

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

221 South Fifth Ave.
Highland Park, NJ
June 22, 2021 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 June 17, 2021, and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board of the Borough Hall, 221 So. Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on June 17, 2021, 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: <https://zoom.us/j/95922299101> Dial-in: 1-929-205-6099, Webinar ID: 959 2229 9101.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, Council Members, Foster arrived at 7:05 pm, George, arrived at 7:05 pm, Hale, Hersh and Kim-Chohan

Absent: Councilwoman Canavera

Professionals: Special Counsel Joseph Baumann, Borough Administrator Teri Jover, Planners Jim Constantine and Chris Cosenza, Deputy Clerk Jennifer Santiago

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2021-02

Executive Session – Cleveland Avenue Developer Negotiations

It was MOVED by HALE and seconded by KIM-CHOHAN that Resolution 2021-02 be approved.

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

There being three (3) ayes and no nays, motion passed.

Discussion Items:

- Upper Raritan Redevelopment Plan

Ms. Jover said this item stems out of a recent Rehab Screening Committee meeting. A property owner wanted to present an idea for a parcel on upper Raritan, Block 3801, and Lots 16-17. She believed it was Lube It All was the last business in that location and they are interested in doing a mixed-use primarily residential development with some retail. Screening Committee discussion was supportive especially in light of the fact that the Master Plan looks at Upper Raritan in particular as a place where we could explore using redevelopment tools. There are some shallow lots and some constrained conditions. Subsequent to the meeting, we heard that there was another property owner has purchase this other lot on 3802 and is interested in discussing very similar kind of redevelopment. We would like to discuss the possibility of developing a redevelopment area.

Mr. Hale said the Screening Committee met and that it was a very productive meeting and shows that the Screening Committee is a good tool to sort of move things forward. There are representatives from the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Code Office representative, Main Street Highland Park are all represented on the committee. It is an informal place to discuss what potential developers are thinking and then get some initial feedback and there are no decisions made, it is just conversation.

Mr. Constantine said that this was an opportunity again to look to the 2019 Master Plan and effectively put into action in moving on two blocks of Upper Raritan on the eastside of the street between South 10th Avenue across South 11th Avenue and to the corner of Maryland. The property that came in on Block 3801 met with the Screening Committee, the other property on Block 3802 has posted escrow. We have felt that to the degree that we can coordinate those two together it really makes more sense to be a more coherent approach to dealing with these first two blocks. The parcels in between are the intervening parcels and it may make sense to include those as perhaps a later phase to again be more comprehensive from South 10th to Maryland Avenue. The existing land use is auto commercial and office uses on the other side of Raritan is single family, two family home and multi-family. There is a mixed condition along this whole stretch. There properties exist with the C Commercial zone with the exception of the intervening parcels, one on South 11th is single family. This was something identified as an issue to be resolved in the Master Plan. In the Master Plan, the vision was really to try to transform outdated commercial corridors into safer more attractive and livable complete streets by enriching the mix of uses, enhancing the gateway and the sense of arrival because this is the corridor that comes downtown. He illustrated the streetscape and road diet that has been discussed with the NJDOT that is identified in the Bike/Ped plan that would reduce the stretch of Upper Raritan into two lanes, put in ped/bike accommodations and make it a safer slower livable street. There are components of the bike/ped plan incorporated but there is a whole bunch of issues that are identified. Everyone who knows this part of town understands there are challenges, its high speed, the pedestrian are not accommodated, there is no bicycle accommodations, it is unsafe, and the neighborhoods really do not come out and embrace the corners because of the high-speed traffic that is there today. He said one of the quotes that came from the outreach from the public workshops or the survey that was done for the Master Plan “this part of Highland Park typically feels excluded as if its part of Edison and that something should be done to tie it into the rest of town”. He presented images with a bike lane, three and a half story building, mixed use on the ground floor, upper level loft style apartments to frame the street and redevelop> One of the sites that we are talking about was illustrated in the Master Plan, to try and create some semblance, even if it is small public space, along this corridor as we transform some of these sites that would make it inviting and safe for residents who live on the block on both sides of the street to come out and basically reclaim this stretch of highway back as a livable street and is a gateway into the downtown. Strategies outlines in the Master Plan which included transforming this into a gateway, custom tailor infill and redevelopment using the redevelopment plan tools, so that’s what we are talking about doing here along with a whole series of other strategies. The commercial zoning that exists up and down the corridor identified in the Master Plan is the fact that it is not consistent, it is at different depths, the lots change so it is a real challenge and it is difficult to have existing zoning that really works effectively. This is hopefully the first of several sites that will come forward to potentially transform and use the guidance that is in the Master Plan which would be what we would recommend be used in a redevelopment plan for this area.

