

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

221 South Fifth Ave.
Highland Park, NJ
August 10, 2021 at 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting is called to order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to the Home News Tribune, the Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on January 27, 2021. In addition, notice of this meeting via zoom was faxed to the Home News Tribune and emailed to The Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on August 6, 2021, and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 So. Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on August 6, 2021, and has remained continuously posted as required by law. <https://zoom.us/j/92715299011>, Dial-in: 1-929-205-6099, Webinar ID: 927 1529 9011.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, Council Members, Canavera, Foster arrived at 7:14 pm, George, Hale, Hersh and Kim-Chohan arrived at 7:14 pm.

Absent: None

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

MINUTES:

April 13, 2021 Regular Meeting

It was MOVED by CANAVERA and seconded by HALE that April 13, 2021 minutes be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes - Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh
Nays – None

There being four (4) ayes and no nays, motion passed.

Discussion Items:

- Cleveland Avenue Redevelopment Plan

Ms. Jover said coming out of the Master Plan and Land Use Element project, we identified several corridors of focus. Raritan Avenue being one that's a high priority that we have been working on but also Upper Raritan as well as Cleveland Avenue corridor. We want to look at the potential for doing a redevelopment plan that will cover a certain area that Mr. Constantine will go through this evening. Cleveland Avenue corridor because we have identified that area as being susceptible to change given some of the nature of the uses there and wanting to get out ahead of that change and being able to guide that growth in a way that works for the Borough. We want to look at the scope and maybe coming out of this meeting charge the Planners with pulling a scope together for doing such a plan. This would be done under their area in need of rehabilitation statute, our whole town was designated as such a number of years ago which gives us the authority to develop site specific redevelopment plans and this corridor was a priority area identified in our Master Plan and Land Use Element.

Mr. Constantine said the Master Plan did set a vision for Cleveland Avenue, there was a focus and actually it was part of a multi-year planning effort that started with a proposal at the end of Cleveland Avenue. That led to community engagement that really rolled into the Master Plans

effort of community engagement. Cleveland Avenue is a light and partially light industrial zone corridor that's really been in transition for more than a decade and it is time to really resent the visions and that's what the Master Plan did. In the Master Plan we identified some key issues and one of the things we did during the Master Plan was asked the community both by way of an online survey and in our open house workshops whether they support change for these specific corridors. On Cleveland Avenue only 6% of the respondents out of approximately 600 people that participated, said that they would like Cleveland Avenue remain the same. There was overwhelming community support or recognition to do something different along Cleveland Avenue. Some of the issues that were identified in the Master Plan process that came from the community were one that the Cleveland Avenue corridor sits with this mix of light industrial, commercial and more and more residential on the lower end close to the River, yet it is disconnected from the Northside that is immediately adjacent to it. Anything that we can do in terms of understanding connectivity and maybe seeing it more as an extension of that neighborhood as we look for improvements. Second was that Cleveland Avenue lacks an appropriate mix of uses in terms of really the hodgepodge of what's out there now in terms of landuse. There's no community gathering places or facilities, park or public space that bridges the community together and lots of folks he knows from the Northside neighborhood talked about their desire to go to something there that was of quality and worth going to as a destination or recognition that there's outdated zoning. The mix of light industrial and professional office zoning and there is a lot of residential that has been developed particularly in the lower end of the corridor and all of that contributes to the underutilization of the corridor. There are numerous vacant lots there and that the corridor serves as a high-speed traffic cut through, missing sidewalks, no shade trees for character, or bicycle accommodations. Along Cleveland Avenue, there is a real mix of different land uses and so the Cleveland Avenue strategies identified in the Master Plan were one to try to accommodate a wider range of uses to try to make some of those not just the existing light industrial professional office uses. Some of the other things that the community would like to see and there were some good suggestions, create a mixed use transition zone to try to better accommodate the fact that the Northside residential neighborhood and R1 zone abuts up against this corridor and some of the lot depths are shallow, custom tailor infill redevelopment which again we had a chance to do by way of a redevelopment plan. As we sort of reset the zoning through there which meets the strategies as mentioned and them to explore the repurposing some of vacant properties that are there and some of the improvements for safety and connectivity that were identified in the Master Plan have been implemented as requirements of the recent girls school that was approved at 433 Cleveland Avenue which included a couple of parcels across the street. Some of the bike and pedestrian and streetscape improvements that we identified in the Master Plan are requirements and will be improved by the private developer of that particular site. Some of the other things identified as the vision for Cleveland Avenue in addition to the ped/bike safety, streetscape improvements, we are also to include some somewhat perhaps a small shop, restaurant that might act as a gathering space as well as some sort of gathering space the public redeem worthy of going to. We are basically trying to custom tailor the zoning and anything that might be potentially change how we can better infill in some of the vacant lots or tighten up some of the parking lots. We know that there is perhaps a couple of proposals once we start to talk to property owners but this is a chance to continue what we began several years ago and proactively guide this area. There is not much left of what was formerly light industrial and professional office and the redevelopment plan is a chance to really try to make sure we make the best use of that, maximize rateables that we got out of that area but also recognize that times have changed. This is no longer a large light industrial area the railroad doesn't service as many light industrial areas along railroads were at one time and the whole lower end of the corridor has changed with prior developments over the past 10-15 years.

