

**HIGHLAND PARK PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES**

**December 8, 2022 @ 7:30 P.M.
Council Chambers, Borough Hall
221 South Fifth Ave. Highland Park, NJ**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rebecca Hand at 7:30 pm. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to the Star Ledger on January 29, 2022 and to the Home News Tribune on January 29, 2022. In addition, notice of this meeting was faxed to the Home News Tribune and emailed to The Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on December 6, 2022, and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board and doors at Borough Hall, 221 So. Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on December 6, 2022, and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

Roll Call:

Present	Rebecca Hand, Scott Brescher, Alvin Chin, Khalidra Hadhazy, Matthew Hale, Paul Lanaris, Padraic Millet, Jeffrey Perlman, Daniel Stern Cardinale, Allan Williams
Absent	None
<u>Board Professionals</u>	Clifford Gibbons Esq., Chris Cosenza, Planner, Bruce Koch, Engineer

Public Hearing:

Stop & Shop Site and Adjacent Commercial Properties, Block 3002, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 30, 34, 35, 36 & 37, Preliminary Investigation of a Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment.

Ms. Hand noted that this public hearing is for our licensed professionals to present to the public the findings of that preliminary investigation that we were directed to undertake by the Borough Council earlier this year at one of their September meetings. After we hear the preliminary investigation and the board has had time to make commentary on their thoughts and findings, we'll hear from the public on their thoughts about the presentation. From there if we're ready, we'll make a finding on whether or not these areas, some or all of them, are indeed areas that should be designated non-condemnation areas in need of redevelopment.

Planner Cosenza thanked the Chairperson for the introduction. It cuts out some of the intro slides he was going to go into. The presentation is about five topics: general overview; overview of the redevelopment statute, benefits and how it works relative to what we're doing tonight; a little bit of context in terms of what's presently there today as well as some historic background; as well as some environmental analysis of the study area; and the meat of the public hearing, the evaluation of the study area and the conclusion of recommendations from the Planning Board to the Governing Body.

Planner Cosenza referenced a slide with a context map that shows the study area is in between South 4th and South 5th Avenue in the center of town. We've learned that the Stop and Shop store will be closing down over the summer. For the purposes of tonight's meeting, the Borough Council believe it is in the best interest of the whole community that a preliminary investigation of the site occur along with the commercial properties of the 3002 block. This is the first step in the planning process to explore and advance any potential for redevelopment plans. Back in 2016, the entire municipality was declared an area in need of rehabilitation. What that means is that we can still do a redevelopment plan for the area. What this public hearing for preliminary investigation does is add an additional tool for the redevelopment plan which is effectively to expand the pilot capabilities from a five-year up to a third year. That's the only difference between the rehab designation and the redevelopment designation. He included a quote from the Mayor about how important it was for the community to find a solution to the closing of a store which will included hopefully a new user, whether it's in the same building, a new building up front or some other combination of the two. This is the first step in exploring additional redevelopment tools for the redevelopment plans