Ms. Jover said that they would be looking for some feedback and ask Mr. Constantine to go back to his team and pull together a proposal for a redevelopment plan for the areas that were just

outlined that Council could then review and hopefully if we think it is a good proposal, we could authorize it at a future meeting.

Mr. Baumann, Esq., asked if those areas were in a redevelopment area or a rehab area. Mr. Constantine said that they were in the rehab area. Mr. Baumann Esq., asked if there was going to be a need for any other tools. Ms. Jover said that has not been apart of their discussions at this point.

Ms. Jover indicated to Mr. Constantine he had the green light to pull together a proposal for the Council's review.

- Parking Consultant RFP

Ms. Jover said that she wanted to give everyone a quick update. Mr. Baumann, Esq., and Mr. Constantine have met with the two front running candidates. We received three very creditable responses to the RFP, it has been narrowed down to two candidates and we met with them on zoon and the truth is she had hoped to do a series of reference calls to come of their references before making a recommendation but was not able to do so. They have a good idea of who they like but before making a formal recommendation on behalf of the staff, she would like to do that due diligence. She said she wanted to let the Council know that she hopes to be able to do that in the next couple of days after which she will certainly be presenting the recommendation to the Mayor, Councilman Hale so that at a future meeting we could make an award for those services. She said that this would be for the downtown redevelopment plan, establishing a baseline and doing some evaluations of different parking strategies for the Borough as it implementing redevelopment. She said that she was encouraged by the candidates we received and thinks we have really good options, price was not a big issue, it is really about who is the right fit, and finish the due diligence and then we will be having a recommendation to you shortly.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked Ms. Jover asked to get her a list of other municipalities that the parking consultants worked with. Ms. Jover said yes and she would be forwarding copies of the proposals to all of Council as well.

Mr. Hersh asked for a price range. Ms. Jover said we are looking at under \$35,000. Mr. Hersh asked if there was a specific time frame as to when we want a consultant to produce some feedback. Ms. Jover said that we did discuss that some in the interviews, there was some sense that for some of the baseline data that September would be a better time then summer to collect some of that information but all represented that as soon as it is awarded they could get started on data collection. There is a lot of baseline work to be done before they are out there counting and doing other thinks but have not established a firm endpoint. What we would do is have a kick off and map that out but all seemed like they could accomplish the tasks within several months of getting started. She said that they were not intending on having that before we move forward with the plan, it is our contention that where we don't need to, it is going to inform us how we implement the plan, the plan leaves enough flexibility to adjust based on what we find out from these studies and from their recommendations.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked if it would be beneficial to share the prior parking studies, they are not extensive, with the professionals. Ms. Jover said absolutely and that would be apart of that initial data dump of everything that we have that might be relevant to their analysis and we are not going to put aside work that may have already been done that would be helpful to us.

- Downtown Redevelopment Plan for Tracts A-D

Ms. Jover said the Mr. Baumann, Esq. is going to bring everyone up to speed on some amendments that we have been contemplating after speaking with the governing body, the planning board and the public at their last two meetings.

Mr. Baumann, Esq., said almost two months ago the plan was provided to the Planning Board asking for consistency review with the Master Plan and provide any comments or recommendations that they deem appropriate. The Planning Board met and did not reach a consensus on the question and did not take a vote and had a subsequent meeting recently and did not reach a consensus. Roger Thomas Esq., took notes for the purpose of drafting a resolution that they will consider at their next meeting. The Borough sent the Board a letter that acknowledged that there is a 45 day window which they are supposed to respond to us , outside of that window we can move forward without them, the wisdom of the Mayor and Council was that was not a good idea and wanted to hear from the Board even though they were out of time. He said that he expressed that them strongly to get back to the us at the last meeting they didn't succeed so we are very hopeful that at their July meeting they will consider the resolution that Mr. Thomas Esq. drafted and provide it back to us. With that being their timetable that meeting unfortunately is two days after our next Council meeting which would mean that we would not have this resolution in hand in time for our next council meeting. We do have the benefit of Ms. Jover, Mr. Constantine and himself attend both Planning Board meetings and both of them were entirely consumed with the discussion on the draft plan, we took copious notes, paid close attention, left that meeting and began to prepare some responses and changes and amendments to the plan anticipating what their resolution might look like as a way of attempting to be sort of ahead of the curve. Mr. Constantine at the second meeting explained to the Planning Board that while they were voting on the plan that was in front of them originally submitted two months ago that we had a sense that the governing body would look favorably on some of their recommendations and he walked through those recommendations, and will summarize them to Council as well. We have gotten through the whole process and you could definitely at your next meeting under the law vote to introduce the plan with the changes that Mr. Constantine is going speak about but without the resolution from the Planning Board. We are recommending that we don't do that instead we take up the introduction of the ordinance at the next redevelopment entity meeting at which we can take official action to give them the time to actually get the resolution voted on and provide it to us before we actually introduce the ordinance with the plan. We think that is consistent with our ongoing effort to be as flexible as we can with the receipt of comments and recommendations and while the schedule is outside the 45-days, it is almost twice as long, it should them move forward with the introduction of the plan which will address the comments that they have and they will provide in a resolution but more importantly that we heard at the meetings and then we have heard from the public since then our recommendation is to not take any action at the next Council meeting. Mr. Constantine will walk through the changes that we believe will address the Planning Board's concerns and te public concerns before we have the resolution but we will have the resolution in time for the meeting.

