

**CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
PLANNING BOARD
MARCH 13TH , 2017
MEETING MINUTES
7:30 p.m.**

I. ROLL CALL

X	Jeff Crum (Chairman)
X	David Fitzhenry
X	Salma Chand
X	John Petrolino
	Carly Neubauer
X	Clary Barber (Class I)
X	Chris Stellatella (Class II)
x	Suzanne Sicorra-Ludwig (Class III)
X	Steven Lujan (Alternate #1)
X	Pierre Checo (Alternate #2)

II. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT)
Read by Mr. Siegle

III. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

IV. MINUTES OF THE BOARDS JANUARY 9TH, 2017 MEETING

V. RESOLUTIONS OF MEMORIALIZATION

- A. JOSEPH BOYLAN OBO THE BOYLAN FUNERAL HOME, PB-2016-15,**
Preliminary and Final Site plan application for the expansion of the
existing funeral home parking lot located at 188 Easton Avenue, Block 67
Lots: 4-9 32-36 and 37.01, Zoning District: C-3B

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VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. FERREN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN, Planning Board review of the proposed redevelopment plan pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (NJSA40A:12A-1 et seq)

Mr. Patterson addressed the Board. He stated that the plan had come before the Board in June of 2016 and that the Board found the plan consistent with the Master Plan at that time. The Board recommended the plan to City Council for adoption. Mr. Patterson stated that circulation concerns came up at the council meeting and the Council asked for the plan to come back to the Planning Board.

Mr. Patterson introduced the first slide which gave the location of the Ferren Redevelopment Plan area. He broke out the area into two types of designations which included an area of redevelopment, which was land already owned by the New Brunswick Parking Authority, and an area of rehabilitation, which did not have the powers of eminent domain.

Mr. Patterson provided contextual information of the surrounding location to proposed site. He stated that the proposed plan area is adjacent to the train station, has bus services, is surrounding by TOD and mixed use type developments and is where a lot of development is appropriate.

Mr. Patterson discussed the development program for the site and discussed the types of permitted uses for the area. He emphasized that the plan sought to make the area more pedestrian friendly using various zoning strategies. He discussed the use of a sky exposure plan which would require buildings to be “stepped-back” once they reach a certain height which would minimize the looming effect on pedestrians that some large buildings may have.

Mr. Patterson discussed the circulation changes to the plan. The plan called for the vacation of Church Street. Put in some restrictions if the development doesn't move forward in a timely fashion the street would need to be reopened after a certain time. If a developer is named and

they haven't moved forward with redevelopment within a period of roughly 18 months, they would have to reopen the street.

Mr. Patterson discussed the other major change to the circulation. He indicated that comments came up that cars trying to get to Easton Avenue from Church Street had to take a circuitous route. He introduced the idea of making Spring Street two-way from Route 27 to Paterson Street. He stated that Spring Street going north would be brought over to the Easton Avenue intersection, but Elm Row would remain a one-way street. Mr. Patterson indicated that this is just an illustrative design and the concept had not been fully engineered. He stated that a rotary design was considered but it decided against as it was not pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Patterson stated that if for some reason that the proposed change cannot be designed then Church Street would be put back through, although it may not be in the current location.

Board Member Jeff Crum asked Mr. Patterson asked if the design was "one way or the other."

Mr. Patterson stated that the preference would be to be keep the pedestrian level design (connecting Spring Street up to Easton Avenue intersection).

Jeff Crum asked if the traffic study would be done by the proposed redeveloper.

Mr. Patterson stated that it would be. He also indicated that the intersection was a county intersection and they would ultimately have to sign off any proposal. He stated that this connection would make the downtown circulation grid better.

Jeff Crum thought the proposed change would make it more pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Patterson introduced the parking strategy which includes shared parking where office, commercial, and residential users can share spaces to reduce the amount of parking spaces that need to be provided. He also indicated that the plan calls for car share services and the provision of bicycle parking.

Mr. Patterson discussed the signage strategies for the plan. He stated the plan was a reflect more modern signage regulations to allow for more flexibility and more signage than what is allowed under base zoning. He stated that larger signs could be a selling point for a larger client.

