

Metuchen Planning Board Minutes
October 7, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:31pm by Eric Erickson, Chairperson, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present:	Linda Koskoski, Councilmember Melissa Perilstein, Administrator Richard Green III Jonathan Lifton Eric Erickson, Chairman	Robert Renaud, Attorney Robert Mannix, Engineer Christopher Cosenza, Planner Denise Hamilton, Secretary
Absent:	Jonathan Busch, Mayor Ellen Clarkson, Vice Chairperson Joel Branch, Mayor’s Designee Alan Grossman	Lynn Nowak James Griffin, Alt I Patricia Kaulfers, Zoning Official

NEW BUSINESS:

21-1298 Homeland Developers, LLC – Applicant is seeking minor subdivision approval to combine several lots into two conforming lots for future construction.

23 Rayle Court Block 124 Lots: 49.02, 51.06, 56, 61

Lauren Tardanico, Applicant’s Attorney, stated that Applicant would like to merge the lots into two for future construction. Applicant had initially submitted a proposal that included construction of one single house on each new lot, however, that proposal has been withdrawn. This application is a fully conforming subdivision in the R1 District.

Mr. John DuPont, Engineer, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud. He has been a licensed professional engineer and planner in New Jersey for the past 20 years. He was accepted as an expert witness.

Mr. DuPont stated the subject property is comprised of four lots totaling 24,359 sq. ft., located on the westerly side of Rayle Court. Currently the lot has one single family house and a detached garage. The house is in poor condition with significant structural issues. Applicant proposes to merge the lots for potential future single family house construction. Both lots will be fully compliant with the bulk standards stipulated in the Ordinance, with Lot A measuring 14, 068 sq. ft and Lot B 10,327 sq. ft.

Ms. Tardanico shared her screen to display the subdivision plan prepared by Mr. DuPont.

Mr. DuPont explained that both lots will comply with width, area, and depth requirements. The existing structure is not in compliance because the side yard setback is 8.5 ft. where 10 ft. is required. That violation will be eliminated.

Ms. Tardanico stopped screensharing.

Mr. DuPont stated that they have reviewed the memos submitted by the professionals and will adhere to all requests made by the Engineer. As suggested by the Planner, they have reviewed the neighborhood and have observed that lot sizes are varied from 3,000 to 7,000 sq. ft. The variety of homes makes it a unique neighborhood without a standard development style. In reviewing the Master and Housing Plans, three goals will be met; 1) character of the neighborhood protected, 2) adherence to setback characteristics, and 3) lots would not be a detriment.

Mr. Cosenza stated that without construction of houses being proposed it is difficult to comment on characteristics. Size, height, and massing would be addressed if a structure was proposed. It is a conforming subdivision. There was concern about a pre-sold lot. Also, plan review could be included as a condition of approval.

Ms. Tardanico responded that neither of the proposed lots have been pre-sold and additional review of the new plans would not be warranted unless variances are required. Building drawings will be given to the construction office as appropriate.

Mr. Renaud mentioned that any variances required for new construction must be presented before a Board. A fully conforming application will follow the standard procedure and would not be required as a condition of approval.

Mr. Erickson opened the floor for comments from the Board.

The Board expressed concern for the unusual application with the construction of houses omitted. It is normally a collaborative effort, however, due the commentary given on the previous application, the proposal was revised for a subdivision only.

Ms. Tardanico stated that Applicant may sell the lots to a future developer. They remain appreciative of the review done by Technical Review Committee (TRC).

Mr. Erickson asked for additional questions from the Board, no one responded, the floor was opened to the public for questions of the witness.

Several residents had inquiries; plan for easement, drainage removal of a dead tree, how sizes of the lots were determined, waivers being requested, time line for construction, meaning of TRC, obtaining plan copies, and house in disrepair.

Mr. Renaud clarified that the easement would not be basis for denial of the application. Applicant could work with resident to address that issue prior to construction.

Mr. DuPont responded that future developer will not be able to increase burden on the property. Lot sizes were divided to give equal frontage and to have two fully conforming lots. There are no waivers being requested and timeline for demolition has not been determined. Applicant's property that disrepair.

Ms. Tardanico stated that Applicant is willing to remove the tree and will comply with Ordinances with respect to the demolition of the property. TRC is the Borough's Technical Review Committee,

PUBLIC PORTION:

Mr. Ericson invited additional questions from the public, no one responded, he closed the floor for questions and opened it for statements. No one from the public responded for statements, the floor was closed.

Mr. Renaud summarized the application and conditions of approval. Applicant has the right to subdivide the property where the application is fully conforming. The conditions are; 1) a subdivision map required (memorialized by deed which will be approved after demolition of the house and garage); 2) Applicant agrees to remove the dead tree near the rear property line and; 3) standard conditions are all applicable.

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Lifton and seconded by Mr. Green. Councilmember Koskoski, Ms.

Perilstein, Mr. Green, Mr. Lifton, Mr. Erickson voted yes. Motion was approved.

RESOLUTION:

Ordinance 2021-20 – Outdoor Dining Structures/Site Plan Applicability

Mr. Renaud stated that approval of the Resolution indicates it has been reviewed and is in accordance with the Master Plan.

Mr. Cosenza explained that it is a proactive step to assist businesses with minor site improvements. It is consistent with the Master Plan designed to promote development.

Resolution to adopt Ordinance 2021-20

Motion to adopt the resolution was made by Ms. Perilstein and seconded by Mr. Green. Councilmember Koskoski, Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Green, Mr. Lifton and Mr. Erickson voted yes. Motion was approved.

Mr. Cosenza shared his screen with the subdivision plan submitted for Rayle Street as Mr. Renaud held a brief discussion with the Board regarding the lot line calculation.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Minutes for September 2, 2021

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Perilstein and seconded by Mr. Erickson. Voice vote, with all eligible voting members in favor, minutes were approved.

Minutes, September 23, 2021

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Green and seconded by Mr. Lifton. Voice vote, with all eligible voting members in favor, minutes were approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Perilstein and seconded by Mr. Green. Voice vote, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,



D. Hamilton