Ms. Jover said that they had seen a draft resolution but it is still being looked over by the Planning Board members prior to their meeting and hopefully if there is an update draft they will be willing to share that with us so that we can be as consistent with that as possible. There may be a couple of points that we are not in perfect sink on, when those points emerge we will have to just articulate why we have taken this action or versus what they have put in their memo. We

heard a lot of the feedback consistently and hopefully Mr. Constantine's overview will give a really solid sense of where things are.

Mr. Hale said just to be specific on the dates, the next Council meeting is July 6, planning board is July 8 and the next redevelopment meeting is July 13. We are not planning on putting forth any resolution on redevelopment on July 6, the Planning Board will memorialize their resolution on July 8th and we will take that ideally and introduce on July 13.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that she thinks this is the best way to go out of respect for the Planning Board who has been spending a good deal of time and talking about this and working on it with is for us.

Mr. Constantine indicated that we started this process in September of last year; it has been a process that has had a lot of opportunities to be shared and to receive feedback. As we look at the four tracts looking up Raritan Avenue, we did emphasize as well in some of the discussions of the Planning Board that there is existing zoning CBD zoning, PO zoning on a portion of Tract D that today permits under existing zoning as of right, four story buildings, there is structured parking that appears to be permitted as well in the downtown, the ordinance could use some clarification but there are provisions for parking structures and design standards for those as well. The other thing we do not have control over under existing zoning would be a potential individual property owner within these tracts that has no other access from a side street or rear street to propose new curb cuts along Raritan Avenue, something the 2003 Master Plan identified as a problem for safety concerns, identified in the 2005 Redevelopment plan but we cannot preclude someone from gaining access, so there's things that can happen under existing zoning that perhaps could have outcomes that people don't realize.

Mr. Constantine reviewed the proposed changes to the April 13 draft redevelopment plan. The revision will eliminate the permanent street closure on North Third Avenue, no festival street, no restriction in terms of vehicular movement and a potential proposed parking structure on Tract D could have access from northward both directions. This also involves exploring the combination of the farmers market on South Third Avenue that however is outside the limits of Tract D, it is not part of this plan. The plan will not go into any detail and that is something that would need further exploration with Main Street. We have clarified some issues surrounding parking and we have amended the draft to basically clarify that the permitted accessory uses when we are talking about parking may provide spaces for residents of redevelopment projects which is the primary purpose. There can be some employee customer and even some limited public parking, all of which is referenced in the plan. Clarification was added in the under the permitted accessory uses, and we brought in reference and garage design guidelines that are in the 2005 redevelopment plan and fact referenced where the parking structures are permitted in the existing land development ordinance. We are suggesting that North Third remain open and town tables on South Third is the area that's been closed and it seems that traffic circulation has been working fairly well and that should be explored further to perhaps be made a more permanent type of public space and obviously the NJDOT has review of anything on a state road. There could still be on North Third some corner bump outs and things that could expand the usable pedestrian space from what exists today, and could be done in conjunction with redevelopment. There could be an occasional temporary closure of North Third that might be part of some event that's perhaps occurring on South Third but the street would remain open. There was also a question raised about the parking structure and traffic related to North Third and emphasized what has been in the redevelopment plan all along is that this parking structure is primarily to facilitate mixed use redevelopment on all of the tracts. The liner space facing North Third which

