

**Metuchen Planning Board Minutes**  
**Special Virtual Meeting**  
**February 10, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Eric Erickson, Chairperson, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA).

<b>Present:</b>	Ellen Clarkson, Vice Chairperson	Jonathan Lifton
	Alan Grossman	Jay Galeota, Alt II
	Linda Koskoski, Councilmember	Robert Renaud, Attorney
	Melissa Perilstein, Administrator	Christopher Cosenza, Planner
	Joel Branch, Mayor's Designee	Robert Mannix, Engineer
	Richard Green III	Patricia Cullen, Zoning Official
	Lynn Nowak	Denise Hamilton, Secretary
	Eric Erickson, Chairman	

**Absent:** James Griffin, Alt. I  
Jonathan Busch, Mayor

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**21-1280 Phoenix 410 Main Street** – Applicant is seeking preliminary, final, and major site plan approval to continue commercial use, add commercial space, and fifteen new apartments to the parcel.  
**410 Main Street, Block 121, Lot 9**

Mr. Eric Berger, Attorney and Applicant, said the plan is part of a redevelopment agreement executed with the Borough. The proposal includes a fast food restaurant on the first floor that fronts on Main Street. They have obtained fifteen parking spaces through the Parking Authority for the new apartments. Mr. Mark Marcille would give testimony as the professional witness.

Mr. Renaud mentioned that the focus for the Board should be the redevelopment plan to be presented and not the redevelopment agreement entered with the Borough.

Mr. Mark Marcille, Architect, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud and accepted by the Board as an expert witness.

Mr. Marcille said they are proposing is to add 15 apartments above the one story commercial space. The commercial space will be converted into a restaurant. Behind the Main Street commercial space will be 4 office spaces. To the rear fronting on Station Place will be the lobby to the apartment entry plus a new commercial space. On the left side adjacent to 412 Main Street is a 6-foot easement that will remain open for access. On the right side an asphalt paved alleyway will also be maintained.

Mr. Berger added that the easement would be made into a sidewalk.

Mr. Marcille stated that along Station Place they are proposing a new street tree and a fenced in refuse area for the tenants. The alleyway will be paved with asphalt and the 5-foot setback will be maintained. Roof leaders will run along the south side of the building, down a horizontal pipe, and will be directly connected into the storm sewer underneath Main Street. The County has given preliminary approval for that plan. The lower facade will remain and there will be a balconies for the second, third and fourth floors. Applicant is willing to work with the Planner's office for suggestions on appearance.

Mr. Renaud inquired whether or not the easement area was included in the total lot area calculation.

Mr. Marcille responded that the area was included in the calculation and continued his presentation. They will work with the Planner for lighting fixtures. Lighting is set to shoot upward and downward, but not outward. A doorway at the side of the building will be exit/entrance for the office space, and there will be an additional door leading to the apartments. Electrical and gas meters will be located inside the building. The lobby entrance for the apartments will be on the Station Place side, where tenants will have access to the stairwell and the elevator. There will be one condenser unit on the roof while additional units will be on the fourth floor. Every apartment will have a balcony for access to outdoor space. On the third floor will be a shared roof deck balcony. Bike racks on Station Place are being proposed, as well as ceiling mounted bike rack in each apartment.

Mr. Cosenza asked for clarification of the parking agreement.

Mr. Berger responded that employees for the commercial spaces would be encouraged to use discounted parking spaces and not the ones at Station Place offered to the tenants.

Mr. Cosenza stated that the goal is to not have parking on private property. Payment in lieu of parking will be required, which would give the Applicant the opportunity to have parking where it would fit due to existing non-conforming lot spaces in the area.

Mr. Renaud mentioned that if someone proposed a payment in lieu of parking, they would do so in accordance with the Ordinance 110-154. Ordinarily the Board would make a judgment call whether to take payment in lieu of parking, but that decision was already made by the Redevelopment Plan, Section 5.1.4 E, which supersedes this aspect in the Ordinance. In this instance, the annual fee payment in lieu of parking will be covered in the resolution if the Board grants the application.

The Board asked for clarification that 15 spaces are available across the street for the tenants.

Mr. Berger stated that a resolution with the parking authority was executed for those spaces which are shared spaces and not exclusive to the tenants.

Mr. Cosenza mentioned that in the agreement tenants are required to park in this lot. The application also provided additional bicycle parking for the tenants and he would work with Mr. Marcille to include bicycle racks on Station Place. He asked if the sidewalk would be redone.

Mr. Berger responded that the sidewalk would be created with brick inlay like Main Street.

