

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
JULY 14, 2022- 7:00 P.M.  
HELD AT THE OAKLAND SENIOR CENTER  
20 Lawlor Drive, Oakland, NJ  
[www.oakland-nj.org](http://www.oakland-nj.org)

Pursuant to Chapter 231, Public Law 1975 (Open Public Meetings Act) adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by:

- ❑ Adoption of an annual schedule of meetings
- ❑ Posting a copy of same at Borough Hall and the Borough's website
- ❑ Advertised in The Record more than 48 hours in advance of the meeting
- ❑ Mailing a copy to any person requesting same

**\*\* MEETINGS CONCLUDE AT 10:30 P.M., THEREFORE, NO TESTIMONY WILL BE TAKEN AFTER 10:00 P.M.**

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS:

Sarah Michel, Andrea Levy, Gregory Liss, Joseph Marscovetra, Michael Rose, Thomas Connolly, Lee Haymon, John Morris, Councilman Pignatelli, Mayor Linda H. Schwager and Chairman Thomas Potash.

FLAG SALUTE, MEETING OPENED AT 7:05 P.M., ROLL CALL:

Present Members: Ms. Levy, Messrs. Liss, Rose, Marscovetra, Haymon, Morris, Mayor Schwager and Chairman Potash.

Absent Members: Councilman Pignatelli, Mr. Connolly and Ms. Michel

EXCUSE ABSENCES:

Motioned by Mayor Schwager and seconded by Mr. Rose, to excuse the absence of Ms. Michel, Mr. Connolly and Councilman Pignatelli was voted unanimously by the Board.

Mr. Joseph Russo, Esq., Board Attorney, John Yakimik, Board Engineer and Mr. Steve Lydon, Board Planner were in attendance.

Ms. Levy will sit in for Mr. Connolly.

BOARD PROFESSIONALS SWORN IN:

None.

## PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Hovnanian - McCoy Road, Block 4202, Lots 1, 2, & 3. Public hearing for a Preliminary and Final Site Plan application.

Chairman Potash announced that there was an error on the agenda showing the wrong date. Mr. Gregory Meese, representing the application, discussed this with his team and decided to re-notice and return to the Board on August 11, 2022. In addition, Mr. Meese, his team and the Board agreed to hold a special meeting on August 25, 2022 to make it up. Mr. Russo confirmed that Mr. Meese will re-notice the hearing date of August 11, 2022 in The Bergen Record and notify the property owners within 200-feet.

## OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Motioned by Mr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Morris, to open the meeting to the public regarding matters not on the agenda were voted unanimously by the Board.

Mr. Kevin Heffernan approached the Board and addressed a matter he believes is being ignored and impacting Oakland people. He referenced the current master plan and matters that apply to vision and community specifically in the downtown area and along Ramapo Valley Road. Throughout the years, he mentioned, many mayors and councilmembers have come and go and the downtown area remains the same. Residents of Oakland have suffered by lower home values compared to surrounding towns in Bergen County due to the appearance of the downtown area.

Mr. Heffernan explained that execution of key sections in the current plan has begun. This includes Bush Park, Streetscape Plan, reconstruction and replica of the Stream House, the possible implementation of NJSA 40A:12 to provide financial support to business owners in the form of tax abatement and sewers. He believes that sewers will cause a destruction to Oakland just like the construction and removal of many Victorian structures resulting in the downtown seen today.

Although development cannot be denied, the Mayor and Council can legally legislate and strongly recommend Oakland's architectural vision such as a late Victorian style. Between the strict architectural vision and an awarded of 5 year tax abatement, it would make it difficult for the contractor to dismiss.

Mr. Heffernan proposes the vision of bringing Oakland back to its late Victorian architectural style and protecting the remaining 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings that remain. He explained that there needs to be a written document supporting this vision, the vision needs to be codified into Planning Board law, an Architectural Review Board needs to be established to define and review all the downtown construction permits relative to the facade of any building. This will insure the vision conformance even if Zoning or Planning Board review is not required. An architectural integrity zone needs to be established from Franklin Avenue all the way down to Shoprite to protect historic residential architectural heritage. Many town agencies are involved in the establishment or/and implementation of the vision for Oakland. He prepared a chart.

The PERT (Program Evaluation Review Technique) chart, developed during WWII by the military which represents the moving parts, organization, responsibility and agreement to timeframes which makes departments keep their commitment and get things done by a deadline. If the Planning Board and Mayor and Council approve this vision concept, the other agencies will need to report to them for guidance.

Mr. Heffernan expressed that the Planning Board and Mayor and Council must act now for the community and for the future of the town. A vision plan must be adopted and submitted to the Mayor and Council for recommendation of adoption. He believes this will satisfy residents of Oakland. Act now, take leadership and create tools for the vision. He thanked the Board.

Chairman Potash thanked Mr. Heffernan and informed him that Mayor and Council has instructed the Planning Board to work on many of the things he mentioned in the presentation. Possibly by the September meeting, the Board may have a proposed ordinance ready for recommendation to the Mayor and Council which will include Architectural Streetscape Standards. The Board has been given instructions by Mayor and Council to work on this with Mr. Lydon, our Planner.

Mr. Thomas "Chopper" Russo, 58 Minnehaha Boulevard, agrees with Mr. Heffernan to some extent. He explained that the tax rate is different in Oakland compared to the surrounding towns. This is a great community with a great school system but the downtown is harsh looking. He does not think most of the landlords will agree to the architectural demand program and the 5 year tax abatement mentioned in Mr. Heffernan's presentation. He suggested floating a bond to pay for the improvements and the community can pick up the bond over time once business improves. There are 2 major medical centers proposing to come to town. Again, Mr. Russo suggests to form an architectural committee and post a bond and do it all at once. There is a high volume of traffic going through the downtown so it is important to make it more attractive.

The Board discussed possible incentive program with limited a timeframe. Mayor Schwager agreed with Mr. Russo concerning the landlords and tenants. She pointed out the new granite store which moved into town which has a contemporary look. Mr. Lydon explained that the lack of investment to the downtown is due to septic systems and the Mayor is pushing hard to get sewers in the town. If sewers come into town, this will attract more businesses. The Mayor mentioned once the decommissioning of the 3 sewage treatment plants are complete, the push for sewers will go full force.

CLOSE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Motioned by Mr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Marscovetra, to close the meeting to the public regarding matters not on the agenda were voted unanimously by the Board.

#### PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Motioned by Mr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Liss, to approve the bills list subject to the availability of funds.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ms. Levy, Messrs. Liss, Rose, Marscovetra, Haymon, Morris, Mayor Schwager and Chairman Potash.  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Councilman Pignatelli, Mr. Connolly and Ms. Michel

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motioned by Mr. Rose and seconded by Ms. Liss, to approve the June 9, 2022 Minutes.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ms. Levy, Messrs. Liss, Rose, Marscovetra, Haymon, Morris, Mayor Schwager and Chairman Potash.  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Councilman Pignatelli, Mr. Connolly and Ms. Michel

#### MEMORIALIZATIONS:

None

#### NEW BUSINESS:

None

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Russo reminded the Board that a Special Meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, July 26, 2022. Mr. Lydon informed the Board that a minor adjustment to the commercial and affordable housing portion in Housing Element and Fair Share Plan needs to be made. This will bring the Borough closer to a compliance hearing.

#### PUBLIC MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:40 P.M.

Motioned by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Rose, to adjourn the meeting by a unanimous vote by the Board.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Kathlyn Gurney, Administrative Assistant  
\*Next meeting on August 11, 2022

