

STRATFORD JOINT LAND USE BOARD
MINUTES
February 22, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Mancini at 6:30 pm and the public statement was read that the meeting was advertised in the Courier Post, the Collingswood Retrospect and a notice was posted on the bulletin board at the Borough Hall stating the time and place.

The Chairman led the board in the pledge of allegiance and a prayer.

ROLL CALL:

Present

M. Mancini, Chairman Class IV
P. McGovern, Vice Chairman Class IV
T. Kozeniewski Class IV
J. Keenan Class I
K. Campbell Class IV
T. Hall Class IV
R. Morello Class II
R. St. Maur Class I

Absent

T. Lomanno Class III
M. Chicalo, Alternate I

K. Walton, Alternate II

A. Costa, Solicitor
S. Bach, Engineer, Bach Associates
S. McCart, Secretary

MINUTES: Motion by Mr. St. Maur and seconded by Mr. McGovern to approve minutes of February 22, 2024. All Ayes. Mr. Kozeniewski abstained.

NEW BUSINESS:

Canrea Capital LLC, 10 Webster Avenue, Block 9, Lot 16, Use Variance.
Mr. Costa stated if there is anyone here for 10 Webster application, it will not be heard this evening. It will be continued March 28, 2024 @6:30 pm. The applicant will not have to re-notice. This serves as the notice. If not heard at the March 28, 2024 meeting for any reason, the applicant will have to re-notice and re-advertise.

Redevelopment Study Area, Preliminary Need Investigation, Determination of Need Report, Block 36, Lots 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16; Block 40, Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 & 10; Block 41, Lots 2, 2.01, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
Mr. Steven Bach and Ms. Candance Kanaplue, both from Bach Associates, PC, were sworn in by Mr. Costa.
Mr. Bach stated the properties along East Laurel are the same properties that were designated as an area in need of rehabilitation in 2017. Rehabilitation only provides certain tool box mechanisms to encourage reinvestment. This is now a determination of need report to see if it meets the statutory criteria for a redevelopment area. The redevelopment area allows for additional planning tools and municipal tools to encourage reinvestment. Very important to note, this is a no condemnation from you to the governing body. No one can take any property from owners that do not want to sell their properties. A question that usually comes up is what does this do if this is approved. This is only the first part of a process. This finds out if the property

meets the criteria of an area in need of redevelopment. This does not set any zoning or change any zoning. If someone has an existing property and have existing zoning, what is going to happen? Most likely, underlining zoning typically always will stay in a redevelopment area. The only time an overlay zoning occurs is when someone is name redeveloper and they have proof that they are going to have controlling properties.

Ms. Kanaplue stated this is a Preliminary Need Investigation for Determination of Need Report for E Laure study Area. The report from Bach's office, dated February 2024, list all block and lots. Part of the process is that each parcel is look at individually. Appendix 1 list all the parcels. The parcels are along E. Laurel Road and situated near the medical school. We are on Step two of the process. The first step Borough Council direct the Joint Lan Use Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the identified area is in need of redevelopment. This is done by resolution. The Joint Land Use Board is charged with conducting a preliminary investigation and holding a public hearing. They make their recommendation to the Governing Body as to whether or not the study area is in need of redevelopment. The criteria are listed on page 8. The parcels are located on Laurel Road between S. Atlantic and Kirkwood Avenue. Most parcels are zoned office. One lot is zoned commercial. Four, and half of lot six, of the lots are residential. A lot of the lots are not being utilized for current zoning. The area is across the street from Jefferson Hospital and Rowan Virtual School of osteopathic medicine. It is an important connector to the White Horse Pike and the transit station. There are six acres, mostly owned and operated by different entities. A lot of the properties are prior residential and have been converted into offices. The majority of the parcels are chopped up into small residential areas, small offices, a few vacancies, or for sale or rent. Architectural of many of the structures are dated or obsolete. There are a lot of curb cuts because of the nature of the parcels being smaller. There is a pattern of underutilization in accordance with the zoning. They need upgrading to parking lots and sidewalks and the layout for several of the buildings. There is a lack of upkeep of some of the parcels which put together add to the determent and welfare of the community.

Appendix 2 are the site photos for each property They were all taken in July.

The 2017 Rehabilitation study was prepared by Masor Consulting and almost all structures were greater than fifty years old. All or most had been fully or partially converted to businesses. In addition, they observed a pattern of vacancies. These issues continue today.

Each parcel has to meet at least one of the criteria listed on page 5 of Bach's Report to be designated an area of redevelopment.

Criteria A Buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated or obsolescent. Summary of parcels that fit this criteria, Block 36, Lots 9, 12, 13, 14 & 15; Block 40. Lots 4, 8 & 9; Block 41, Lots 4, 5 & 6

Criteria B Discontinuance of the use of building, significant vacancies for at least two years, or being allowed to fall in a state od disrepair. Summary of parcels that fit this criteria, Block 36, Lot 2 and Block 40, Lot 8

Criteria C Land that is owned by the municipality, county or local housing authority or unimproved vacant land that has remained for a period of time. Summary of parcels that fit this criteria, Block 36, Lot 4 and Block 41, Lots 2, 2.01 & 3

Criteria D areas by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, faulty design, deleterious land use or obsolete layout or a combination. Summary of parcels that fit this criteria, Block 40, Lots 7, 8 & 9, Block 41, Lots 2, 2.01, 3, 4, 5 & 6

Criteria E Lack of proper utilization of area. Summary of parcels that fit this criteria, Block 36, Lots 6, 8, 9, 10 & 11; Block 40, Lots 2 & 3; Block 41, Lots 2, 2.01 & 3

Another criterion permissible under the redevelopment law that is NJSA 40A:12A-3 which allows for the inclusion of parcels that may not meet specific criteria but important to study area as a whole. Those parcels are Block 36, Lots 1, 7 & 16; Block 40, Lot 5; Block 41, Lot 7 & 8. In Conclusion the entire study area as a whole meets the criteria as an area in need of redevelopment for non-condemnation. All areas meet one or more of the criteria

Mr. St. Maur asked on the map tax parcel the red line should not be splitting lots 13, 14, 15 & 16. Ms. Kanaplum agreed.