Mayor Brill Mittler said another driving force is to get what Council feels is the most advantageous use of that property for our residents as opposed to being forced into things by court settlements as we were with other developments there.

Ms. Jover said once we get a sense for this being kind of what everybody's thinking it would be on our planning team to put together a proposal for the creation of this plan including the public engagement that would be part of that as well as the other exercises that are involved with that study.

Councilman Hale asked Mr. Constantine to walk the Council through the benefits of having a redevelopment plan and the study necessary for it.

Mr. Constantine said right now there is a mix of professional office and light industrial zoning but the uses as they have been developed do not necessarily match that. We identified back in the Master Plan and prior to that, that in fact was a problem we really needed to rectify the zoning there. Right now if you leave the existing zoning in place we may see something come along for instance like an expansion or an extension or an addition of the sort of things that happened in the lower end of the corridor with some of the high density residential. We may be finding ourselves in front of the Zoning Board interpreting the Master Plan and dealing with the use variance application for perhaps a use that the community does not want there. With the zoning we do not have full control, we certainly have control over what it's zoned for but we are always liable to have to address a use variance that's seeking to do something other than the zoning. A redevelopment plan allows us to go in and to specifically identify the uses we want more of a custom tailor approach of the zoning for the remaining parcels. We can then have that supersede the existing zoning and use variances to do something different will no longer be possible so there is a much greater community control rate out of that in addition to the other redevelopment tools. The ability to review concepts before you designate a site with a conditional redeveloper and would allow redevelopment to move forward and then all of the redevelopment tools that you have for greater control, that you do not have under existing zoning.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that the rateables is a key element to all of this, in the past decades prior to the last 20-30 years; the municipality really relied on rateables from industry from that area. Those have slowly disappeared because we did not have the right controls in place and this would allow is to prevent further deterioration of our rateables and our job opportunities with the Borough by creating a redevelopment plan that was specific to the types of development.

Councilwoman Canavera asked if we would be putting any of the current businesses out of business with the redevelopment. Mayor Brill Mittler said not at all, none of us would ever even consider that.

Councilmember Hersh asked what the public process was from here as far as gathering feedback and how engaged are the residents in the process thus far. Mr. Constantine said that we have has a lot of community engagement over the past two and half years. When we began the process of moving the girls school redevelopment forward and we were very clear we needed to have community engagement. We had a very well attended workshop at the community center for that and the Master Plan provided community engagement. At this point, he does think trying to sit down with the stakeholders in terms of some of the property owners and businesses that are there and really try to understand what we can do to better support the retention and expansion and reinvestment of those existing businesses and other things that may be possible. Also

understanding that some of the properties are perhaps about to be put of the market, getting ahead of that so there's engagement on that front and certainly there will be a community engagement component but we have had a lot of input from the community so far.