that are also ongoing. The Borough Council authorized the Planning Board to authorize this particular study. The scope of the study is to conduct inventory; review records; review master plan and zoning; analyze physical conditions; and indicate findings and make recommendations. Mr. Gibbons noted that the Supreme Court has mandated that a report has to be prepared with detailed findings that evidence a thorough investigation and that's the Harrison Redevelopment Case. Planner Cosenza noted that in 1992 the State Legislature enacted the local redevelopment housing law. It's really a consolidation of the 1949 laws and expanded the powers of what could be done for redevelopment to guide municipalities through the process of redevelopment and housing in the designated areas. The local redevelopment and housing law is a planning and financial tool, including the ability to transform properties that are really poorly designed or have other issues and with the principal goal of promoting physical development that's most conducive to the social and economic improvement of the state and its municipalities. In order to take advantage of the redevelopment statute through a plan, a specified area must first be designated as a rehabilitation area or a redevelopment area. In this case, we already have a designation of rehab for the entire municipality. The purpose of tonight is to expand that to include redevelopment at least through non-compensation. The advantages include more flexibility in zoning and the ability to do a site-specific concept plan by virtue of a redevelopment plan. Think of a redevelopment plan as a mini massive plan and zoning ordinance for a specific area. You can include very detailed design standards if you have engaged with the redeveloper/property owner in a public/private partnership. We're trying to be proactive in developing a plan for an area as opposed to being reactive with a site plan application. Another advantage is you are able to select a redeveloper and also have financial tools. There are various financial tools that can be offered as part of the redevelopment statute. Redevelopment is not new in Highland Park. He showed a slide depicting two examples of redevelopment in Highland Park. 40 units on the corner of Walter Avenue and River Road and the Popov property at 137-139 Raritan Avenue, which expanded the building to more of a better design that is more in keeping in the scale and character of the adjacent buildings. There's a very detailed procedure spelled out by the statute which we're following. The first step in order to do a preliminary investigation is for the Governing Body to adopt a resolution to authorize the Planning Board to conduct the preliminary investigation. The second step is the Planning Board's duties are to prepare a map and a statement, which is the report in front of them and that is posted on the website, which outlines the case for how the property does meet the statutory requirements as an area in need of redevelopment. We are in step four as we previously selected a meeting date, tonight, and we have to serve two notices in consecutive weeks. Step four is to hear the recommendations from the professional that does the report on behalf of the Planning Board. It'll be up to the Board to make a finding whether or not it agrees or it can make its own findings as to whether all or a portion of the study are qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment. There's additional steps that happen afterwards, mainly internal steps, once the Borough Council receives the recommendation from the Planning Board they make their own determination. Once the resolution is adopted, they transmit the resolution to the state for filing and then the state will send a letter of consent acknowledging that the area is a designated redevelopment area. Then you have a whole series of steps relative to the redevelopment plan.

Planner Cosenza outlined the statutory steps on how a site is declared an area in need of redevelopment. There are various statutory criteria provided by the local housing redevelopment law. It is based on the blighted areas clause which was adopted to the New Jersey constitution in 1947. It was intended to provide guidance to the municipality on how to facilitate investment into what it viewed as related areas. In 1992, the redevelopment plan was recodified and expanded through the local redevelopment housing law. The current version of the law has gone beyond the traditional definition of blight. It could include abandoned buildings, public or vacant land, or obsolete layout. If any one site meets any of these criteria, it triggers that it does conform and it can be qualified as an area in need of redevelopment. Other conditions include issues regarding property ownership and title; fire and natural disasters; urban enterprise zones; and smart growth consistency. There is also a provision that properties do not have to meet the traditional definition

or statutory criteria as being in need of redevelopment. When you designate an area in need of redevelopment it does not necessarily mean all of it is blighted.

Planner Cosenza showed a slide of a location map. The study areas are between South 4th and South 5th Avenues and includes all the commercial properties, including the grocery store that's currently used by Stop & Shop. It also includes the Wells Fargo bank, the Park Towne Center and the Landmark Supply building. He spoke about the historic development of Highland Park along Raritan Avenue. What you see are frame dwellings, two and a half stories high, typically used as residential, but have been converted into office and retail uses. You can still see that pattern if you look at buildings today where you see a two and a half story dwelling with a store in front of it. The Wells Fargo site was previously a two and half story dwelling. There was another dwelling where the parking lot is and some masonry sheds. This was a used car lot with a small office and two homes. The corner lot is the same building as the landmark supply building and the hair loft. The property has been developed and redeveloped several times over the past 80 years. The act of going through redevelopment is not going to be a new topic. It is not something that you should be scared of. It is something we should anticipate and through the redevelopment plan we have control in the process and make sure we get an end result that is beneficial to the community as well as a property owner and redevelopers. The dwellings at 420 and 424 Raritan Avenue were demolished in the 1940's and 1950's to make way for a one-story grocery store of 16,000 square feet up front on Raritan Avenue. In the 1970's that building was torn down for the current building and was pushed all the way to the back of the property with the parking lot in front. The building is already 51 years old and has been redeveloped multiple times. The frame dwelling was turned into a bank building and expanded in 1983 where they took the parking lot and redeveloped the rest of the lot that was behind it. To facilitate that development, a public right-of-way was added by the Borough in the 1960's. The used car lot remained that way until the 1940's/1950's. In the 1960's it was filled in with the current building with the post office all the way down to 418 burger.