Mr. Patterson stated the Board must consider how this plan conforms with the Master Plan. He stated that the plan calls for the concentration of entertainment and commercial activities in a clearly defined center as the Master Plan calls for as well. He stated that the plan improves the visual environment while also clustering office development in the downtown area near other office users. He stated that he believes the plan is in substantial compliance with the City of New Brunswick Master plan and the State Plan (by encouraging economic growth and reducing sprawl by concentrating development in an urban transit oriented development).

Board Member Salma Chand stated her concerns about pedestrian safety at the Easton/Rt 27 intersection.

Mr. Patterson stated that the change makes it more of a traditional intersection. He stated that the pedestrian and vehicular traffic are more aware when approaching this intersection because of its uniqueness. He stated that an all-pedestrian phase could be created, but a lot of volume of traffic comes through that intersection and could lead to significant backups.

Mr. Stellatella asked about a pedestrian bridge from the NJ Transit platform to the Wellness Center.

Mr. Patterson said yes, but that platform would not serve the majority of pedestrian traffic and that pedestrian traffic should be out on the street rather than overhead on walkways.

Jeff Crum stated that he thought one of the great features of the plan was the creation of open space downtown.

Public Comment:

Louise Forman was sworn in. She stated that he was a resident at 1 Spring Street. She expressed concern that the shelter for the bus has been completely removed. She asked if a bus shelter will be implemented into this plan. She stated that Spring Street is narrow for two-way traffic.

Mr. Patterson stated that Spring Street would be widened.

Ms. Forman asked what is planned for the "island of land" created by the Spring Street extension.

Mr. Patterson stated that it depends on the final alignment of the road, but a bus shelter could be put in that area as a way to encourage mass transit use.

Charlie Kratovil was sworn in. He stated that the development of the site would bring strain to the existing utility network. He asked if there was any firm commitment that the potential developer would upgrade the existing infrastructure.

Mr. Patterson stated that any site plan development application would investigate the sewer and water lines (storm water reports, sewer and water capacity analysis) which may require upgrades.

Mr. Kratovil asked if electrical would be considered.

Mr. Patterson stated that PSEG generation demand is not of a particular concern.

Mr. Kratovil asked about the roundabout.

Mr. Patterson stated that the roundabout was not off-the-table but stated that it was not the preferred design at this point.

Mr. Kratovil asked about the right-of-way widening of Spring Street. He stated it made sense but asked why the Boraie's were allowed to build so close to the right-of-way.

Mr. Patterson stated it was because that was where their property line ended and they had the right to build up to it.

Mr. Kratovil raised an issue regarding 53 Patterson Street. He stated that if the street was going to be 55' wide the building would need to be demolished.

Mr. Patterson indicated that was what the plan called for.

Mr. Kratovil asked when the two-year timeframe began in regard to the Church Street vacation.

Mr. Patterson stated that the City Council in October 2016 approved the closure of Church Street in relation to the demolition of the Ferren parking structure.

Mr. Kratovil asked if Church Street would be two-way if it were to re-open.

Mr. Patterson replied not necessarily as the main traffic flow was getting vehicular traffic from Church Street out to Route 27.

Mr. Kratovil asked where the proposed parking exits and entrances would be.

Mr. Patterson stated it would be designed during the site plan application portion.

Spencer Forman was sworn in. He asked about the height limits for the building.

Mr. Patterson stated that the plan sets height limits at 350' and floor-area-ratio limits the volume of development on the site.

Mr. Forman asked when Spring Street be opened up to allow pedestrian travel to the train station.

Mr. Patterson stated that he believed that it would be open soon but was not 100% certain.

Yasmina Azer was sworn in. She asked about bike parking and how the plan was going to be bike friendly and accommodate bike traffic.

Mr. Patterson stated that bike parking would need to be secure and out of the weather. He stated that the City was designated as a Bike Friendly City (1 of 7 in NJ). Mr. Patterson stated that the City wants to upgrade the bike facilities but it takes time.

Ms Azer discussed the need for "third places" for people to gather in New Brunswick and whether they are considered in the plan.

Mr. Patterson stated that "third place" can cover a wide-variety of things, but maybe some "we-work" space could possibly be incorporated.

Ms. Sicorra-Ludwig made the motion that she found that the plan was in conformance with the master plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzhenry.

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VII. OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC

VIII. ADJOURNMENT