Mr. Hersh said he wanted to emphasize your point this is really to discourage and prevent additional negative impact development over there. He thinks that corridor is particularly the housing on the other side of the track is very segmented from town. He asked Mr. Constantine to sum up what the vision is for Cleveland. Mr. Constantine said in the Master Plan we said it was preserve the unique inherent town qualities while evolving to meet current conditions and emerging trends, transforming and enriching the mix of uses along the outdated commercial corridor to support safer more attractive livable complete streets. He said folks did talk about the things that they would like to see, in the community engagement we heard residents say especially because there is a whole neighborhood on this former light industrial lands along the railroad track down to the river, there is no focal point there for instance like a little neighborhood corner store, a little gathering place something to create a little hub that works with Birnn Chocolates and creates a focal point gathering place, a sense of identity.

Councilman George said he knows we have had some studies and Mr. Constantine showed some of the slides that were related to it about the general discussion, but he thinks it is really important idea to now connect the area where there is the approved girls school at the end and we have a long standing residential neighborhood which is backed up by a new neighborhood of its own, we have American homes as well. He thinks the infill to connect all of that is really important and agreed with the Mayor that having a plan in place is a better preventative than having it forced upon us. We have been subject to that for a long time and finally learned our lessons and we have had a lot of redevelopment plans that hopefully will forestall that in the future. He would like to see the infill and the study done to really do the connection between at least three different, if not four, distinct neighborhoods along Cleveland Avenue and get that in place. It is a study that really needs to be done, and he would like to see it fully developed and brought about, we have had some of the info and some of the input for over two years and now it is time to put it together.

Councilwoman Foster said that her concern is, with understanding of better controls, in that no time it's going to be over developed and in some sense with being over developed and we have seen that it has exploded over there, its quality of life is going to be affected. The other thing that she is hearing some of her colleagues saying is that we want to create little neighborhoods or create that downtown Highland Park to create a downtown within these neighborhoods. One of the things that was said before was when the American Properties was going in and one of the other ones was going in that they were going to put some small pocket parks in place in those neighborhoods so it could get a better community feel. If we are now looking at creating their own little downtown area, their own separate little communities we are only creating more segregation and that's what is going to happen. She thought the idea and the plan was to have our residents utilize the downtown and the excising space that there is, and yes it may be little bit of a trek. If we really was to build and put communities together, she thinks it is important. We have a town center, one of the things that most towns do not have is what we have. We have a downtown, we have a destination downtown and it would be nice for people to take strolls to go downtown, to go to our town center to utilize what we already have in place rather than creating the pockets of neighborhoods that would add more too how segregated we are already. That is something that seriously needs to be considered, there has been a lot of chatter about developing Woodbridge Avenue for the past 19 years nothing has been done in those areas. Those are opportunities where you can develop and create areas where people would want to go with what

we already have rather than packing into one particular area that in her opinion is going to explode with overgrowth. The resources that you were talking about communities and having a destination and have the intermingling and people coming together is going to be stretched thin. We need to focus of developing what we already have in our Woodbridge Avenue corridor and in the downtown and think of creative ways to mesh that all in so when we create neighborhoods the neighborhoods are going and utilizing what's already built and what we are trying to work on in those particular areas

Mayor Brill Mittler said that was a really good point. What this plan will do it help us avoid all this over development on Cleveland Avenue because if we don't have a plan in place to stop it what you saw happen with those developments that are there and were forced on us and are still going to continue to happen. There are seven new homes going up on Cleveland Avenue now that we could not stop because there is no plan in place to do what we as a Council and a community feel are the best things for Cleveland Avenue. If we do not have a plan in place, we are at the mercy of developers doing whatever they want as we have seen over the last decades over there. She does not think what we are trying to do is create another town within a town but to have accommodations in other parts of town that make life easier for residents. She said as far as Woodbridge Avenue we were included now in the State's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) which makes us eligible for grant funding to redevelop the Woodbridge Avenue corridor and perhaps even go in a little bit on the residential side of it as well. We are putting together a plan for it to address it and it is not necessarily building a lot of additional housing there it is improving what currently exists there for folks, businesses and residents who are always walking in that neighborhood and drawing people in as well.