Planner Cosenza noted that the entire study area is in the central business district. The zoning for this area allows for 5,000 square foot lots, no setbacks, except for 20 foot rear yard setbacks. The minimum height is two stories and none of these buildings are two stories, except for a portion of the landmark building. All of these buildings are not conforming. In the current code, the maximum height that's permitted in the CBD zone is four stories and 50 feet. The impervious coverage is 90% and a lot of these properties exceed that by virtue of the surface parking areas on the property. The study area is surrounded by the Professional Office (PO) zone and the two-family zone (RV) and they serve as transition zones to the RA zone which is south of Magnolia Street. In 2019, they did an extensive update to the master plan and land use plan element by including four goals to ensure that a vibrant downtown and commercial corridors is respected. We looked at five separate corridors including the downtown area and one of them of particular interest was an area that we designated was the Stop & Shop property. Part of the vision was there could be some infill whether it's on the park town property or just on the Stop & Shop site. In relation to the state plan, Highland Park is smack dab in the purple metropolitan planning area. Going through redevelopment is consistent with the state plan relative to this study area.

Planner Cosenza noted that the study area consists of six separate properties even though there are 13 lots. He began with the Wells Fargo lot at 400 Raritan Avenue in block 3002, lot 1. It is a bank facility on the corner and there's a drive-through facility with ingress only from South 4th Avenue that exits onto Raritan Avenue. There is some landscaping along the front of the building that is pretty modest in design. The drive through facility has limited pedestrian facilities. The drive through lane is at the back of the building but there's no way for people who park to get to the bank unless they walk all the way to the public sidewalk in the middle of a drive aisle, which is unsafe. He noticed that people walk through the drive through lanes to get to Raritan Avenue. The apron is in disrepair on the other side of the building. The egress route is wide for a single lane exit. There are no bollards to protect vehicles from hitting the building

and there are limited features to protect pedestrians from the drive-through lane. The exterior building has minor staining and some water damage. The remainder of the sites are not well landscaped other than the lawn area by the back of the building. Loose stone is not a great landscape material because it tends to migrate onto the travel pathway and also presents a tripping hazard and various sidewalks are in disrepair. He does not have interior pictures of the building because the bank asked that he not take photos. He noted that the bank as a lot of wasted space, unused offices and workspace. The bank was expanded in the 1980's in an obsolete design. The building has a full basement that is used as a break room. There is no elevator in the building and is not designed for today's standards for banks. Despite the building being in pretty good condition, he finds that the property qualifies under statutory criteria D.

Planner Cosenza noted that lot number two is known as the Park Town Center property from 406 to 418 Raritan Avenue. 406 is the Highland Park post office and 418 is the burger restaurant. This building has 10,400 square feet and is one story in height. The building was originally built with four leaseholds on the corner and that portion has a basement. The remainder of the building has the post office and two other businesses and was built on a slab. At the back of the building there are some issues with water damage and water infiltration with respect to the ground surface. There is a depressed curb for vehicles to go from the public right-of-way into the rear parking lot and that has been paved over with asphalt in an attempt to prevent some storm water sheet flow from getting into the property. A lot of the damage has been done through the storm water over the years, including some recent storms. There is water damage in those spaces that have a basement including rotting sub floors. The post office has several broken windows on the side and back of the building. There is a lot of limited storage space for these tenants, haphazard parking area problems and there is no designated trash area. The building was renovated in 1997 with a stucco finish and the borough worked with the state and the property owner to improve the streetscape by adding more trees and benches. The building is over 60 years old and there are water stains and patterns underneath the awnings which are showing signs of deterioration. Under the awnings there are exposed light fixtures and equipment that is rusting. There are areas underneath the fascia of the overhangs that is peeling and allowing water damage into the building. This property has seven different leaseholds and they all vary in condition depending on how recently they were renovated. He finds that the property is substandard, unsafe and has obsolescent characteristics and qualifies under criteria A. Due to the dilapidated conditions, faulty arrangement and design of the parking area, he finds that it qualifies under criteria D.