is on the ground floor of that parking structure, which we had referred to in text but we had not shown graphically combined with the proposed residential building facing Denison Street. This was an issue discussed by the Planning Board are the liners basically don't allow for a lot of public exposure for the parking structure which will be somewhere on the order of three and half stories in height so you do not see it from the street. You can have active uses with ground floor space and entrances along the street and very walkable. Today this is a surface parking lot that's completely visually exposed and so the liner principle of wrapping the garage with buildings so that you don't see it is in fact what's contained in the 2005 redevelopment plan and it is the same that's contained in the parking garage design standards that are contained in the existing zoning and we emphasized that further in the plan. He said some portion of the ground floor could be for public use that is what we have always indicated in our presentations and contained in the text of the redevelopment plan and has been but limited to the ground floor but is not a public garage. The garage is primarily related to facilitating mixed-use redevelopment and primarily to accommodate potential residents of those upper floor apartments. Changes to Tract C which is the site of the existing farmers market, we are now requiring a public plaza/green gathering space along Raritan Avenue and permitting multiple buildings. The prior draft had referred to having one courtyard building and a small plaza so that's been expanded in terms of really what it is intended to achieve. We have also clarified that the redevelopment plan supersedes the existing land development ordinance. It incorporates provisions of the 2019 pedestrian/bicycle plan that was a recommendation from the Planning Board to boost it up. There is a whole variety of miscellaneous minor corrections at its revisions that have been made, nothing substantial. What we have amended the plan to actually say is not an actual size but to basically recognize that we want to achieve and maintain a public gathering space in the form of a plaza/green space along Raritan Avenue at the front of this site, configuration would need to be determined and that there could be multiple buildings on site. Provisions placed into the draft plan dealing with 2019 bicycle/pedestrian plan, plan recommends ensuring that new development includes appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The plan already includes leveraging private development activity to advance elements of the bike/ped plan we just re-highlighted them, streetscape improvements along any of these potential redevelopment tracts that would involve filling in sidewalk gaps particularly on Tract D where there are numerous driveways, repairing existing sidewalks that would apply to all tracts, modifying and eliminating existing driveway access, and installing intersection roadway improvements. We really think the Raritan and Third intersection will be the place that probably can bring forth some of the crosswalk techniques and enhancements that are talked about in the bike/ped plan. Reinforcing the gateway effect and Tract A and B in this redevelopment plan across each other on Raritan really envisioned as a gateway into the downtown as you cross the bridge and come up the hill on Raritan Avenue. We have suggested enhancing that with landscaping, seeding public art, installing bike corrals, again this would be an NJDOT review but we have talked about in the plan previously about allowing for some limited convenience parking for the residents of these buildings if they are parking in the parking structure that is a block or two away and we think by combining that with bicycle parking in front of these buildings acts as traffic calming for recommendation of the bike/ped plan and enhances the gateway effect. The bike/ped plan talks about establishing preferred design standards for covered bicycle parking and incorporating that in redevelopment site plans and in fact we require covered bicycle parking which we believe in most cases will be inside these proposed building in some way on these redevelopment tracts, one bicycle space per unit. The element of the bike/ped plan is incorporated so we have just highlighted that degree of consistency and brought a few additional elements in to the amended draft.

Councilmember Hersh asked about the parking and the garage. He only recently realized that this was a completely private structure suited for what's proposed in the Master Plan and was

wondering if there is any element of public parking. Mr. Constantine said that it was indicated that we could have that and the example that was referenced previously is a redevelopment project that's received full approval and is moving forward with full Borough support in Hightstown, that both himself and Mr. Baumann's have worked on, that parking structure which is part of 400 downtown residences in a restored/renovated rug mill and some new structures include a limited number of ground floor spaces because they are the most accessible to the public that can be used to support the downtown business district, in that case they are seeing it really as employee parking and those are available for and it could be that in this case here as well.

Mr. Baumann, Esq. said that this is not only going to be for residents, it is to be determined how this garage will be sized, who will go into it and that is part of the parking analysis but we say that it is just for residences we leave opportunity for other revenues so he thinks who will park in this is to be determined. To Mr. Constantine's point it is not a commuters garage, it is not designed because we have a major problem for parking for retail downtown, it is designed to house residents but that does not mean that it won't have multiple purposes, he is certain it will.

Mr. Hale said there are provisions for some of that flexibility but the underlying idea is that it is not a garage where you are going to have people going in and out constantly. The idea is to have people who might go in the morning go to work, come back, park their car and then walk all over Highland Park, instead of driving back and forth or in and out. There is clearly a lot of potential for public parking and that's part of the plan.

Ms. Jover said we wouldn't be suggesting the creation of the structure based on existing parking conditions in the Borough, in terms of parking demand needs but if we are going to promote downtown living we recognize we are going to have to find a place to put those cars and we believe a structured parking garage approach in this centralized location has multiple wins to it.

Mayor Brill Mittler said it is important to understand that it is not a build it and people from town are going to come and park in it, it is going to be built primarily to be filled by the new residents that we would have in the downtown projects with additional parking spaces available for the public.