Councilman Hale said that he was excited, as about the NPP possibilities and thinks there is a real fantastic opportunity up at Woodbridge Avenue. In terms of Cleveland Avenue, one of the thinks that we are striving for here is really to try to stop over development and have sort of smart development. It is an area that is mixed use and it used to be light industrial and we have to figure out what's next and what's next isn't necessary a whole bunch of houses, could be workspaces, some other types of businesses that would bring people to work there an then be able to utilize downtown, and Woodbridge Avenue. There would be some amenities needed if we are able and successful to bring additional rateables and workspaces, the goal of having a plan like this is to try to figure out what is best. The area has transitioned away from light industrial, that is not coming back and so we have to figure out what is the best possible use for that's integrated throughout the town.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that she wanted to remind everyone that what we are talking about tonight is giving Mr. Constantine the authority to go ahead and do a plan for Cleveland Avenue; it is not the actual plan itself that is why input from the Council Members is important.

Councilmember Hersh said that development over there has been haphazard and it segregates the community in terms of really creating an island off of there, particularly on the other side of the tracks. He asked Mr. Constantine if there was any commitment to any open space use, pocket parks only because in the Ethan Lane, Gabriel Lane, Ella Lane, are and along Lambiance Court there are basically private playgrounds and it would be great if we could find ways as we do this to include some open space for the neighborhood and for the entire Borough. Mr. Constantine said those were some of the suggestions that came from the community. He said the folks who participated were not suggesting trying to create anything intense or a separate downtown. Pocket parks was something we had a lot of hits on, must just create a little bit of an identity

gathering point. There is also the catwalks that connect from Cleveland Avenue into the Northside neighborhood so there is alternate means to get there.

Councilwoman Foster said again I just want to say that she heard private pocket parks; it is supposed to be a communal space for all of the Highland Park. She has seen that when you walk into certain communities people feel that it is their pocket park, it's there personal space that only the people that live in that community is entitled to use and if that word is so loosely said here people will hold on to that dearly and think this is their community park, their community space and others aren't authorized or allowed to use it. One of the concerns that she has with development that is currently over there, most of it is one way but it does not lend itself for people to walk through so it seems private, gated and cornered off. There is no one walking through from neighborhood to neighborhood. Someone just spoke about the path that on the northside, the catwalk that links. Those new developments do not have, do not afford, do not lend itself to and that is a problem. If we are going to start looking at what's going to be developed, what we're looking to develop, what we want to put in those places, she is all for making it fair and making it equitable and making something that it doesn't become a sprawl of any one particular thing but also making it accessible to all and that is what is missing from this. When we say, private areas there should be no private areas in a public space.

Councilmember Hersh said this is the second time we all agree and somehow we are finding a way to disagree in public which is unfortunate because that is not what he said, he was talking about how existing bad development over there has resulted in basically private development with private amenities. If you go to the end of Lambiance Court there is a playground over there and had no idea that is not a public playground, it's not a municipal playground, if you go to Leia Court there is a playground that is not a municipal playground, it is private. He said that is what he was saying, that we need to at all costs avoid that and that is why he asked the question of Mr. Constantine. Is this going to increase this type of segregated development or is it going to be inclusive and actually include community input in a way that makes it accessible and a benefit to the entire community. He said he apologized but thought he was asking these questions in order to avoid that, there has been really crappy development over on that side of town and we have missed a lot of opportunities that we cannot undo so this is an opportunity to create public spaces that are very clearly public. Councilwoman Foster said thank you for your point of clarification.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan said in regards to the parks on Cleveland Avenue, a lot of people there use Johnson park, if we could look at some other maybe recreation and arts committee can weigh in on something for that area outside of a pocket park she thinks it would be beneficial to that area. That area does not have any characteristic and suggested maybe a mixed-use splash park, something from recreation and arts and maybe they can work on that. Mayor Brill Mittler said that she was on to something, there was already a semi-recreational usage there for a baseball hitting facility where you can practice hitting baseballs, so that is a good point.