Mr. Cosenza asked to have repair of damages, if any, for the storm water connection on Main Street and continued a brief discussion with Mr. Berger about the following; concrete walkway, tenants access to trash area, additional foot in height for the building, design of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, flexibility with size of the office spaces, use of materials that would not impact health, and the use of electricity versus gas. He requested the design changes be submitted before the Board's next meeting.

Mr. Berger was willing to work with Mr. Cosenza on these requests and agreed to repair damages to the street. He stated that the alleyway would have a gate on both ends and not be accessible to the public. Tenants would have a key.

Mr. Cosenza inquired about the Affordable Housing requirements?

Mr. Berger responded that they are in compliance with the 15% requirement, and as a result, has two units.

The Board questioned wheelchair accessibility to the apartments from the lobby? They also wanted a button installed to open the door at that the residential entrance.

Mr. Marcille responded that from the lobby by Station Place there will be wheelchair accessible as required.

Mr. Berger was agreeable to their request.

Mr. Mannix stated that the Applicant has already addressed items in his memo. He requested construction details in the restoration of the road pertaining to the storm sewer connection.

Mr. Renaud explained that the floor was opened to the public for questions only. Comments will be later and participants must be able to be seen on camera for that portion.

### **PUBLIC PORTION:**

Mr. Erickson opened the floor to the public for questions.

Gary Tyrell, Chief of Metuchen EMS, inquired about the anticipated schedule for construction, the times designated for garbage pickup, accessibility to the apartments, including provisions for emergency access.

Mr. Berger responded that a decision has not been made about construction times and collection of garbage, however, both would be during daylight. He added that all apartments are accessible by elevator and stairs. There will be a code for access to the shared component that will be given to the emergency services.

Mr. Ericson asked if there were additional members of the public with questions, when no one responded he closed the floor.

Mr. Cosenza stated that there is a Solid Waste Ordinance that states pickup can only occur between 6:00am and Dusk.

Mr. Erickson opened the floor to the public for comments.

Mr. Gary Tyrell, Resident, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud. He stated that construction is being done at odd hours and asked for assistance in having this stopped. He was informed that Ms. Kaulfers would be the person to contact.

There were no additional comments, Mr. Renaud closed the floor to the public and invited the Applicant to make final comments.

Mr. Berger expressed appreciation to the Board for hearing the application. There are no variances or waivers being requested since the plan conforms to Ordinance requirements.

Mr. Renaud stated the Conditions of Approval: 1) The plan for the disposal of storm water from the roof is satisfactory and proof of County approval is needed; 2) General agreement to continue to work with the Planner and revised plans are required for light fixtures, location of utility meters, increase in size of utility room, location of bike racks on Station Place, and ceiling mounted bike rack in each apartment unit; 3) Parking stipulations, including agreement with the parking authority, payment in lieu of parking, and provision regarding employee parking; 4) Landscaping revised plan subject to approval of Planner and Engineer; 5) Addition of one foot to the ground floor; 6) Applicant agreed to work with the Planner on

appearance of Station Place entrance; 7) Applicant agrees to review and consider suggestions made by the Planner pertaining to sustainable design; 8) Residential portion of the project will be handicapped accessible with automatic door opener; 9) Compliance with utilities and plans as stated in the Engineer's memo; 9) Affordable Housing compliance.

The Board expressed enthusiasm for the project.

Motion to approve was made by Councilmember Koskoski and seconded by Mr. Green. Ms. Clarkson, Mr. Grossman, Councilmember Koskoski, Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Branch, Mr. Green, Ms. Nowak, Mr. Lifton, and Mr. Erickson voted yes. Application was approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Ordinance 2021-01/Resolution; Proposed Rehabilitation Area Dining**

Mr. Renaud stated that it is a proposed Ordinance for non-enclosed dining structures. It minimizes the procedure for approval by the Zoning Officer and eliminates the need for site plan review.

Mr. Cosenza stated that is consistent with the Master Plan. It allows for business owners on Main Street to get an additional 10% of business coverage for one-story open air dining. As a result of the pandemic, it is a temporary situation being made permanent.

Motion to approve the Resolution was made by Councilmember Koskoski and seconded by Ms. Nowak. Ms. Clarkson, Mr. Grossman, Councilmember Koskoski, Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Green, Ms. Nowak, Mr. Lifton, Mr. Galeota and Mr. Erickson voted yes. Resolution was approved.

**Minutes**

**December 3, 2020**

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Green and seconded by Mr. Grossman. Voice vote, with all in favor, the minutes were approved.

**January 7, 2021**

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Green and seconded by Mr. Grossman. Voice vote, with all in favor, the minutes were approved.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Clarkson and seconded by Ms. Perilstein. Voice vote, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
D. E. Hamilton