

**Town of Phillipsburg
Planning Board Meeting
535 Fisher Ave
Minutes for March 22, 2018**

Chairman Corcoran called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Corcoran read the Open Public Meeting Acts Statement. Those Present were: Mayor Stephen Ellis, Chairman Kent Corcoran, Councilwoman Degerolamo, David P. Morrisette, Jennifer McBride, Dominic Vangeli, Rosanne Rohm, Darren Bodogh, Keith Zwicker, and Bill Duffy. Also in attendance were William Mandry, Planning Board Attorney; Mr. Stan Schrek, Board Engineer; and Ms. Charee Carney, Recording Secretary.

Resolutions-

Iglesia Pentecostal Church Case

Mr. Zwicker motioned to accept the resolution for Iglesia Pentecostal Church and Mr. Bodogh accepted. The motion carried with two abstentions from Councilwoman Degerolamo and Mr. Vangeli.

Mr. Schrek state that the applicant still needs to appear in front of council and the Mayor for the encroachment of right away.

Bourbon Street resolution will be voted on at the next meeting.

Meeting location change (535 Fischer Ave) and meeting dates resolution.

Mr. Zwicker motioned to accept and Ms. Rohm seconded. The motion carried.

New Business - LMR

There was not anyone present representing LMR.

Attorney Mandry updated the board with the history of the redevelopment plan and how LMR would like to make an amendment to the redevelopment plan. The planning board needs to make a determination if the use is consistent with the master plan. The board can make recommendations for the town council. Attorney Mandry concurs with Mr. Shrek's review letter and feels there could be potential hardship.

Mr. Schrek stated that even if LMR is approved by council, they would still have to appear before the planning board for site plan approval. He read the current allowed uses and the review letter to the board. That area of town is a part of the plan for an improved use. Mr. Peck's letter mentioned they are an inherently beneficial use and Mr. Schrek does not feel it is an inherently beneficial use and reminded the board that there is an approval for 400 plus units not far from the site.

Mr. Bodogh does not feel that it is consistent with the master plan because of the base of the overpass and not a good site for large trucks. The heavy truck traffic will damage the roads and ruin the new sidewalk. He referred to Mr. Duddy's letter and how it states they are operating illegally.

Ms. Rohm brought up a prior application from the county about putting in salt sheds in that area and how it was denied because of truck traffic. She asked if this was the same location and the board stated no but not far. Chairman Corcoran also mentioned how another applicant, Micro Molding appeared before the board and a large portion of the testimony was about how much truck traffic the applicant will have. Chairman Corcoran stated that if he were to buy a 200 thousand dollar townhome, he would not want to drive past and smell a trash facility.

Mr. Scheck reminded the board that the area is proposed to be a multifamily residential area.

Mayor Ellis said that the business proposed is not appropriate for the site. There is a no left turn on the Main Street, the area around it has a five ton restriction, and they have been using Center Street, Roseberry Street and Main Street. The site has been tracking mud all the way to Agway. They have been going over the curbs and sidewalks. There are quite a few trucks going out and it does have a stench of odor. The area is a national state historic area, the canal. He feels it disrupts the current quality of life in that area.

Mr. Rooney joined meeting at 7:32 pm.

Councilwoman Degerolamo asked if LMR purchased all three properties and it was stated yes and he paid the tax lien. He did not obtain a C.O. Karl's Auto Glass pays LMR rent now. She asked, why were they not sited in 2015 by Paul Smith? All of the prior rent that was paid had to be forfeited to the town because of the foreclosure and a former agreement with the Mayor. They did not apply for a site plan. Councilwoman read that that truck traffic was no longer a concern because of reduced industrial and asked if the planning feels differently now? Mr. Duffy said the language was referencing the four round trip requirement, so there was not a concern because there was a restriction in place. Mr. Schrek said the riverfront property originally had a connection out to Main Street, the Howard Street extension in 2006. There was a revised plan and the board was going to enable a D.O.T. grant to enable that extension under the basis of economic development. As for the junkyard that is right next door, the use is a preexisting nonconforming use. His goal is to sell the property to a developer or do something different.