Councilman George said realistically there are four to five different neighborhoods on that street, that's less than half mile long including neighbors that have lived there for 30 years, houses that have been there for 100 years, one property, one residence that takes up one half of one side of the entire route. We really need to look at this and tends to agree a little bit with Councilwoman Foster/ All of the new redevelopments on that side were forced upon us in bogus lawsuits of claiming affordable housing and the court masters gave two, three, six units out of a hundred for affordable, and we are now cursed with having to fill in somewhere else. Mr. Constantine would have the opportunity to take all of the inputs and link all of there together and we need to realize they may not be perfect. He said he agreed with Councilman Foster that each one of those

development is its own insular neighborhood without connection to the rest, he liked Councilwoman Kim-Chohan's idea of having the Arts Commission weigh in. What we are talking about now is getting Mr. Constantine to professionally start pulling together the pieces and the people to look at how to link all that together and avoid those traps, he also is not a fan of pocket parks because they turn into little private entities. He thinks what needs to be done is try and deal the best with the plans that were already forced upon us in that neighborhood. Do the best we can to salvage it with a newer and clearer vision, whether we like all of the pieces or not because right now anything could go in there and doesn't know that batting cages is the best use of the properties.

Councilmember Hersh said that he had a strong commitment to light open space use over there and thinks that we have these two beautiful parks in Highland Park, they are County run but they have their problems, they are not developed because they flood, and Donaldson Park would not be Donaldson park if it did not flood and you could build on it. He thinks having that integrating open space within neighborhoods is really sound urban planning and as the third densest municipality in the County. He asked Mr. Constantine is there any discussion or thought about accessing Cleveland Avenue to River Road and Johnson Park and making that area more accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Mr. Constantine said as part of the girls school redevelopment we do have about five thousand lineal feet of pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements subject to the redevelopers agreement. He said he thinks once that occurs along with some of the streetscape improvements there is a lot of improvement that will calm traffic at the Madison/Cleveland intersection that is going to be implemented as part of that redevelopment. That alone is going to begin to have a first layer of traffic calming slowing folks down making the cut through. Something that happens with more friction and at lower speeds and most importantly has a benefit for bicycle and pedestrians. Lots of them do go down Cleveland towards Johnson Park and he thinks that will better facilitate that and accommodate it as you walk through this stretch. It is a little bit of a no man's land, you're more likely to see vacant lots, empty parking lots, some truck activity and things of that nature that aren't as community friendly as he thinks that was identified as an issue in the Master Plan.

Ms. Jover said she wanted to remind Council that the bike/ped plan did look at River Road and we know especially the other side of the railroad tracks where we have a lot of new communities and existing ones that have come in and how we can get them more safely into town using bike/ped as opposed to cars is a priority. We have some touchstones in that document that we can try to weave in as appropriate as well as to implement those either obviously River Road in partnership with the County, but those are certainly important projects that we have to factor in as well. She said she appreciates all of the input and this is exactly what will feed this plan. This is a lot of private properties so some of these would be goals that maybe through redevelopment we could find the opportunity for the recreational space or other things or we will have to figure out another way to accomplish that if that ends up being a high priority. That is why it is really helpful to get this kind of input to help Mr. Constantine to come up with some of the ways we can move this forward, and create the parameters. We can specifically say we do not want segregated and we want integrated, we can set those values forward at the top of the plan and then figure out the strategies to make it happen.

Councilmember Hersh said it might be helpful as we move forward with this and other redevelopment areas too, is to reference you know very explicitly what is laid out in the site in the cycling and ped plan because what he has found was that, it is all there, but sometimes it is not kind of incorporated into the grander vision.

