

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK

WORK SESSION MEETING

May 28, 2024 – 7:00 PM

A Work Session Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held on Tuesday, March 28, 2024, and was called to order by Mayor Foster at 7:00 PM. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to The Home News Tribune, the Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on April 18, 2024 and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Flag salute led by Councilman George.

Roll Call:

Present: Mayor Foster, Councilpersons, Canavera (7:20 PM), Hale, Hersh, Postelnik; George, Kim-Chohan Borough Administrator Jover, Borough Attorney Shah, Borough Planner Christopher Cosenza.

Absent: None

Mayor Foster informed that this meeting is a work session and no formal action will be taken.

Discussion Items

1. Tract C Redevelopment Public Meeting on Wed., June 5th from 7-9:00 PM at the High School (TJ)
Borough Administrator Jover reminded everyone that on Wed. June 5th from 7-9 PM at the High School Cafeteria, the Borough will have their open community meeting to discuss plans for Tract C. It will be an overview of the plans. It is an opportunity for people to see different aspects of the project and ask questions and give feedback. The presentation will be recorded.

Councilman Hale added 232 Raritan is scheduled to be demolished the same week, and there is no relation to the redevelopment of Tract C.

2. 810 No. 2nd Avenue Redevelopment Plan Presentation

Borough Planner Cosenza had a presentation of draft slides on the two potential redevelopment plans for 810 North 2nd. He noted it was site-specific implementation, it was an adaptive reuse of legacy light industrial use, it creates sustainability with the reuse to create a unique housing type. He discussed what the area contained and it could be beneficial for small developers. He noted that the current zoning does not permit this type of project and the Master Plan encourages an appropriate mix of uses. Plan requirement uses for a multi-family apartments within existing building, bulk regulations would maintain existing coverage, setbacks, and height, one space per unit, 1 bike space per unit, improve buffer, improve frontage, with minimum size units, and affordable housing. Borough Planner Cosenza said there are between four and six units. We are going to require one affordable unit. There will also be one bike per unit.

3. Upper Raritan Redevelopment Plan Presentation

Borough Planner Cosenza made a presentation showing the area for redevelopment. He said the vision is to have a site specific implementation plan, adaptive reuse of legacy light industrial Allow for a mix of uses with housing and commercial flexible ground floor with activated uses, emphasis on walkability and bicycle parking. The Master Plan goal is to transform Upper Raritan from single-story strip commercial to multi-family uses. The way that the plan is written it's not exclusively commercial and a lot of different flexible potential uses. The Plan Requirements are as follow, Uses: multifamily apartments, range of commercials uses. Bulk Regulations: right sized setbacks/build to lines, reduce coverage, 3 stories (with a possible small 4th story popup and roof deck). Standards: 1.5 spaces per unit, 1 bike per unit, parking in rear, improve buffer, affordable housing, and a sustainable design. Public benefits: Eliminate curb cuts, improve streetscape, and supplement/support Upper Raritan road diet.

Upper Raritan Road Diet Proposed Alternative

Borough Administrator Jover announced she as well as the Chief of Police, Lt. Soden, Borough Engineer Bruce Koch, the Department of Transportation staff member and their consultant group had a meeting to get an update as to where this project is at. She then showed a presentation that shows three phases. She said we're in the concept plan phase. They want the Council to pass a resolution of support for the concept plan before going into the next phase of Engineering. The slide presentation covered the Project Location, Route 27 Project Area (Existing conditions), Project needs: Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, improve motorist safety by reducing crashes. Key Issues: Safety, Mobility, Environmental impacts, Accessibility, Congestion, and ROW Impacts. Existing Conditions, Safety Issues, The Preliminary Preferred Alternatives are to reduce number of travel lanes from 4 to 2. One way bicycle lanes. Curb to curb width is maintained. High visibility crosswalk and sidewalk connectivity. Traffic signal upgrades. Marking and sign upgrades. Resurfacing. Benefit Cost Ratio of 6.78, nine direct utility pole impacts, 14 temporary easement for driveway reconstruction and no storm water management is anticipated. Construction Staging Objectives, Travel Time (seconds), Intersections Results (Delay = seconds). Borough Administrator Jover continued with the slide which covered, NB Mainline Queue Length (ft.), the Tail End of CD Phase –New Jersey Department of Transportation Project Delivery Process, Public Information Center and Anticipated Project Schedule. Mayor Foster indicated that she and Borough Administrator Jover met with the Mayor of Edison and had a conversation about this project to get it going at the same time, he agreed. Councilman Hale, Council President Hersh and Councilman George shared the concern with the wait times and slowing the traffic down with lights, the turning access and drivers going around cars in the bike lanes. Borough Administrator Jover stated there will be buffers and upgraded signage. She reviewed the Mainline Queue Length, it tells how

many feet of backup there would be at different times. She also went over the anticipated project schedule, which included the CPC Graduation from Concept Development Phase: Fall 2024, Consultant Selection: Spring 2025, Preliminary Engineering Starts: Summer 2025, Final Design Starts: Fall 2026, Construction Award: Fall 2027. Councilwoman Kim Chohan suggested setting the traffic lights longer to 15 seconds to slow traffic. She asked if Edison has to be on board with this. The Mayor answered that the Mayor of Edison will work together with us on this project. The Mayor will request the speed limit be dropped to 25 mph at their meeting this Thursday. Councilman Postelnik would like to see added protection in the buffers for bike lanes. Councilwoman Kim Chohan asked if there would be a cost to the Borough for anything. Borough Attorney Sapana answered, there is an agreement and under the statute sometimes it's a percentage or if they decide on a different agreement they're going to have a projective cost and then they'll give you labor cost. It can be adjusted between the parties. Borough Administrator Jover we could probably use a capital ordinance.

Public Discussion

Nora Kreger 19 North 6th Avenue, said New York's bike lanes and barriers have a cut in the in the barrier for turns. She's in favor of the Raritan Development add to add commercial uses. She is not in favor of having an apartment at A10. She added when the Council is going to have the meeting on June 5th tell the residents that you haven't voted on it yet. She thinks the New Farmers Market does not have a big space. She is not in favor of bike lanes on Raritan Avenue.

Mayor Foster shared that she and the Council are doing a charrette at the high school on June 5th. It was discussed that each council member will be at a station where the displays are going to be with notepads to address questions and comments. The potential developer is coming and will do a presentation.

There being no one further to comment, Councilman Hale motioned to close public session, seconded by Councilman George and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, public session was closed.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Pampinto
Assistant to the Borough Clerk