Planner Cosenza explained that the next property is the Stop & Shop building itself. Along the South 5th Avenue property line there are various sidewalk slabs showing overgrowth, cracking and dilapidation. The wheel stops are sort of dislodged and moved away and vehicles have hit the fence that is in disrepair and there is debris all over the place. There is no buffer for the wheel stops along Raritan Avenue and it is unsafe for pedestrians and is not in keeping with the design standards for the borough. The parking lot and site was last renovated over 20 years ago and is a faulty design arrangement and very unsafe. Along the walkway between Raritan Avenue and the front of the store there are various slabs that are deteriorating and the wooden fence and metal railing are starting to break apart. The walkway does not have any accessible features and is not compliant. Since January 2019, there were 14 accidents in this parking lot, 3 involving pedestrians, including 1 who passed away. The parking spaces may be ADA compliant, but in order for a user to use the space to access the aisles in between, they have to get out of the vehicle onto the access but would have to go out into the middle of the drive aisle. The parking area itself hasn't been paved in quite some time and various painting and re-striping is causing some confusion. Various areas are not well utilized and could be used for more parking. The landscape islands are small and useless. The landscape island, if properly sized, provides better visibility between other vehicles traveling and seeing other vehicles. When vehicles are parked here, it's essentially blocking the site triangle of all these parking spaces. Without a properly designed parking aisle this limits visibility throughout the parking lot. The loading area is used as an ad hoc storage area with debris and unused carts. The stairway leading up to the dock has no railing and

is not to code. The retaining wall has a severe crack and needs to be evaluated by a structural engineer. The bumper block at the loading dock has been depressed and is not up to today's standards. There is a lot of rust and mold conditions in the loading area. The exterior of the building has various water infiltration, damage and staining. The retaining wall next to the parking area by Wells Fargo is falling over. The expansion joint is starting to fall and the various street furniture is unusable because it's broken. The access way in front of the store in many areas is blocked. The inspection of the roof found areas where the flashing was failing. They noticed pooling of water in low spots and blockage of vents. They also noticed HVAC piping and protection measures relating to the flashing failing which means more water is getting into the building which causes mold. He showed pictures of the interior of the building in the back of the store. Over time the needs of the store changed and more and more coolers needed to be added. Part of the warehouse had to be carved out and utilized for high value equipment to be stored. The manager's office is cramped and has no windows and is not a great working environment. Various coolers have standing water because it's not pitched correctly to the floor drains. There's stains and rust and damage all throughout various coolers and on the sales floor there's various areas where it has not been renovated in quite some time, including the fixtures themselves. He finds that the Stop & Shop building qualifies under statute A for substandard working conditions as well as criteria D.

Planner Cosenza noted that the next property is Block 3002, lot 7, 438-440 Raritan Avenue. It is a two-story building at the front and the remainder of the building is one story metal frame. The building is pretty well maintained but there is a little bit of damage at the foundation, minor cracking and some staining at the cornice line and parapet wall. He found no issues with this building despite it being the oldest building in the study area and gave kudos to the property owner and business owners for maintaining it. He believes a former Planning Board member or Council member ran a business in this building. It is an interesting history of all the different types of businesses that were there on the first floor. The second floor is a service business and there's no elevator to get to the second floor. This building obviously predated building codes. He finds that this building does not qualify as an area in need of redevelopment. However, due to section 3 of the criteria, you can still designate certain properties as those who are not qualified as an area in need for the effectiveness of effectuating a redevelopment plan. For that reason, because of its proximity to the Stop & Shop property, he finds that this property qualifies under section 3 of the redevelopment statute.