Mr. Hersh said that he's sure the parking consultant will factor in future redevelopment, proposed structures and they will likely have a proposal for some type of management either in a structure or in other ways.

Mr. Baumann, Esq., underscored the fact that since he arrived in Highland Park he has heard talk about eliminating curb cuts along Raritan Avenue and that's been a huge focus developing individual parcels without a centralized parking garage is impossible to further that goal. If you are going to be parking on site you need curb cuts at every site, a centralized garage furthers that desire to eliminate curb cuts. You need one or the other, if you are going to park on each site you are going to need curb cuts to get in and out of each site but if you have a centralized garage you can start getting rid of some of those curb cuts and so the garage has that added benefit in reducing curb cuts.

Mr. Constantine said that one of the discussion points that occurred at the Planning Board meeting was in fact that having that centralized parking also mitigates having minor traffic hot spots with people parking more intensively on individual sites that on Raritan Avenue and if you don't want curb cuts you are accessing them from neighborhoods and in fact part of our solution

for Tract B is to eliminate what right now is vehicular access through Park Place at the end of the stub and down an 8' alley that the residents supported you know trying to eliminate because any redevelopment on that site would have an impact into the neighborhood so there is sort of a related issue on any of the tracts.

Public Comment

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the floor to the public. Ms. Jover indicated that there were 43 attendees.

Jeffery Perlman, 116 North Third Avenue said that there was not consensus on the Planning Board at least for Tract C and D, some disagreement at least for him and a couple other members of the Planning Board. He asked with regards to the RFP can you as you decide which consultant to use to amend the deliverables to include an evaluation of the bicycle and pedestrian plan in relation to a parking garage? Because there are no deliverables related to bike and pedestrian impacts there's deliverables related to specific parking impacts so he was wondering if you have the opportunity to amend the deliverables before you go under contract. Mr. Baumann Esq., said he would have to see whether they have the expertise but yes we could amend it, Mr. Perlman asked if any of the consultants under consideration have a bike pedestrian expert. Mr. Baumann Esq, said he could not answer that, he did not know. Mr. Perlman said maybe you could find that out and typically you would get resumes of people working on a project. He said that what he is hearing about parking on parcel d is still confusing about the use of this potential structure, we know that it is going to multiple uses and we do not know what percentage will be for public and for residences. He understands the intent but the redevelopment plan is not going to be so exacting it doesn't sound like because of potential revenues so that is a concern he has in the redevelopment plan and as you know obviously South Third is not in the redevelopment plan so moving the farmers market you can't say it is going to go on South Third because it is not in the plan, it's an idea and not actionable right now.

Peter Spool, Graham Street said that the Main Street Highland Park memo made it clear that both the space on North Third and even on South Third was not enough to accommodate the farmers market and they considered the farmers market an important activity in Highland Park. What other ideas might be thought about as a better location with more space, Tract B is still rather small and there's a lot of underutilized properties right near there and wondered why more effort was not being made or more patience in trying to enlarge that tract and he also wonder why the vacant lot next to the Blue Horse why more effort wasn't make to try to include that in the plan. Mayor Brill Mittler said that Ms. Jover and Mr. Constantine have been meeting with the Main Street organization to talk about that. Ms. Jover said that they did meet and the current thinking, although we need to reconvene with them to be fair, was consideration for use of the area currently identified as town tables as well as the municipal parking lot on South Third for the use of the farmers market on Friday's , they are all still details to be worked out including access issues. Mr. Baumann said in terms of the other properties Highland Park with one exception has not been interested in taking people's properties by condemnation. Highland Park has generally been unwilling to use the power of condemnation with one exception to take people's property in furtherance of redevelopment, that means we need to have property owners that are prepared to work with us and or control the property ourselves and so we have focused on properties where the property owner has expressed an interest in redeveloping their property or we own the property and we want to redevelop. Other parcels we really look for property owners that are interested in redevelopment and we have not been willing to impose redevelopment on property owners that are not interested in it. Mr. Spool said even including more patience and better enticements perhaps. Mr. Baumann, Esq. said the Borough has been

incredibly patient from its last redevelopment plan and it did not really serve us well, no development as really occurred over the last 15 years along Raritan Avenue so we are really trying to focus on things we can achieve, patience just hasn't really worked very well. Mr. Hale added that we are and would welcome more discussions with people on some of the things that Mr. Spool mentioned and have reached out and have had conversations and those are going to continue on and moving forward with redevelopment plan does not preclude future one with other interested and willing participants.