- Upper Raritan Redevelopment Plan

Ms. Jover said this was more of a reminder item; we did have a similar presentation from Mr. Constantine at our prior meeting talking about two areas on Upper Raritan as you head towards Edison, after the downtown portion. We want to look at two site-specific redevelopment plans and just wanted to remind Council that is in the works and Mr. Constantine is working on the proposal. It is a much smaller, more tailored plan and we are going to tie right into the bike/ped plan because it will help us advance that as well as this came right out of the Master Plan visioning. She said that she just wanted to remind everyone because we are dealing with areas that are in transition, properties are changing hands and we have a little better control over the final outcomes in those areas.

Mayor Brill Mittler clarified that the location was where the Lube It All was and the block up from that.

Mr. Constantine mentioned that the Master Plan did identify that corridor as a place where there is sort of antiquated zoning. The C zoning really creates things like the strip commercial pattern that we want to try to marry what starts to happen on these first two blocks, scaling down of those blocks of Route 27. There have been discussions with the NJDOT for some time that we are ready to move to the road diet and somewhere we go from the four lanes to the two lanes and right now it is closer to the soldier monument. The vision and what has been discussed with the NJDOT is to try to move that towards the Edison border. We need to look at how the land use and those safety and livable street transformations, which is the vision of the Master Plan, take place. The corridors that took place in the Master Plan were Upper Raritan, Cleveland, and Woodbridge, which is very exciting from a planning standpoint that they are all moving forward in some way, which is important. We are moving from the vision and the Master Plan to implementation in those. The other corridor was River Road, which has a completely different set of issues, and there are challenging connections to get to the other side of the tracks and maybe we can revisit that as we look at these. We have improvements on River Road that will be coming as a result of the Walter Avenue redevelopment, some pedestrian/bicycle trail improvements on the River Road side as well as that public parking area that provides access to the open space a little north of the Environmental Center.

Councilman Hale said the one of the proposals up there has gone through the redevelopment steering committee, an informal group of planning board, zoning board and others and it is a good example of early input into how they might turn out. He said he thought that was important to let the Council members know that there has been a number of eyes on this already, there is more to come as Mr. Constantine develops this.

Public Comment

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the floor to the public. Ms. Jover indicated that there were 30 attendees.

Mary Forsberg, said she received notice of this meeting at 8:22 this morning and there was no agenda attached to it. She sent an email to Jennifer that she sent that to the Mayor and all of you Council members and heard back from one Councilperson who explained to what was going on. She said she thinks you need a little more attention to the issues that your constituents have about these things. She said that she was also really curious to know how you select projects because she looks at the Cleveland Avenue redevelopment project and sees Birnn Chocolates which is

one of the actual very successful businesses in town. If you look at the other, Tract A Ubry's and Classic Cleaners are also very successful and the one you are looking at on Raritan Avenue is Park Vet. She knows a lot of people who have animals got to Park Vet, which is part of the redevelopment plan for the Raritan Avenue area. She said she would like to know how you pick, why have you never ever considered the charter school which is almost two acres in the middle of town. She would like to know why there has not even been any discussion about what to do with the charter school, it is a vacant property, they never plow it, and nobody parks there, its two aces and believes it is bigger than the area where the parking garage is going right in front of her house. Why not put a parking garage there.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that she wanted to clarify that the meeting notice of this meeting and the agenda were posted on the Borough web site a while ago. Ms. Jover said the process for when the agenda goes to Mayor and Council it also goes on the website, we also noticed the meeting as we do all of our meetings in accordance with the local public meetings act. It has been on our website calendar since the meeting was scheduled, the mishap happened when we sent the nixel, which we are not required to do, but we fully embraced the idea of promoting our council meetings and the link was missing on the web calendar. As soon as we were made aware of the missing link, we fixed it but the meeting was noticed properly, the agenda was posted on the website timely and she apologized for the confusion that was caused, we corrected it as soon as we could.

