

**METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES**

**June 15, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Ellen Clarkson, Vice Chairperson, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**ROLL CALL:**

<b>Present:</b>	Melissa Perilstein, Administrator William Love, Mayor's Designee James Griffin Lauren Cohn, Alt. I Ellen Clarkson	Shannan Foat-Gelber, Alt. II Robert Renaud, Attorney Thomas Herits, Engineer Christopher Cosenza, Planner Denise Hamilton, Secretary
<b>Absent:</b>	Jonathan Busch, Mayor Eric Erickson, Chairman Jason Delia, Councilmember	Lynn Nowak Alan Grossman Jonathan Lifton

**RESOLUTION:**

**23-1349 The Borough of Metuchen** – *Applicant requires minor subdivision approval with variances and waivers to create two conforming lots.* (Approved 5.18.23)  
442 Main Street Block 118 Lot 29.01

Motion to approve was made by Ms. Gelber and seconded by Mr. Griffin. Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Love, Mr. Griffin, Ms. Cohn, and Ms. Gelber voted yes. Motion approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**21-1304 HES Equity, LLC** – Applicant requires approval for variances and waivers to construct a new one-story warehouse on the rear gravel parking lot, with a small dispatch/entry area, and renovations on the existing warehouse. (*Continued from 4.20.23*)  
100 Prospect Street Block: 152 Lots: 51.01 & 51.02

Mr. John Wiley, Applicant's Attorney

- Stormwater Management Plan was submitted to the Borough's Engineer
- Mr. Schmidt will speak about the building's façade
- Professionals will be available to respond to questions

William Lane, Engineer, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud. Has been a been licensed for 26 years in New Jersey and has testified before numerous Boards. He was accepted as an expert witness.

Mr. Lane, Principal at Menlo Engineering

- Handled project design for the stormwater management
- On roof parking line is an extension to take the volume off the rear roof addition

- New drain line to tie into corner of Prospect and High Street
- New drain line up the side of the building
- Loading dock will tie into new drain line along with overflow from pavement area
- New line reduces flow 62%
- New stormwater design was also submitted yesterday to Engineer

Mr. Herits

- Stormwater report from yesterday changes were de minimis would not change the plan
- Nothing major has to be done with the drain. Consulted with Mr. Mannix. OK with plan.

Mr. Fred Schmidt

- Sidewalk added as requested by the Planner. (Testimony inaudible)

**Mr. Wiley**

- Testimonies have been concluded

**Mr. Cosenza**

- Design is a good compromise
- Gives the illusion there are windows on the High Street side of the building
- Accent lighting on High Street could be considered

**PUBLIC PORTION:**

Ms. Clarkson opened the floor to the public.

Ms. Jenna Pusillo, Resident

- Concerned how the building would be used in the future
- Was not in favor of the application
- Reversing into the site is already a problem
- Appearance of the building does not of concern, but increased traffic is
- Parking is already an issue

Mr. Wiley

- It is a continuation of what already exist
- The zone is appropriate for the use
- 18-wheelers can make turns and utilize the new addition proposed

Mr. Lane

- Addition is modest

Ms. Pusillo

- Already too much traffic for the street
- Board is not concerned since they are not residents of area
- Previous plans proposed has not been what has been executed

Mr. Renaud

- Board is not responsible for bringing in business
- Property is zoned for what is proposed and has been for some time
- Operation on the loading docks were discussed in previous hearings

Ms. Clarkson invited additional questions. No one responded. The floor was closed.

Mr. Renaud read the Conditions:

- Trucks will not be permitted to block sidewalk with deliveries. Must pull into the bays
- There cannot be two 18-wheelers on the premises at the same time
- One tractor trailer at a time
- Declaration of covenants and restriction will be recorded so future purchasers and current applicant would be bound by these restrictions
- Pervious pavement will require operations and maintenance manual as part of the declaration
- No trailers larger than 42.5ft will be permitted
- Parking limited to five spaces and not more than five employees
- Approval is for a storage warehouse, not for distribution
- Tractor cannot idle on lot
- Applicant cannot sublet property
- Applicant will comply with requirements by the Board Engineer and Board Planner

Board inquired about the Mezzanine.