Mr. Morrisette thinks the redevelopment is exciting and making the area look great. The plans will expand throughout the town and people will want to come here and Phillipsburg will be on the map. LMR does not fit in with what Phillipsburg is planning.

Mr. Bodogh motioned that the proposed use is inconsistent with the master plan and Ms. Rohm seconded. The motion carried.

Attorney Mandry will prepare a resolution and give it to council.

Reorganization of the Board - Swearing in of alternate member.

Bernie Rooney was selected for a two year term and was sworn in.

Old Business

Angela Knowles presentation for the Redevelopment area

Ms. Knowles handed out a revised riverfront redevelopment plan. There needs to be a public meeting. She gave a brief history of the area that needs redevelopment and the plan on the timeline. She mentioned the survey and received helpful information from the public and was able to develop concepts. Planners from Rutgers took an interest in Phillipsburg and presented fundamental designs. Ms. Knowles said that there is funding through organizations such as the Highland's Council. Phillipsburg established a Historic Preservation Committee. The applicants will work with the committee and site plans will go to the planning board. The council is applying for a grant through the NJ Historical Trust to do a Heritage Tourism Planning.

The new section that was missing from the 2013 plan is the action section, with condemnation. It is a tool that town has and authority to use.

As for the waterfront and parking lot area and recreation, Union Square, north is the area of focus tonight. There were suggestions such as sidewalks to the bridge to encourage pedestrian traffic. She said, "Where do you want your front door?" If there is a relocation of business, there can be lots of possibilities. For circulation and access, they would like a route to the Route 22 to minimize traffic. A new road would go along the railroad tracks as well to avoid Union Square. Ms. Schrek said that entrances have been considered for years but have been blocked from Norfolk Southern. Now we have a project being funded from Highland's; they want to see growth that is a regional project. Mr. Duffy asked if the ideas presented are all separate or the same idea and Ms. Knowles responded that they are all conceptual. The focus is on how the people are going to get to the site and where they are going to go. They are looking at three separate building areas. The goal is to build out the area more and define buildable and green spaces. They would maintain an urban forest for flooding and add to it. Ms. Knowles handed out potential drawings of the area. They constructed an elevated boardwalk, which is above grade. The nature trail would go under the bridge and to the boardwalk. The farmer's markets, festivals and vendors would be under the boardwalk. They would have benches, tables and chairs and garbage cans under the boardwalk. The mechanics and kitchens etc. would be above the flood levels.

There will need to a public hearing where there will be an adoption of the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Morrisette stated that north of 22, there was discussion of moving the boat ramp and creates more parking. The square building by 22 was discussed as being a recreation building for things such as an ice skating rink.

For the Good of the Board

Mayor Ellis gave a brief story about when before he was mayor and how he spoke with the investors from the Sand's Casino and how they said that Phillipsburg is the golden egg and how Phillipsburg and Easton work in connection with each other in order to be successful. They told him that there are hedge funds for projects, if they are designed. Mayor Ellis informed the board about President Trump's new program called the opportunity zone and how Phillipsburg qualifies for the program (job and tax plan). It is a federal pilot. There is a 2.5% tax break on capital gains. The request from the state for Phillipsburg to be in the opportunity zone is now waiting to be signed by the federal government. Mr. Schrek said that we can really make something happen being in the opportunity zone.

Ms. Carney stated that there is an applicant that would like to change a group home and make it into a six unit apartment building. Mr. Schrek said that CVS will be in front of the board in April; they are changing the square footage from 11,000 to 9,000.

Minutes

Mr. Duffy motioned to accept the minutes from the January meeting and Mr. Zwicker seconded. The motion carried

Bills

Ms. Rohm motioned to accept the bills and Ms. McBride seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Duffy Motioned to adjourn and Mr. Morrisette seconded. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46.

Respectfully submitted,

Charee Carney
Land Use Technical Assistant