Alexis Thomason, 155 Exeter Street said she signed on today to mostly talk about Tract C but in hearing you talk about Cleveland Avenue stuff, she has biked around there and it would be pretty exciting to have some public spaces there and just to get it in your brain a public pool would be cool. Tract C where the farmers market is, she would really hate to see that area developed. That whole space should remain public space and maybe we should develop it as a park where we can continue to host the farmers market, continue to have a pavilion, maybe a more permanent stage. It is a town square and hopes that you guys will remember that there's a heart beating in this town and its right there and hopes that you will not change it too much please.

Dan Stern Cardinale, 221 Harper Street thanked everyone for all their work on main redevelopment plan and now with this Cleveland Avenue plan. He was really excited last week to see the full redevelopment plan before the Council and he really likes the renders for Cleveland Avenue that Mr. Constantine presented earlier this evening. He loves that style of development, it is exactly right for Highland Park, it looks like the plans that we are putting together use the best practices in the field for pedestrian friendly development. Alleviating the severe housing shortage in Highland Park, this is extremely important for the space in Tract C considering we can move those activities just a half a block north to the already closed part of South Third Avenue and let people live on that space right smack in the middle of town. It looks like you are doing exactly the right thing for Highland Park and just wanted to say thank you and keep up the good work.

Melike Baykal, 111 North Ninth Avenue thanked everyone and the idea of making our town much more pedestrian and bike friendly is going to be wonderful. She asked if there were some studies done for the traffic that might happen because of the school and because of the recent developments on Cleveland Avenue. Everyone would like to have access to River Road and that is going to be a problem. She proposed having an underpass or overpass through the tracts to Cedar Avenue or even to Rutgers Livingston campus for bikers and pedestrians so people could have easier access from Cedar Lane to Highland Park.

Mayor Brill Mittler said Rutgers University itself is looking at a transportation plan that does include some of the things that were just mentioned, there is hope in the future for alternate ways of getting around between Highland Park and Rutgers.

Pam Dorman, 423 South 5th Avenue, said with the professional buildings that are on Cleveland now, and does not know whether this redevelopment changes the property value for the owners of those buildings and if that ends up having an impact on the professionals who are renting in those buildings. She said she would hate to have those people cut out because of their rents. She said someone mentioned Tract C with the farmers market so that she understands is owned by the Borough, whereas the borough does not own properties on Cleveland Avenue but we want to have an impact in terms of having a redevelopment plan. So the issues end up, I understand being different, there's no way other than property taxes that the Borough can generate any income off of Cleveland Avenue whereas if they built on their own property there are things we can do. She is concerned about and knows that traffic issue was addressed with all the discussion about the girl's school but was wondering if at some point there is going to be consideration of a traffic light down at the end of River Road and Cleveland Avenue.

Diane Feldman said she wanted to comment on the downtown redevelopment plan for Tracts A through D and said that there were items that needed to be updated such as it references the Blue Horse as currently operating which it no longer is, section 5.7, point 15 where there's a large section discussing accessibility and the town has done some work recently to update their working referring to people with disabilities and access for them and this document is not at all in step with that. It uses the word handicap in multiple places and that whole section needs to be reviewed so that it is consistent with the other work that you have done on documents. She asked the pocket park that you want to put between Park Place and Raritan, talking about how there is a difference in levels, and she would like some understanding of the access for somebody who cannot use stairs. She said when you speak about Cleveland you speak about the track that's been approved for what is a private school and everyone continually refers to this as a girls school, it is a private school. She asked why the emphasis on it being a girls school, from a gender and neutral perspective would it be more appropriate to just call this what it is a private school.

Mayor Brill Mittler said that was a very good point, the builder of the school has let us know that it will be just for girls but there is no reason we have to use any sex references and calling it a private school is a very good suggestion.

Adjournment

There being no further business, there was a motion by GEORGE and seconded by KIM-CHOHAN the regular meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago
Deputy Clerk