's website.

Mr. Pray said that the last meeting we had talked about some six million dollars that you've already invested in properties. Mayor Brill Mittler said that the total bond amount was six million, that being the maximum that this bond could cover so whenever a property is purchase for example the teen center, the cost of purchasing that property was put on a council agenda as a modification to that bond ordinance indicating that this ordinance will cover the payment of this particular piece of property, the total allotted for the purchase of properties was six million dollars and was not sure how much has actually been spent thus far but knows there is a lot left.

Harold Sakowitz, 317 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue said he was concerned about is towards the end of this process even if everything is approved there's going to be some huge collection of zoning ordinances that go along with the Avenue and he is wondering what that could be because there are a lot of other properties on the Avenue and when people see 5-7 story buildings going up, they could get together and sell their stuff and do the same thing. He asked what the zoning ordinances were going to be, assuming people actually like your project, to keep that way. The basic premise a couple of weeks ago is that we need to have more people on the Avenue, what is the additional number of people you need to make the Avenue vibrant. He said that it would be nice if just some specifics, even if you're guessing, it would be nice to have some specifics as to what you have in mind and what could possibly happen. He said that he has been in Highland Park since 1975 and when Matt Hale says well we want to make Highland Park be Highland Park he has no idea what the means. Time after time he has seen Highland Park has very good intentions but never get specific enough then we always get ourselves into trouble. He would hire these consultants in addition to coming up with a project that looks good, ask them at could go wrong, what could some other developer do that would make us very unhappy, because that is what he has seen in the last 45 years that he has been a resident here.

Ms. Jover said that the redevelopment plan that they are in the process of developing with the comments and input would establish zoning for the tracts that are being studied and included in this area. There is underlying zoning up and down Raritan Avenue either through the Central Business District zone but there is also a prior redevelopment plan that covers several of these areas which also establishes zoning that developers could have been taking advantage of all along. The Borough is trying to set that now and there will be some tight controls and the question about what if the garage does not happen, what happens to the rest, the version that we are pursuing does see that as a center piece and we admit that if we do not come up with a centralized parking solution for sites that we are looking to develop that we control we will have to reevaluate and amend. This is zoning that is being put in place that would supersede the underlying zoning up for these lots, however there are going to be a lot of provision in that plan, such as if the garage fails this zoning doesn't happen. She said that there is development potential on these sites now, we are trying to control outcomes to some extent that we feel will be for Highland Park's betterment.

Councilman Hale said that one of the things we are attempting is to have as much control over this process as possible and when he says that he wants Highland Park to be Highland Park speaking in terms of architecture, the types of designs, the types of things that are years away from actually happening. One of things they are committed to is that it represents Highland Park and not something you would see in another Borough. We are trying to create an even

more of a walkable downtown, the festival street and all of things are designed around a walkable downtown and he thinks that they are important values that they are doing their best to hold to while at the same time having a thriving downtown and right now it is not. This is an attempt to reinvigorate and make our downtown much more vibrant and usable and that means more people, this is a hundred thousand foot thought processes, a unique place of downtown as that is walkable with restaurants and shops that are filled with people who want to live on the Avenue. How this develops and how this comes to fruition, we are still a long way away from those specifics but we do have those goals and vision and that is really where we are right now.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that they are listening to what people are asking and talking about, this is a very fluid process, a vision that allows us, once passed, move forward with the lots that have been identified and discussions about a possible garage so we can better control how our downtown develops and make it more of what we as a community want, elected body and the resident's, as opposed to what developers have in mind for us. Keep in mind that we are very far from shovels in the ground and we will keep everyone well advised as to the next steps as we continue this process along the path to downtown development.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, there was a motion by HALE and seconded by KIM-COHAN the regular meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago  
Deputy Clerk