Mr. Constantine said that if we moved forward with the realization of a centralized parking facility we actually have something to also talk to some of these owners at these smaller properties that are basically constrained that can't fit a building and parking on the site and that may facilitate additional properties. Mr. Spool indicated that was the wrong approach.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street said he appreciated everyone's work, he liked the slight revisions especially the switch from North Third to South for the community space. He said that he has been using those town tables a lot it is just a great location and the idea of having that in a more permanent state is really encouraging to hear. He said that he has been on the fence about the parking garage and he thinks he has come around on it because of what Mr. Constantine said about there being a lot of small properties having or needing to build on-site parking takes up so much space that it becomes prohibitive to be able to make anything else on the site that you can actually make a profit on and if you remove that requirement then you can actually build something whether living space or retail or both. That makes it possible, economically feasible to build smaller developments, kind of piece-meal infill kind of stuff once the ball gets rolling. He said that is has gone from being on the fence to being in favor of that central parking structure, and with the change from North to South Third as kind of a meeting plan and that removes the logistical difficulties of the traffic flow associated with the in and out and hopes this continues to move forward and it is moving along and he is encouraged by that.

Mary Forsberg, said that she was very confused by all of this because everything is kind of a moving object. All of these people who say that small plots for new apartments and things. People will not want to park in the parking garage, they want to park where they live and nobody in town that she talks to thinks that's a good idea. She is curious if you talked to South Third to tell them that they are going to be permanently closed for something she thinks that you know people who moved here in the past and moved here recently are not going to move here if this goes through. This will be New Brunswick, this will be Metuchen and Princeton. The other thing she really wanted to talk about is the pilot plans that you will propose for all of these new developments. She recently re-read the April 16, 2019 minutes where Attorney Baumann talked about the pilot program for 31 River Road and in it he says that they would have paid 249,000 in property taxes but they are only going to pay 100,000 in the service charge but that will increase by 300 to 370,000 and she would like to know how you figure the math on that. She has looked at it in a number of different way, she has talked to a number of people who know things about pilot projects and they do not believe that at any point in time something that starts out as a hundred thousand dollars is going to be 370,000. In the December 2019 Master Plan and Land use element only 39 people thought that Highland Park needed more parking in downtown and nobody said that we needed 300 more apartments, so we needed huge development on Raritan Avenue. Three months after you approved the land use element and the Master Plan you signed a contract with LRK, Mr Constantine's firm, hiring him to do a feasibility study on how many people you could pack on Raritan Avenue in order to make it financially feasible to do a parking garage. It seems to her that you have decided to build a parking garage and you are going to do it no matter what and she does not think you know the fact that you are taking parking away

from Tract B and putting in on Tract D which is also a residential area in case you didn't know is not really making things better for anybody in town.

Alvin Chin, 31 South 3rd Avenue, said he would like to respond to one of the points the previous speaker raised. He is really excited about the idea of making permanent closures on his street, putting the farmers market there. He is glad that the public parking lot off of South Third is being considered as a place for the farmers market. He would like some assurance that the uses and in the public space by the church, the farmers market area will be able to continue in whatever place that is selected after development happens. For example the outdoor movie nights which are really nice use of the space and build on the community activity spirit. The other issue is with the financing of some of these redevelopment projects including payments in lieu of taxes and tax abatements. He would like to know that we are not shortchanging some of the public institutions like the schools that rely on property tax revenue even though it may not be a large portion overall, if this pattern continues for redevelopment I would be leery about an excessive number of pilots along Raritan Avenue. He would like to be reassured that the parking consultant is going to consider the cost of the parking garage and the way to pay for it whether it's through some parking authority or through a public-private partnership. A parking consultant named Gerald Giosa said it is like 21,000 per space for parking garages and he is just concerned about how long that will be hanging over the Borough if in fact the Borough is in any way responsible for that cost. Mr. Baumann said that 21,000 a space is a good number that is not out of the realm of possibility, it's an industry number that we think about and then there is an operating number that we also use. There will be pro formas both Gerald Giosa and the other respondents are all more than capable of helping us to figure out how to build a garage, how much the garage will cost, how to pay for it and how to support it. We are counting on them to give us that kind of advice too when and if we need it. The parking garage consultants basic job is going to give us a baseline, and that's why we are probably going to have them start in September and October not in August when there are people on vacation and you don't really get good counts and then once that baseline is done we are going to use that to apply to individual projects so we see this consultant as sort of an ongoing assistant once the baseline is built in and have a good understanding in terms of everything including what a garage might cost and how to pay for it and pro forma associated with it. How we pay for the garage would be possibly the developers paying for spaces in the garage so that's an annual fee we may do a payment of the parking which would be upfront fee that would offset the actual construction. We have considered using pilot money to pledge it, if we sell some land, the land proceeds could be used towards it, there's the possibility of federal infrastructure money, we are going to pull out every possible source and be as creative as we can. These are all things we have done all over the state so we are going to use all the tools that we have seen in other places to pay for garages. Generally they cannot pay for themselves so you have to come up with other sources, you can't sell enough spaces to pay for the debt service on the garage unless you are in New York city, so we will have to be creative about how we pay for it including money from developers. People should think about the investment we may or may make into this as an investment in our economy the same way you invest in a bridge or a road or in your educational system, investing in your downtown is another form of investment that is designed to bear fruit for generations to come. If we had to pay for part of the garage out of a bond issue for example, you have to think of that as like buying or paying for a bridge or a road or educational system, it is another way to invest public dollars to jump start your economy downtown. It is too soon to know how we are going to do it. Mr. Hale said remember that as we are conceptualizing the primary use of the garage it is that the developers, their tenants or their spaces, they would be parking there so it is more reasonable that they would front some of the cost.