Planner Cosenza noted that the last two properties are Block 3002, lots 34 & 36 and lot 35, 21 South 4th Avenue. They are owned by the Wells Fargo Bank and they're about 25 feet wide each and are not conforming to today's standards, but taken together, they serve as a parking area for the Wells Fargo Bank. It is off-site because you have to cross the public right-of-way to get to the parking area. There's some issues with this parking area and relative to its layout, there's two two-way driveways serving the entire parking lot, but there's only two rows of parking which is extremely inefficient. You only need the 24 foot lane with head in parking on both sides. Technically, that 22 feet of pavement is a complete waste of space even though it is the area for the public right-of-way and it should be paved for access. The overall design is completely inefficient and leads to unnecessary impervious surface and it contributes to the urban heat island effect. The fact that there's very limited landscaping contributes to the faulty design arrangement. There's no buffer between the parking area and a residence next door. Users who park here to get to the bank must cross multiple drive aisles, including the drive through lane, to get to the front of the bank. The sidewalk and apron are showing some signs of dilapidation deterioration. He finds that this property qualifies under section D of the criteria as an area in need of redevelopment due to its dilapidated conditions and faulty arrangements of design.

Planner Cosenza noted that he found through this report the entire study area, lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 34, 35, 36, and 37 all qualify as an area need of redevelopment. It is in the board's hands to make the recommendation back to Council whether you agree. You can make the determination whether it's all the areas discussed in this report or just a part of it.

Ms. Hand opened the meeting to the board for questions of the Planner.

Ms. Hadhazy asked about 406 Raritan Avenue, the post office, and whether there are federal funds that can be supplied or allotted to redevelop. Planner Cosenza noted that generally speaking underneath the rehab designation as well as the redevelopment designation, the Borough could through a redevelopment plan offer rehab programs that offer financial assistance.

Mr. Perlman asked about the vehicular crashes and what lots they were on. Planner Cosenza noted that the vehicle crashes all occurred on the Stop & Shop property. He also noted that a lot of the accidents did occur generally in the area where all the driveways converge, including the fatal incident. Mr. Perlman asked if there were crashes on any of the other properties. Planner Cosenza noted that he didn't do a deep dive into the other properties because they don't have parking lots. He didn't see any accidents for the parking lot behind Wells Fargo Bank and he is not aware of any accidents associated with the Park Town Center. Mr. Perlman asked if there were building code, fire code or health code violations. Planner Cosenza noted that they did find some zoning violations for the Wells Fargo Bank. They were supposed to have a dumpster and still don't. There are a couple of building violations from the 70's and 80's relative to timing permits. In the Park Town Center certain leaseholders got permits for improvements that would show that they've been periodically updated. There were gaps in the building records, but work could have been done without permits. For fire records, there were permits for burglar alarms. He did not see any health code violations. Mr. Perlman asked if there were any burglaries or assaults reported. Planner Cosenza noted that he did not check for assaults, but noted that he did see alarms tripped at the Park Town Center. Mr. Perlman asked if the retail spaces are occupied. Planner Cosenza noted that there is one vacancy. Mr. Perlman asked how long the tenants have been in their spaces. Planner Cosenza noted that he did the research, but did not analyze it. There's been some businesses that have turned over but he does not have the information handy to answer the question. Mr. Perlman noted that the reason he asked some of these questions is because he's done some redevelopment investigations over the years. He is a little concerned over the use of criteria A for the town center property. The report says the property is in fair condition and there was not in your preliminary investigation any documented building code, fire code or health code violations. There are no reports of burglaries or assaults or anything to determine that that meets criteria A of the redevelopment statutory criteria. It is not the finest building anyone has seen but it has fairly new tenants and long-standing tenants and it services a portion of the population that maybe doesn't have the highest income. It has a laundromat and a dollar store and those retail stores are important. He does not see how the Planner got to criteria A for that property. Planner Cosenza noted that the conditions he observed were in the basements and many of those basements had substandard walkways and stairways down to the basement with missing railings. Some of the subfloors were rotted and are in substandard condition. That is what he based that standard on. If the board finds that it does not meet criteria A, you could disregard it and remove it, but it still does qualify underneath criteria D. Mr. Perlman asked about criteria D and whether there were any reported burglaries or health code violations that would lead to some public health threat. None of that was in the preliminary investigation report and none were provided tonight. He has an issue with this property being included in any criteria in this preliminary investigation.

