

**CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2019
MINUTES**

MEETING LOCATION:
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CITY HALL, TOP FLOOR
78 BAYARD STREET
7:30 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| | Jeff Crum (Chairperson) |
| | David Fitzhenry (VC) |
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| √ | John Petrolino |
| √ | Robert Cartica |
| | Manuel Casteneda |
| √ | Clary Barber (Class I) |
| √ | Chris Stellatella (Class II) |
| | Suzanne Sicora-Ludwig (Class III) |
| √ | Dale Vickers (Alternate #1) |
| √ | Yelitssa Checo (Alternate #2) |

II. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT)

III. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

IV. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MONTHS' MEETINGS

April 8th Meeting

Motion to Approve: Could not make a Motion.

V. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

Resolutions of Memorialization

- A. RWJBH 25 FRENCH – 150 SOMERSET, PB-2019-04,** Application for the expansion to the existing South Building to provide 29,000 square feet of new hospital space and the renovation of approximately 60,000 sf of existing hospital space on Block 24.01, Lot 1.01, adjacent to French Street approximately 100 feet east of Paterson Street, Zoning District D-HI (Downtown Hospital/ Institutional)

Motion to Approve: Dale Vickers
Second: Robert Cartica

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

AMENDMENT TO THE 2005 JERSEY AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT

Dan Dominguez, PP, AICP, (Director of Planning, Community, and Economic Development for the City of New Brunswick):

We are requesting an increase in floor area from 1.2 to 1.4 to better accommodate parking on site as the parking structure counts towards floor area ratio. We are recommending a change in building height to be more comparable to the 2005 redevelopment plan version which had a staggered height of 40 ft on the front side of the jersey ave frontage. And then elevated to 80 ft on the interior of the site. What we would be looking for here would be a change from 60 and 90 feet respectively. In 2011 the amended created a flat 40 ft height across the entire project area. So, this would be bringing back the stepped measures. We would additionally be adding the parking requirements back into the plan. They were removed from the 2011 plan for reasons unknown. Technically it would be bound by RSIS parking requirements regardless. So, it just reiterates those same standards. We would like to put them back into the plan. Lastly, we would be changing the depth at which the staggering of the project occurs. If I am remembering correctly, it was 40 feet for the first 100 feet from the Jersey ave frontage and then elevated to 80 ft at 100 feet. In this case it would be 60 from the jersey ave frontage. And then after 225 feet of lot depth it would be able to increase to 90 feet, and those would be the changes as proposed by the city. The city's redevelopment authority: the housing authority pre-designated this developer back to December of this year with an approved concept plan that reflects the changes that we are proposing to amend the plan. As such the plan necessitated these amendments for the development to carry forward. No use changes.

Planning Board Member:

Other than the parking error that apparently was made in the past and the slight change in FAR, what's the reason for the proposed change?

Dan:

To better conform to the concept plan that was adopted by the housing authority into conformance with the parameters of the redevelopment plan.

Planning Board Member:

So this is not the request of a specific developer?

Dan:

The designated redeveloper did ask for those changes after the concept plan was approved by the housing authority which is their right under the redevelopment law. It is more than okay for the designated redeveloper to ask for these changes to avoid having to apply for variances.

Bignell:

The typical process on which you start a redevelopment area when they are originally adopted. Sometimes we adopt an area not knowing who the designated redeveloper is going to be because you want to start redevelopment in a blighted area. As time goes on the redevelopment plan is sort of out there and new developers come around and provide plans. Therefore, redevelopment plans are sort of always in state of flux and are always being amended to adjust for market trends. Technically the process here begins with the city council. Although technically it didn't begin with the city council yet. The process of amending that redevelopment plan really is a city council operation that is referred to a planning board. The planning board has the ability to review those things. Have a hearing and recommend master plan consistencies would sort of be the board that hears or refuses changes which is an essential part of your roles. So, this is something that the city council is going to be considering. And are looking for comments and recommendations that you might have. Its really no different then when we review the master plan. If the board has any comments or questions, you can discuss that, then open it to the public after.