Ms. Jover said that in regards to the programs that are currently running on Tract C has been part of the discussions with Main Street, the outdoor movie theater in particular so that is certainly on our minds and part of what we are trying to figure out is where can we accommodate and what spaces needed, where to do that and we have been having those conversations.

Mayor Brill Mittler thanked Mr. Chin about his openness about the closing of South Third and how active a location that has been for all of our residents,

Marcia Shifman, 131 North Sixth Avenue, said she is a member of Main Street Highland Park and a long time member of the Main Street Design Committee. We had submitted a fairly detailed report in May and we have been working with some of the Borough officials on addressing some of our concerns which is appreciated but wanted to discuss for the record specific concerns that we would like to have considered as part of the plan. She knows Mr. Constantine said that the plan will not go into any detail regarding the farmers market or other aspects but thinks it is important that it be part of the record and hopefully considered as part of the plan because Main Street is such an important public operation for the Borough specifically we had presented spaces and sizes of spaces to accommodate Main Street's current operation that included 18,000 square feet that we need to accommodate the current farmers market clients. Not expanding but the 60 some clients that we have now, South Third Avenue works but there are issues in terms of having enough space and that really has to be looked at in much more detail and also the street will need to be rebuilt and redesigned and that's cost. We talked about a link through the Rite Aid parking lot which we think is very important regarding Borough Square and we are pleased it is now being considered in the place it was shown in the 2019 Master Plan and Land Use plan and it is along Raritan generally in its current location to meet all the needs and she appreciated what Mr. Chin said that Main Street supports many operations. We need 8,000 square feet to accommodate them which should be designed into the Master Plan. We also need space for storage and that's being removed as part of the development of Tract D, 800 square feet of public storage space is needed nearby and we could see that being built in one of the buildings that would be on the site as part of the negotiation with the redevelopment and finally 600 square feet for a visitor center Main Street office public activity space.

Pam Dorman, 423 South Fifth Avenue said one piece about South Third, the previous speaker mentioned there would need to be some reconfiguration of what currently exists and wondered about the residents who are sort of in back of town tables and how with the farmers market whether they still have access to their driveways. The idea that the parking deck is parking for a structure that is going to be a five minute walk away, she knows that exists in major cities that people cannot park exactly where they live and they pay to park somewhere nearby, that sounds odd to her for a small town but it is true there is no other parking for them near where they would live. But she thinks that is part of the problem in the building so she questions that the other thinks is in terms of the appearance of that parking deck, we have talked about what it would look like on Third and a little bit about what it would look like on Denison although I have heard from some Denison residents that looking out their window to something quite big is difference but they don't have a beautiful view right now. On the other side, east side of the parking deck not the South Third side but the other side of it abuts residence and yards and businesses, she hopes there some consideration for those people. As brought up in other situations is the impact of many more residences or many more residents on our sewer system in town and hopes people are thinking about that.

Laurel Kornfeld, 106 North Sixth Avenue was very happy to hear that the Borough has no intention of using condemnation on any properties but did hear, if heard correctly, the phrase

except for one, what property is that the Borough is thinking about using eminent domain to take and where is it located. Mr. Baumann Esq., said in the past, not related to the project we are doing now, we authorized condemnation which we have not used on two landlocked parcels of property that are undevelopable, behind gun and boat. Ms. Kornfeld said that is not in works now. Mr. Baumann Esq., said no but we did authorize it. She said that she thinks that the farmers market current site serves a purpose, it's one of those things where if it ain't broke don't fix it and it should just be kept with that beautiful new pavilion as the farmers market site it would save a lot of grief and a lot of studies, people love it where it is. She asked for both adoption of the redevelopment plan and for any bonding necessary, because these policies have major impact on residents on everybody who lives in town, would you consider putting both the plan itself and any bonding to public referendum in a November election not necessarily this year but in a future election. Mr. Baumann said that the redevelopment law prohibits referendums on these issues. Ms. Kornfeld asked about the bonding. Mr. Baumann Esq., said that there is a process if people want a referendum. Ms. Kornfeld asked if they would consider it. Mr. Baumann Esq. said it was not up to us, it is up to the public there is a process under the law that has to be complied with.

