

MINUTES

PLANNING BOARD

TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

Virtual Online Public Meeting

August 10, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 6:00 PM by Kevin Hall via Zoom virtual meeting service.

Mr. Hall confirmed that the meeting was being held in conformance with all regulations of the SUNSHINE LAW and proper notice had been given to the Courier News; also, the Agenda had been posted on the Township website. The Agenda for the meeting, as well as instructions for public participation in the meeting, have also been posted on the Township website and sent to the newspaper of record. The Agenda items will not necessarily be heard in the order listed and the meeting will not continue significantly past 10:30 PM.

Roll Call:

Members present were Mr. Graziano, Mr. Niceforo, Mr. Hall, Ms. Schwarz (6:10 pm), Ms. Greenwald and Mr. Cunningham. Mr. Robertson Board Attorney, and Mr. Hughes, Township Planner, were also present.

Election of Temporary Chairman

A motion was made by Mr. Niceforo, seconded by Ms. Greenwald, to appoint Kevin Hall to act as Temporary Chairman. The voice vote was unanimous.

Adoption of Minutes:

July 9, 2020 Special Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Mr. Niceforo, to adopt the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 9, 2020 as presented. The voice vote was unanimous.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to enter into Executive Session for the discussion of litigation. The voice vote was unanimous and the Board entered into Executive Session at 6:10 pm. Ms. Schwarz joined the meeting during Executive Session.

The Board returned to Public Session at 6:21 pm on the motion of Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Niceforo and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Referral:

Township Council Ordinance #13-2020 Adopting the Redevelopment Plan Amendment for the Property identified as 91 Lone Pine Drive, Block 703, Lots 3, 4 & 8 (DH-24 Zone)

The ordinance adopting the Redevelopment Plan Amendment for 91 Lone Pine Drive, Block 703, Lots 3, 4 and 8, was introduced by the Township Council at its meeting on July 21, 2020 (Ordinance No. 13-2020). The Township Council is asking the Planning Board to review the Redevelopment Plan Amendment and make recommendations in a report to be submitted to the Township Council pursuant to the Redevelopment Law.

Keenan Hughes, Township Planner, reviewed the proposed ordinance that involves an amendment to the existing DH Zone Redevelopment Plan for the Mill Creek project as a result of litigation settlement efforts. The changes to the plan include an additional buffer setback between the project and the Chemtrade property, an increase in building height to four stories, and inclusion of directional signage, monument sign and canopy sign. Mr. Hughes presented a rendering of the proposed new building, layout plan and elevations. He stated that this will be coming to the Planning Board as a site plan application.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Hughes stated that the buffer area will not be used for any amenities but will be a true buffer between the properties, and the fire department will review the project during the site plan review. Mr. Hughes further stated that in his opinion this is consistent with the Master Plan and the Township's housing element and redevelopment plan.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Hughes' testimony. There were no members of the public who had questions or comments.

Discussion took place and the consensus of the Board was in favor of advising the Township Council that the Board finds the ordinance to be consistent with the Master Plan and recommends that the Township Council adopt the Ordinance. The Board Secretary was authorized to advise the Township Council of the Board's determination and recommendation.

A motion was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Mr. Niceforo, to adopt the Resolution memorializing the Board's action. The roll call vote was 6-0 with Mr. Graziano, Mr. Niceforo, Mr. Hall, Ms. Schwarz, Ms. Greenwald and Mr. Cunningham voting in favor. There were none opposed.

Referral:

Township Council Ordinance #209-2020 Referring the Proposed Redevelopment Plan for Block 702, Lots 17 & 18 to the Township Planning Board

The ordinance adopting the Redevelopment Plan prepared by Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes LLC for the property known as Block 702, Lots 17 & 18, along with portions of the Sherman Avenue right-of-way (the "Stratton House Redevelopment Plan"), was introduced by the Township Council at its meeting on July 21, 2020 (Ordinance No. 209-2020). The Planning Board is asked to review the Stratton House Redevelopment Plan and make recommendations in a report to be submitted to the Township Council pursuant to the Redevelopment Law.

Keenan Hughes, Township Planner, reviewed the proposed ordinance that involves the Stratton House Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Hughes stated that the developer has entered into a contract to purchase the adjoining lot that was previously approved for a hotel, and wishes to include it in the multifamily residential project. The project will have 212 units including 32 affordable units as shown on the renderings presented. Mr. Hughes reviewed the proposed changes to the Redevelopment Plan and advised that this will be presented to the Board as a site plan application. Mr. Hughes further stated that in his opinion this is consistent with the Master Plan and in compliance with the downtown design standards.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Hughes stated that the site plan application will include storm water management and a traffic study, the parking for the project will be in a parking garage and the existing parking will remain for the existing retail units.

Discussion took place regarding the adequacy of the traffic lights and whether additional lights will be required because of this project.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed height of the building that is proposed to be four stories. Mr. Hughes noted that the existing Station Court development has four stories. It was noted that the Board will have to carefully consider this issue during site plan review.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Hughes' testimony.

Al Mea and Frank Mea, owners of the Berkeley Heights Shopping Center, stated that the hotel that was previously approved was intended to have four stories.

Discussion took place and the consensus of the Board was in favor of advising the Township Council that the Board finds the ordinance to be consistent with the Master Plan and recommends that the Township Council adopt the Ordinance. The Board Secretary was authorized to advise the Township Council of the Board's determination and recommendation.

A motion was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Mr. Niceforo, to adopt the Resolution memorializing the Board's action. The roll call vote was 6-0 with Mr. Graziano, Mr. Niceforo, Mr. Hall, Ms. Schwarz, Ms. Greenwald and Mr. Cunningham voting in favor. There were none opposed.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Mr. Niceforo, to adjourn the meeting. The voice vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Regina Giardina, Secretary Pro-Tem