Public

Charlie Kratovil:

Concerns that in making this decision that you would be open minded about the needs of the city. And not rush a vote tonight on this. Just for some contents the developer that requested that this change be made has been sitting on this site for some time. This is the vacant land next to the Walgreens shopping center. And this site has been a site for sore eyes to the neighborhood. This owner happens to be a major corporation. That has bought large properties all over the state of NJ. They have gotten considerable treatment from the city government and secured long term tax exemption. What was promised was not delivered. The original plan promised housing, a supermarket. The bank that was built never opened. And has no plans to open. Walgreens that was once 24 hours, a nice addition to the neighborhood is now closed at 11pm. I don't think this developer should get favorable treatment and that the needs of the neighborhoods should be put behind. This neighborhood and the city needs a school. We have a situation in the fifth and sixth ward where we have an elementary school where there are very few users dominated by college students who don't always have children. Then there is this area that has no school but lots of children. The reason that I am hear tonight is because I have heard of plans that Robert Wood Johnson has plans to take over and purchase Lincoln annex school. A school that just opened three years ago. Successfully. I have heard from reliable sources from members on the board of

education that the school is being sold off. And I think that part of that sale and discussion should be about finding a replacement school. I am sure that you are all familiar with this area, and you know that there is not a lot of area to build a large campus like an elementary school. One of our last remaining areas where this is a possibility is the area that the developer has asked for the change to the redevelopment plan. It just so happens that the developer and owner of the company is the chairman of the board of Robert wood Johnson Barnabas health. School has overcrowding. Removing Lincoln annex, it would only get worse. I hope you that you will put the brakes on this amendment. Is anyone familiar with the situation and can confirm who is doing the negotiation?

Planning Board Member:

Do you have any questions related to the amendment to the redevelopment plan?

Charlie:

In that case then please take into consideration my comments.

Planning Board Member:

Just to be clear the planning board is not adopting an amendment to the redevelopment plan. The planning board is being asked to make a recommendation to the council of this change. Because the council is the only one that can make the adoption. What is the zoning of the lots that are involved here?

Dan:

The zoning of the lots that involved here is community commercial and abuts general industrial. On the far end to the site, the area is zoned for community commercial. Which allows for residential, commercial, and office space. With some possible light industrial on the periphery, "Clean industrial". In addition the proposal as I understand it is was adopted by the housing authority would include midrise residential fronting jersey ave, with office and parking on the rear interior.

Planning Board Member:

Does anyone have any other questions about this?

Motion:

Guy started the motion

Women seconded it

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| | Jeff Crum (Chairperson) |
| | David Fitzhenry (VC) |
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V. OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC

Charlie:

I encourage people to watch the sept 25th meeting because they still have not adopted a redevelopment agreement for this particular development and that is supposed to happen at that meeting, and it has been delayed for some time. Hopefully this is a chance to look more into exactly what this developer wants to do. Take into consideration this developer's track record, not just on this site but in other sites as well. I did want to ask if anyone here is familiar with who is doing the negotiating with Robert wood Johnson.

Planning Board Member:

No

Charlie:

So, it's unclear who is doing the negotiating. I know that there is a need for a school, and I hope that you take that into consideration going forward. Thank you for your time.

Planning Board Member:

Thank you

Dan:

Tentatively we are planning to have an October and a November planning board meeting. We have plans that are in the pipeline and should be ready to go for the October meeting.

Particularly we have to designate this formally as a hearing at this planning board. On Nov 11th. As part of our hearing would be an amendment to the city's master plan. The last year or possibly the year before led by the environmental commission, we were able to get done a municipal public accessing plan. that I believed involved the state among others. Therefore, we seek to add it to our open space section of our master plan. So, we would be having a hearing on that day.

We are going to be meeting on October and November.

Motion to Adjourn:

Man
Women
All in favor

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VI. ADJOURNMENT