Ms. Hand asked about the layouts for the back of the building. Mr. Perlman noted that it has to be detrimental to safe, healthy morals and welfare. That would be documented through various health violations and the like which should be on record. Ms. Hand commented that there can be more violations than just those recorded. The lack of safe access to the backs of those businesses to her are substandard design layouts. While the building is not falling down, it's also not an optimal condition, at least from the photos, and from her personal observations. The front of the building is not the worst thing she's ever seen but when you get up close, you can see the deterioration. The back of the building has water damage and when you walk the public pedestrian walkway you see the deterioration of those buildings. She hears his concerns about the lack of fire code violations and lack of burglary information, but she thinks those are not

the only ways to document the ongoing deterioration of the building. Planner Cosenza noted that not all issues are ever documented. In this case, this offers an opportunity to document the condition at this point and that is why they spend an enormous amount of time taking photos and incorporating that into the report. That's why the report is not just a wall of text. We're showing it to you through evidentiary evidence. In terms of the parking lot layout, the Chairwoman is correct that it is a faulty design arrangement. It has no defined drive aisles, the parking spaces are haphazardly laid out, the wheel stops are not properly in line or affixed to the ground, there's no buffer around the property, there's no designated trash removal or recycling areas and any and all trash cans are laid out along the side of the building. By today's standards it is certainly a faulty arrangement in terms of parking lot layout and it's not safe because there's no defined routing system for all the vehicles to park and it's not safe for pedestrians.

Attorney Gibbons noted that it is not necessarily the absence or presence of objective violations or findings. It's the opinion and investigation of a qualified Engineer/Planner based upon proper planning standards. It can also be used as evidence in terms of reaching the conclusions under the LRHL. He cautioned the board that just because there may not have been x number of violations or identified problems that doesn't necessarily mean that the quantum of evidence isn't met. The whole point of the proceeding is to have a detailed investigation and findings based upon the qualified expertise of the professional, not just an opinion, but things that can be identified and discerned over and above any public record or violations or other identified conditions.

Mr. Millet commented that since this is a non-condemnation process, he wanted to know what role the property owners would have in the ongoing redevelopment assuming it moves forward. Planner Cosenza noted that regardless of what the findings are tonight, the entire study area is already an area in need of rehabilitation. What this means is that the property owner and other property owners could engage the borough or vice versa to do a redevelopment plan that might benefit all the parties. There is really no difference between non-combination and combination in terms of the statutory findings other than the fact that if you do combination, it gives you the power to utilize eminent domain. In a non-combination you can't do that. The difference between an area in need of redevelopment versus an area in need of rehabilitation is the five year pilot versus a 30 year pilot. We did this report to have that additional tool that might be useful to help spur redevelopment of any one of these properties. Specific to the property owner, he doesn't have to engage the borough and obviously there's no combination involved. We're not interested in doing that, we've declared that up front.

Ms. Hand commented that she thinks it is important to emphasize that this designation does not force the property owners to do redevelopment. This is a town side designation so the town could, if they wanted to, make a plan but they can't force action. Planner Cosenza noted that from his experience working with the borough officials, we've been trying to be proactive and transparent in saying that they'd be interested in working with them. It's less red tape, gets it done and everyone's happy and more importantly, it benefits the community and in some cases removes eyesore conditions. That is the goal of the redevelopment plan and hopefully with the redevelopment designation we have that additional tool, which ironically the borough does not have to even use. You want that in a toolbox just in case it becomes useful for a particular project.

Mr. Chin asked for a general description of what could happen or what the role of a commercial tenant would be moving forward if they were to declare this area in need of redevelopment. Planner Cosenza noted that he believed the statute has a workplace relocation program similar to affordable housing. He will do more research on that and provide feedback. Mr. Millet noted that the Governing Body is interested in partnerships with landowners and partnerships with developers not in confrontational or adversarial relationships. Part of the reason that the Governing Body put this forward is an attempt to have all of the tools that they possibly can to have a non-adversarial relationship to move forward.

