

Borough of Highlands
Planning Board (Land Use Board)
Special Meeting
October 26, 2016

Meeting Location: Robert D. Wilson Memorial Community Center, 22 Snug Harbor Ave, Highlands NJ.

Mr. Stockton called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Mr. Stockton asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Stockton read the following statement: As per requirement of P.L.1975, Chapter 231 notice is hereby given that this is a Regular Meeting of the Borough of Highlands Planning Board (Land Use Board) and all the requirements have been met. Notice has been transmitted to the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times. Notice has been posted on the public bulletin board.

Roll Call:

Present: Mr. Blewett, Mr. Card, Mr. Stockton, Mr. Braswell, Mr. Colby, Mr. Francy, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Kutosh, Mr. Wells, Mr. Knox,

Absent: Mr. Nolan, Mr. Fox, Ms. Ryan,

Motion for adjournment and any other motions: None

New Business:

Discussion/vote on a final draft of a Master Plan Reexamination.

Evidence submitted:

A1; Legal notice from Asbury Park Press,
A-2; Certified notices to adjacent towns,
B-3; Final report of Master Plan Reexamination,

The Board pointed out that this is a first opportunity for the Public to provide some input on the Master Plan Reexamination. They can actively participate in the testimony presented by professionals from T&M Associates and make any comments or suggestions. The Board's Attorney pointed out that the point of the special meeting was to comply with the original deadline (October 27th), but it was extended for another three (3) months.

Stan Slachetka and Christine Bell (T&M Associates) were sworn in and presented their testimony. Mr. Slachetka stated that a Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant is designated to help municipalities to recover from Superstorm Sandy. This grant monies pays for the Master Plan Reexamination and helps the towns to minimize/reduce future loss from natural disasters.

The Borough of Highlands adopted its last comprehensive Master Plan in 2004. The Borough subsequently adopted a Reexamination Report and Land Use Plan Element in 2009. The current document serves as a reexamination of the 2004 Master Plan, as supplemented by the 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

There were three (3) objectives that the report was being concentrated on:

1. Bay Avenue Commercial Corridor,
2. Shadow Lawn Trailer Park,
3. Code Enforcement,

Here were some of the concerns:

- Parking on Bay Avenue,
- Type of business that is being to be proposed,
- General code enforcement issues,

Some of the proposed changes are:

- Mixed use development,
- Waterfront activities/recreation,
- Home employment,
- Green building design,
- Encourage maintenance and preservation of residential properties,
- Strengthen Bay Avenue commercial district,
- Continued improvement along Bay Avenue,
- Encourage development of commercial properties,
- Encourage designed buildings with residential use above the commercial,
- Achieve stronger storm water management,
- Obtain NFIP compliance,
- Zoning recommendation: Along Bay Avenue to VFW to consolidate to one zoning district. This would allow as a permitted use off street parking (building garages, allowing to use vacant lot owners to provide off street parking), pool halls, breweries, mixed use structures (commercial on a first floor, residential on a second floor),
- Create Ordinance to regulate B&Bs,

Comments from the Board:

The Members agreed that bridging the mixed use on Bay Avenue is a good idea. Perhaps Miller Street corridor from bay Avenue to beach can be added as well. Some of the recommendations from the Board were:

- Adopting green building project,
- Implement storm water piping system from Rt. 36,
- Increase code enforcement,
- NFIP compliance,
- Implement sanitary system,
- Storm water drainage system,
- Update hazard mitigation plan,
- Undertake a study of environmental/climate change,
- Storm ready community,
- Detail mitigation plan,
- Dune system and vegetation,
- Adopt operation plan,

Comments/Questions from the Public:

One of the questions asked was, whether parking meters are installed along Bay Avenue. Mr. Slachetka response was that NO. The change is strictly to encourage businesses to provide off street parking. It can be done through building garages on a first floor, or using vacant lots to provide parking. In addition, parking lots on vacant parcels can be used as a principle use, not accessory use. Not to be

confused with storage or/repairs dilapidated boats or a heavy construction equipment on the vacant parcels.

Wanda Randowski, resident of 321 Shore Dr#5, and another resident had a question if someone can charge for off street parking.

The response was YES. If the owner of approved parking lot wants to charge s/he can do so.

Barbara Aywanary, resident of 21 Shadow Loan, wanted to know why the Board is obsessed with the density and approval of high-rises.

The response was that there are quite a few of them all around (Asbury Park) that have been very successful. Moreover, it is not an obsession. People want to see some development on that property (Shadow Lawn). In addition, making development on that property will provide more traffic to support downtown businesses. For over seven (7) years the town has been losing big revenue on that lot. In the past, there were two (2) proposals for high-risers, but they were not constructed. There is still a trailer park on the parcel; perhaps a zone change from mobile home use to mix use would be more appropriate.

The Public stated that out of 209 people surveyed, 53% answered that they do not want more density approved on the property.

A question was asked about the amount of the grant allocated for the Master Plan Reexamination.

The response was \$50,000. In addition, all the grant must be completed by May 2017.

Kim S., resident of Shore Dr., stated that approving a high-rise project would contradict with the Redevelopment plan. They do not support the downtown businesses, she added. We need more out of town traffic/people to support the businesses. Allowing 200 units will increase traffic patterns and cause other problems. Highlands need quality of housing residences not quantity.

Higher density contradicts paragraph#6, another Member of the Public added. As a result, traffic jams will be created on Bay Avenue. We do not want to clog the downtown. Bay Avenue is in dire need of re-development but people that live uptown do not come down to support downtown businesses.

Arty Few, resident of 50 Valley St, had a question about a mixed use. Can someone open a commercial or residential business?

The response was both are permitted in the mixed use zone.

The Public stated that there are 10 or 15 empty businesses on Bay Avenue. Changing a zone to a mix use will attract more investors. That is a good idea.

Kaity S., from 7 Snug Harbor Way, asked why the Board is pushing to vote on the plan tonight, especially since the deadline was extended till December.

The Board's response was that there will be a special meeting scheduled for November 14th to continue with the discussions/recommendations.

Rosemary Flannary, 1 Central Ave, stated that no one is talking about the vision of the town. There is no marketing. A large construction on top of the hill will not bust the economy of the town. We need to improve the town so it can attract people. It is very frustrating to be living in the town, she added.

Paul Aliver, 14 Seadrift Ave, stated that he is all in favor of the new plan and likes the idea of creating new business with an off-street parking, but the town needs to be caution not to make all the vacant lots into parking lots as supposed to structures.

Jenifer Olson, resident of 61 Barberie St stated it is true, many store fronts remain empty even though the town is working hard on re-developing the downtown area. Maybe other approach should be considered. Page 43 of the report encourages the increase of the home owned properties as supposed to rentals. Why not allow the residents to have B&Bs.

The response was that the town is aware of the existing/operating B&Bs. They are not proposing to close them but simply implement ordinances so they can be regulated. A strong code enforcement needs to be put in place.

Mr. Rosiack came forward to ask the Board for the opportunity to hear the testimony to either allow him to change a zone on Captain's Cove Marina, or include him in the Reexamination report.

The Board stated that Mr. Rosiack can come to November 10th meeting to present his testimony.

No more questions from the Public.

Adjournment:

Mr. Nolan offered the motion for an adjournment, seconded by Mr. Gallagher. All were in favor.

Kathy Burgess, Acting Board Secretary