Mr. Schmidt

- The second floor would remain
- Applicant would like to retain this space

Mr. Cosenza

- No objections to space being retained

Mr. Herits

- Intent is to beautify the area and increase storage facility
- Warehouse should close by 4pm - 5pm
- Operation would close by 5:00pm
- No activity after 5pm refers to loading and unloading of trucks
- Hours of operation would be 7:00am – 4:00pm.

Board

- Number of employees would be out of Board control in terms of future use of the property
- Members expressed disapproval of the application
- Property is already non-compliant, and the situation is being made worst with the application
- It is not a hardship per the application and there would be no public benefit
- Cementing windows was not an improvement.
- An 8,400sf addition to a 10,000sq building is extensive
- Future use of concern

Motion to deny the application was made by Mr. Griffin and seconded by Ms. Gelber. Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Love, Mr. Griffin, Ms. Cohn, Ms. Gelber and Ms. Clarkson voted yes. Motion was approved.

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

### Complete Street Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Presentation / Chris Cosenza

- Document was originally prepared in 2016, but was never formally adopted by the Board as part of Circulation Plan of the Master Plan
- Adoption is in compliance with the Municipal Land Use Law
- The study noted that most streets in Metuchen are suited for bicycling
- Study provided concepts and recommendations addressing pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Planning Board's Role is to determine if the study should be incorporated into the Circulation Plan as part of the Master Plan

Mr. Renaud

- Planning Board's role is to assist in determining if a plan is beneficial for the development of the municipality, which the Governing Body will consider when adopting ordinances
- Resolution has been prepared for consideration, if Board agrees that incorporating the Pedestrian Plan into the Circulation Plan amendment as part of the Master Plan

Motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Perilstein and seconded by Mr. Love. Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Love, Ms. Cohn, Ms. Gelber and Ms. Clarkson voted yes. Motion approved.

### Expanded Arts District Redevelopment Plan

Mr. Renaud

- The Governing Body has introduced an Ordinance to adopt the Redevelopment Plan for the Arts District. Role of the Planning Board is to make recommendations to the Governing Body. The Plan then return to the Governing Body for a decision on its adoption.

Mr. Cosenza

- Over the past year some historic buildings in the area have been demolished. The idea is to preserve some of the remaining buildings such as the Forum Theatre. The sliver of land by the gas station, the vacant gas station and Forum Theatre have been designated as part of a condemnation area within the Arts District area. The Arts District is part of the Redevelopment Plan.
- Planning Board's role is to determine if the provisions proposed are consistent with the Master Plan
- Although designated as a B3 Zone, it could be more expansive
- Arts District will be inclusive place for the arts, culture and history

Mr. Renaud

- This is not the public hearing for the Redevelopment Plan. That hearing will June 26<sup>th</sup> at the Borough's Council meeting.
- Resolution is to recommend the adoption of the proposed Redevelopment Plan

Motion to adopt the resolution was made by Mr. Griffin and seconded by Ms. Perilstein. Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Love, Mr. Griffin, Ms. Cohn, Ms. Gelber and Ms. Clarkson voted yes. Motion approved.

## **Land Development Ordinance Amendments**

Mr. Renaud

- This is a referral from the Governing Body for Planning Board review, as required under the Municipal Land Use Law. Plan Board must agree that the change is consistent with the Master Plan

Mr. Cosenza

- Changes affecting how single and two-family homes are developed
- Allows more flexibility to homeowners, especially those on narrow lots
- Administrative changes to provide additional guidance for the Zoning Official; fencing, driveways, etc.

Motion to approve was made by Ms. Cohn and seconded by Mr. Griffin. Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Love, Mr. Griffin, Ms. Cohn, Ms. Gelber and Ms. Clarkson voted yes. Motion approved.

## **Minutes - May 18, 2023**

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Griffin and seconded by Ms. Perilstein. Ms. Perilstein, Mr. Love, Mr. Griffin, Ms. Cohn and Mr. Gelber. Motion was approved

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Gelber and seconded by Ms. Perilstein. With all in favor, meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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D. Hamilton, Secretary