

**BERGENFIELD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 15, 2024**

Chairman Robert Rivas called the meeting to order at 8:05 P.M.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

In compliances with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates are confirmed at the Annual Meeting. Notice of this meeting was provided to the Record, Star Ledger, and Cablevision, posted on two municipal public notice bulletin boards and published on the borough website.

Any board member having a conflict of interest involving any matter to come before the board this evening is reminded they must recuse himself from participating in any discussion on this matter.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Amatorio, Phil Neville, Robert Rivas, Romeo Abenoja, Jason Bergman and Praveen Joseph

Absent: Councilman Lodato, Ernesto Acosta (excused), Joel Nunez, and Miquel Vasquez

Also Present: Gloria Oh, Planning Board Attorney and Hilda Tavitian, Planning Board Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led By Board Member Joseph.

APPOINTMENTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Liaison to Board of Adjustment:

- a. Jason Bergman
- b. Joel Nunez

Site Plan:

- a. Phil Neville
- b. Romeo Abenoja

Master Plan:

- a. Mayor Amatorio
- b. Councilman Lodato
- c. Ernesto Acosta
- d. Chairman Rivas

Parking/Legal

- a. Mayor Amatorio
- b. Councilman Lodato

APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – February 26, 2024

Motion By: Mr. Abenoja

Second By: Mayor Amatorio

All ayes. None opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Comments by members of audience on matters not on evening's agenda

No one came forward.

Motion to Close Verbal Communication

Motion By: Mr. Abenoja

Second By: Mr. Joseph

All ayes. None Opposed

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Site Plan – No report.
2. Parking/Legal – No report.
3. Capital Improvements – Mayor Amatorio stated the grant application for Phase II for Vivyen Park has been submitted. They have already received \$750,000 in grant monies. A design plan has been created. There will be a pavilion with restrooms and a concession stand.
4. Master Plan – Mayor Amatorio stated the Mayor and Council are going to update the master plan. The two planners have submitted proposals. The planner will be determined at the Council meeting tomorrow. It will be updated in the next few months.
5. Liaison to Board of Adjustment – There was an application that was carried over to the next month's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. West Church Street Redevelopment Plan

Lyndsay Knight, borough planner from Neglia Group, stated there are three steps in the redevelopment process. The first step is doing an area in need of redevelopment study, which was done in December 2022. The next step is to first present it to the Mayor and Council and then to the Planning Board for review, provide comments, and referral back to the Council. It is a public process where the public can comment. The third step is the site plan application where they come back to the Planning Board to present. Ms. Knight stated some of the benefits include increasing control over development pattern when a property is within the redevelopment area, entering a contractual agreement with a private developer to stimulate revitalization of the redevelopment area, apply for grant funding specific to the area, and revise municipal ordinances and regulations to reflect the intent of the redevelopment plan.

Ms. Knight stated currently the block is split between two zones, B-2 (business professional district) and R-5 zone (one and two family residential homes). The redevelopment plan will create a lot that is unified with a new zone for the entire block. Anything that is existing will continue to exist as it is and any new development will have to conform with what is required in the redevelopment plan. She stated with the proposal, residential will be permitted, specifically multi-family and mixed use buildings. Mixed use is permitted only if there are multi-family units located above it. The bulk requirement is 50 units per acre that can have a maximum of 69 units. In addition, a total of 20 percent of units within the building are required to be set aside as affordable units. There is a maximum building coverage of 86% which will be lower than what is currently existing. The Nissan dealership was 100% impervious coverage. Along West Church Street, the minimum street-facing setback along street frontage shall be seventeen feet from the

curb to the first floor façade. All floors above shall be setback ten feet along West Church Street. Along North Demarest Avenue, there will be a 15 feet setback. North Front Street will have a minimum setback of 3 feet and minimum side yard setback will be eight feet from the property line to the building. The building height will be 4 stories or 45 feet which is slightly higher than the existing height. The required number of parking spaces is 1.5 spaces per residential unit. There will be a wider sidewalk with landscaping. There are design guidelines in the redevelopment plan that the materials used are high quality.

Chairman Rivas inquired if the street will be expanded or it will remain the same.

Ms. Knight stated the street will remain the same. However, they are requiring a wider sidewalk than currently there that will be more welcoming to pedestrians. There is a requirement of street trees, landscaping, and street furniture to beautify the project. Parking will be within the building so anyone who lives there will not park on the street. The parking area will be screened so the parked cars in the building won't be seen.

Mayor Amatorio inquired if the sidewalk on the other side of the street will be addressed.

Ms. Knight stated there will be wider streetscapes. There is some interest from developers who want to build the property that will be in-line with what the town is looking for. Ms. Knight stated as more redevelopment plans come forward, they are trying to set a standard within the borough for the sidewalks wanted, the type of street furniture, etc. so that everything has a uniform look.

Chairman Rivas inquired if the dumpsters will be in the building. He inquired about snow removal and if there will be a designated area for where the snow will be pushed to.

Ms. Knight stated the dumpsters will be inside the building. There will be a private hauler with trucks that can fit inside the building. She stated the snow will be pushed within their property or out of the right of way as any other owner would do. Snow removal can be addressed during site plan approval.

Mayor Amatorio stated the redevelopment plan was presented to the Mayor and Council and the plan was approved. He stated part of the process is to present it to the Planning Board for comments. It will then go back to the Mayor and Council so an ordinance can be adopted. If the developer wants to deviate from the plans, he has to go before the Planning Board to request approval of the variance. This is the old Nissan area that is currently vacant. They are excited to develop the area that will bring revenue and make the neighborhood better. They are trying to set a standard for all the development that will take place in town.

Board attorney Oh read a letter written by the board engineer, Robert Yuro, into the record.

Motion to Recommend to Mayor and Council

Motion By: Mr. Bergman

Second By: Mr. Abenoja

All ayes. None Opposed.

MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion By: Mr. Bergman

Second By: Mr. Joseph

All ayes. None opposed.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hilda Tavitian".

Hilda Tavitian, Clerk
Planning Board