Sasha Rudy, 247 Cleveland Avenue said the plan has been refined very well and makes more sense now. The only concern is that the community spirit remains with events and a farmers market of an appropriate size being in a central location and not tucked away somewhere having purchased here in October 2020, Main Street Highland Park was a major factor in the decision. Other prospective buyers and renters will find it important too to echo a previous commenter. The current spot where it is all seems like the best spot.

Rob Roslewicz, 123 Magnolia Street thanked Ms. Jover for saying you are looking for an appropriate size space in terms of redevelopment and for the farmer's market lot. Glad to hear that is being considered. His concern is that the farmer's market lot being a successful space would suffer horribly from trying to be moved to a different space rather than taking what is already working and working on improving it within a current redevelopment plan. Looking to have a modest component or modest public space within that area is short sighted and that we need to invest in something that already working and maintain it. We heard it needs a very large area, South Third location would not be large enough for the movie nights and or for the farmers market and we already have a space that can be improved as opposed to looking at creating a small space here and then other small spaces throughout town. There is a large component in terms of investing in public space that needs to be considered. He asked to confirm we are looking at having a parking consultant and not a parking garage consultant because we want to look at parking not at parking garages. There is a concern when we are looking at the language as presented by Mr. Constantine he said that we may allow other uses other than parking for the residents from tract A, B and C and thinks the language will allow because you know if we are having a parking space that's only for these residents of these other locations that just looking at it for the benefit of eliminating some curb cuts by having centralized parking that everyone has to walk to really doesn't provide enough benefit. We are looking at this parking garage and the potential and the potential on future development particularly for some smaller spaces, does that mean that we are going to save some spaces in this garage for future development or are we putting ourselves into a plan where all future developments even for small spaces rely on having future parking garages in town for future developments. Mayor Brill Mittler indicated that they would be able to better address that when we get the parking study done. Ms. Jover said it is a parking study that we are doing not a parking consultant, not a parking garage consultant however one of the deliverables will be the evaluation of the garage financial viability and ways we would pay for it but it really is about management in the downtown area as currently scoped.

Mr. Baumann Esq. said that the curb cut elimination is not the purpose of the garage it's a benefit of the garage, the purpose of the garage is to provide for more opportunity for people to live and spend money in the downtown.

Allan Williams, 319 Harrison Avenue said that the Reformed Church acts as a community center as much as the community center does and what is the minimum number of parking that is going to remain in the municipal parking lot if the development moves ahead. He said that there is currently 72 spots. Mayor Brill Mittler said all along we have been in communication with Pastor Seth at the Reform Church, so anything we work on he will be a part of a discussion as far as it concerns parking. Mr. Williams asked if anyone could be more specific than that. Mayor Brill Mittler said that he has not given us a number yet on the number of spaces he needs from us. Mr. Williams said okay, there are over 30 organizations that meet there on a regular basis

Jamie Belancia, 515 South First Avenue, we heard this evening and not for the first time that redevelopment plans particularly this one are an investment in the town and investment in the downtown and wanted to put a finer point on the idea that we are investing in is in a sense the product is renters and wants to make sure that we are hearing from renters during these discussions, the last number was 60% of Highland Park is renters, many of us are very long term renters and in terms of being able to have a future here we need to be talking at all stages in the redevelopment plan. About affordability, Highland Park currently does not have rent control for instance, it is very concerning, there are a wide variety of types of landlords from multimillion dollar companies to mom and pop types who rent out part of a building. There is not a one size fits all approach that might work for this but wanted to be clear that personally was in favor of high density housing if and only if housing is safe and affordable not just minimum requirements for affordable housing I want a community that exceeds that and ensures that housing is available, attractive place to be for years to come. Mayor Brill Mittler said most members of Council would agree with you on that, right now we have an ordinance that requires if you are developing rental units 15% of them must be affordable units and if it is for sale its 20% and that is over and above any requirements that she is aware of.

Adjournment

There being no further business, there was a motion by HALE and seconded by KIM-CHOHAN the regular meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM to go into executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago
Deputy Clerk