Mr. Bach stated that will be correct before the second hearing. This is a public hearing. Our recommendation would be for this to be considered as an area in need of redevelopment without condemnation, then it can be referred back to the Governing Body.

Mr. Mancini asked can you give some specifics of the building that need updates? Mr. Bach stated this is zoned as an office zone. Generally, in the structure if you had two parking spaces and you have 1200 square feet of office space or if you have an office space that is not easily accessible, going through 2 side doors to get to it, it is not conducive for what the zoning is asking to do.

Mr. Mancini asked about the residential? Ms. Kanaplum stated they were in need of updates of superficial items.

Mr. McGovern asked what tools are used this area. In general terms, there are different options to allow and encourage reinvestment under the redevelopment process different than a rehabilitation area. Redevelopment areas allow to go up to thirty years. You have more incentives. They can structure longer term financial arrangements for the value added of taxes. It is important to note, it is what the improvements are over and above what the current values of the properties are. For those value added, you have the ability to phase in the additional added on taxes that would be assessed on improvements. There is possibility of how value added in taxes are distributed. Those are types of tools under a redevelopment designation.

Ms. Kanaplum stated the redevelopment plan can potentially provide for different type zoning to be implemented.

Mr. Costa stated the important thing is it is not condemnation. The municipality cannot sell your property.

Motion by Mr. McGovern and seconded by Ms. Campbell to open to the public. All eyes Shmaeya Saffold, 7 E. Laurel Road, was sworn in by Mr. Costa. Ms. Saffold asked if they were trying to build by railroad tracts. Mr. Bach stated it is all the properties from South Atlantic to Kirkwood. There are no plans. This is just step two of a multistep process. This is just the process that states this meets the state statue. Then there are other steps.

John Gentless, 111 Union Avenue, was sworn in by Mr. Costa. Mr. Gentless stated eh agreed with everything being said but in 2017 resident were being told if they don't sell going to condemn. Mr. Mancini stated that is not why it is being done.

Mr. Gentless stated he disagreed with definition of obsolete. That is kind of a subjective definition. That could be the whole town. I live two streets on back of these properties. If we are coming in with a four-story building, then what about the people who are going to back up to that. Mr. Bach stated there is no four-story structure being plan at the moment. In terms of how words are interpreted. These words are interpreted by professional planners. Just because something meets the criteria does not mean it is not a valuable property.

Ms. Saffold asked can we still live on the property. Mr. Bach stated it is your property. You can continue to enjoy your property.

Property owner, 11E. Laurel Road, was sworn in by Mr. Costa. We purchased the end office. We are trying to building up a business. Have you put all this into consideration when making a decision? Mr. Bach stated most of the have been underutilized as what the zoning as been which is the office zone along the corridor. If the properties have not met the goals of the office zone, that when we labeled it underutilized. It doesn't mean its your property or that you are not using

your property to the fullest. It is a statutory definition. Mr. Bach stated, just for the record, your notice indicated that this information was on file with the Borough for your review. Mayer Chetta, who owns Block 40, Lot 8 and Block 41, Lot 6, 277 White Horse Pike, Suite 102, Atco, NJ, was sworn in by Mr. Costa. He stated Block 40, Lot 8 was never boarded up. Block 41, Lot 6 was for sale in 2017 and I acquired in 2019. As far as parking goes, those have been previously approved. Mr. Bach stated you can put your objections on the record. A lot of existing structures are substandard in nature.

Motion by Mr. Hall and seconded by Mr. McGovern to close public portion. All ayes.

Mr. Bach stated those two items, if we stand corrected, would not change our recommendation that the criteria was met for these properties.

Motion by Mr. St. Maur and seconded by Mr. McGovern to favorable to recommend to Borough Council the Redevelopment Study. Roll call vote: Mr. McGovern, yes, Mr. Keenan, yes, Mr. Hall, yes, Mr. Kozeniewski, yes, Ms. Lomanno, yes, Mr. Morellos, yes, M.s Cambell, yes, Mr. St. Maur, yes, Mr. Mancini, yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Motion by Mr. St. Maur and seconded by Mr. McGovern to open to the public. All ayes. Hearing none.

Motion by Ms. Lomanno and seconded by Mr. McGovern to close the public portion. All ayes.

MEMORIALIZATION OF RESOLUTION:

Resolution 2024:07 Velocity Ventures and Stratford Square Condo, Block 62, Lot 2, 222 S. White Horse Pike, Preliminary and Final Site Plan.

Motion by Mr. St. Maur and seconded by Ms. Lomanno to approve the memorialization of Resolution 2024:07. Roll call vote: Mr. McGovern, Yes, Mr. Keenan, yes, Mr. Hall, yes, Mr. Kozeniewski, abstain, Ms. Lomanno, yes, Mr. Morelo, yes, Ms. Campbell, yes, Mr. St. Maur, yes, Mr. Mancini, yes.

BOARD COMMENT: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: Motion by Mr. McGovern and seconded by Ms. Lomanno to open to the public. Hearing none. Motion by Mr. St. Maur and seconded by Mr. Keenan to close the public portion. All ayes.

COMMUNICATION/ORGANIZATION: Next meeting is a special meeting on March 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm and a regularly scheduled meeting on March 28, 2024 at 6:30 pm

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Mr. McGovern and seconded by Mr. St. Maur to adjourn. All ayes.