Mr. Perlman commented about the landmark building and noted that he has trouble believing that they need the additional 50 feet for the redevelopment plan. You're looking at a very small site across a very large study area. He asked the Planner to justify the inclusion of section 3. Planner Cosenza noted that a redevelopment area may include lands, buildings or improvements, which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary with or without change in their condition for the effective redevelopment of which they are part. The Redevelopment Handbook, A Guide for Rebuilding New Jersey's Community, 2nd edition, says that the inclusion of properties that do not meet the statutory criteria but are essential to be included for the designation to effectively redevelop the area. Examples include property located within and surrounded by otherwise blighted areas, properties that are needed to improve access to be developed and properties that are needed for infrastructure, utilities or properties that otherwise could be determined to be critical to the area's successful redevelopment. In order to do that, you have to have a vision of what the redevelopment is. We're not there yet, but it could be critical to have that corner building as part of a complete redevelopment plan. That doesn't mean that building has to go away to serve a redevelopment plan purpose. It could be retained and a new building next to it or it's knocked down and part of a new building. Due to its proximity to what we're calling a blighted area and the fact that it could be necessary for successful redevelopment.

Ms. Hand asked the Planner if it was his testimony that the inclusion of the landmark building would be necessary for effective redevelopment of the area. Planner Cosenza responded yes.

Ms. Hadhazy asked the Planner if he learned anything about the plans the landlord for Stop & Shop has for the building as they vacate the space. Planner Cosenza commented that not during this particular research. In the resolution that authorized the Planning Board to do the study, there was another resolution authorizing the Planner to do the study as well as to start a redevelopment plan. We are engaging with the Borough Council and property owner representative on concepts, but nothing that's public record yet. Ms. Hadhazy asked if there is any talk of demolishing the building or leaving the building standing. Mr. Millet noted that it is very early in the process and they are not there yet. Ms. Hadhazy asked if Stop & Shop has leased the space or is offering the space for lease to another potential tenant. Mr. Millet noted that there are a number of tracks that could follow. One is to attempt to fill the space with a current tenant. Another is an attempt to have a redevelopment. We are way too early in the process to know which of those roads were going to go down. We are trying to get all of the processes pointed in the direction of what is the way to get a great grocery store there.

Ms. Hand opened the meeting to the public.

Alan Pavon, Hillsborough, NJ, commented that he is a part-owner of Park Town Center. He noted that the Planner did a good job and pointed out a number of issues at the property that he is trying to address and will be addressed. He felt the comment about the garbage was unfair.

Ms. Hand asked if he had an objection to being included in the designation, if they were to make that designation tonight. Mr. Pavon commented that it is too early for him to say that, but he wants what's best for Highland Park. His family grew up in Highland Park and he loves the town. There is a lot about Highland Park that he likes and anything they can do to make it a better place to live is fine with him.

There being no other public present wishing to speak, public comment was closed.

It was MOVED by PERLMAN and seconded by CHIN that Block 3002, Lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 8, 30, 34, 35, 36 & 37, Non-Condensation Areas in Need of Redevelopment and excluding Lots 2 and 7 and the annotation correction on page 46.

ROLL CALL: Ayes –Perlman.

Nays – Brescher, Chin, Hadhazy, Hale, Lanaris, Millet, Stern Cardinale, Williams, Hand.
There being one (1) aye and nine (9) nays, motion defeated.

It was MOVED by MILLET and seconded by HADHAZY that Block 3002, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 30, 34, 35, 36 & 37, Non-Condensation Areas in Need of Redevelopment and the annotation correction on page 46.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Brescher, Chin, Hadhazy, Hale, Lanaris, Millet, Stern Cardinale, Williams, Hand.
Nays – Perlman
There being nine (9) ayes and one (1) nay, motion passed.

Mr. Millet noted that the Governing Body intends to take this up at the next Redevelopment Meeting on Tuesday. Attorney Gibbons noted that the Board can advise the Council of tonight's findings and a formal resolution can be imparted to the Council after adoption.

Correspondence and reports.

Zoning/Building Officer – Ms. Hand asked about the Spanish style house that's half dilapidated. Mr. Brescher noted that it went back to the courts.

Mr. Williams asked about the Wells Fargo lighting and noted that the lighting is much more intensive.

Public comment on any item not on the agenda – None.

Adjournment

There was a motion to adjourn from WILLIAMS and a second by HALE at 9:03 pm the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tania Varela
Board Clerk