

MINUTES OF THE  
EAST BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING BOARD

March 10, 2021

STATEMENT - Open Public Meetings Act

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL -

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

Shawn Taylor, Chairman

Laurence Reiss

Brad Cohen, Mayor

Laurence Bravman

Charles Heppel

Joseph Criscuolo

Steve Philips

Julie Clarke

Muhammad Hashmi

Rachel Cohen

James Wendell

ALSO PRESENT:

Lawrence B. Sachs, Esquire

Loren Morace, Secretary

Louis Ploskonka, Engineer

James Lambert, Engineer

MINUTES

January 13, 2021 - Motion to approve by Mr. Heppel,  
second by Mr. Criscuolo. Minutes approved.

February 10, 2021 - Motion to approve by Mr.  
Philips, second by Mayor Cohen. Minutes approved.

RESOLUTIONS

Application #20-11 - 888 Old Bridge Turnpike -  
Proposed subdivision of property into seven  
single-family lots located at 888 Old Bridge  
Turnpike, block 133.28, lot 5.29, in the R-3 zone.  
Motion to approve resolution by Mr. Heppel, second

by Mr. Philips. Resolution approved.

Application #20-14 - Beth Abraham Cemetery Association - Proposed demolition and replacement of existing cemetery office building located at 617 Cranbury Road, block 319, lot 18.09, in the R-2 zone. Motion to approve by Mr. Wendell, second by Mr. Taylor. Resolution approved.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Wendell.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good evening, everyone. This is the March 10, 2021, meeting of the East Brunswick Planning Board. The township is using the telephone meeting format in an effort to mitigate the chance of exposure to COVID-19 as part of the township's ongoing effort to slow the rate of transmission and avoid overwhelming our treatment centers. The dial-in information and the agenda have been posted on the township web site and are posted on EBTV for members of the public. Members of the public can call in with the number provided, which is 646-558-8656 -- that's 646-558-8656 -- if they have questions for the planning board members. You will have 3 minutes to speak. Should you have any further comments or questions, the planning and engineering staff is always available by e-mail and telephone. Each member of the public shall have only one opportunity to speak during the public portion. Thank you in advance for your patience as we implement this technology to continue to move the township forward during this health emergency.

Loren, would you please call the roll.

MS. MORACE: Miss Cohen.

MS. COHEN: Here.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Hashmi.

MR. HASHMI: Here.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Philips.

MR. PHILIPS: Here.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Reiss. Miss Clarke.

MS. CLARKE: Here.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Criscuolo.

MR. CRISCUOLO: Here.

MS. MORACE: Council Wendell.

MR. WENDELL: Here.  
 MS. MORACE: Mr. Heppel.  
 MR. HEPPEL: Here.  
 MS. MORACE: Mr. Bravman.  
 MR. BRAVMAN: Here.  
 MS. MORACE: Mayor Cohen.  
 MAYOR COHEN: Here.  
 MS. MORACE: Chairman Taylor.  
 THE CHAIRMAN: Here.

In lieu of the pledge of allegiance, I would ask us all on this 1-year anniversary of when this horrid pandemic began to rule our lives a moment of silence for the millions of people worldwide who have lost their lives and for the -- all of us whose lives have been affected in ways more -- some more severe than others, but a moment of silence for those who have passed, please.

(Moment of silence)

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. And just before we begin, I would also like to give a shout out. I've had people who have taken -- gotten their shots at East Brunswick Community Arts Center. It's a facility run by the county. I've had friends go there and have gotten rave reviews about how efficient it is. It's great to have it in our town, and I know that our mayor fought to have it here, and I just want also thank the mayor for how well informed he's kept all of us during this horrible pandemic. So, Brad, thank you for that.

MAYOR COHEN: Thank you, Shawn.  
 Appreciate that.

THE CHAIRMAN: The first item of business are minutes that we received. The first are the minutes of January 13, 2021. Remember we provide minutes by voice vote. What's the board's pleasure with these minutes?

MR. HEPPEL: I'll move them.

MR. CRISCUOLO: I'll second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: They've been moved and seconded. Any comments, questions?

Hearing none, all those voting in favor of accepting the minutes as presented, signify by saying aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? The minutes are approved as submitted.

The next set of minutes are from the February 10, 2021, meeting. What is the board's pleasure?

MR. PHILIPS: I'll move them.

MAYOR COHEN: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: They've been moved and

seconded. Any comments or questions?

Hearing none, all those in favor of approving the minutes as submitted signify by saying aye. Any noes? Any abstentions? The minutes pass as submitted.

The next item is the -- is resolution -- remember, resolutions are applications that have been previously acted upon by the board, and we are adopting them tonight in their formal fashion.

The first application is number 20-11, 888 Old Bridge Turnpike. Mr. Sachs, is this resolution in order for us to vote on this evening?

MR. SACHS: Yes, it is, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Very good. What is the board's pleasure with this resolution?

MR. HEPPEL: I'll move them.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's been moved. And is there is a second?

MR. PHILIPS: I'll second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Steve, thank you.

Seconded. Any comments or questions?

Loren, please call the roll of those eligible.

MS. MORACE: Miss Cohen.

MS. COHEN: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Hashmi.

MR. HASHMI: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Miss Clarke.

MS. CLARKE: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Philips.

MR. PHILIPS: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Criscuolo.

MR. CRISCUOLO: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Council Wendell.

MR. PHILIPS: He's muted.

MS. MORACE: Jim, you're muted.

MR. WENDELL: Oh, I didn't know I was muted. Sorry. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: You were muted.

MR. WENDELL: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Heppel.

MR. HEPPEL: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Bravman.

MR. BRAVMAN: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mayor Cohen.

MAYOR COHEN: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Chairman Taylor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. The resolution is approved.

The next resolution is for application

20-14, Beth Abraham Cemetery Association. Mr. Sachs, is this resolution in order for us to vote on this evening?

MR. SACHS: Yes, it is, Mr. Chairman, and just so the board is aware, all of the tree service activity that was ongoing on that site has been addressed thanks to Mr. Criscuolo and our planning and engineering staff.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good. Thank you, Joe, and thanks to our staff.

What is the board's pleasure with this application?

Mr. Bravman, you have a question?

MR. BRAVMAN: I'm sorry, I have a question. I do apologize.

Larry, I just want to --

THE CHAIRMAN: Why don't we move it first and then we'll deal with the question.

MR. WENDELL: Make a motion to approve.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, and I'll second it.

MR. WENDELL: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Questions, Mr. Bravman.

MR. BRAVMAN: I'm sorry, yes. Larry, when we heard this application, the board had expressed some concerns about the concrete paved driveway, and I think, you know, we talked about there being elderly people, wheelchairs, walkers.

MR. SACHS: Right.

MR. BRAVMAN: I thought we talked about not having pavers and making it solid so that there's no tripping hazards or mobility issues.

MR. SACHS: You know what, I put down impervious pavers so it won't be the landscape pavers. These will be, you know, whatever type of solid paver they wanted to put in. I think the paver was just more the architectural style.

MR. WENDELL: It's not going to be turf paver is what you're saying.

MR. SACHS: No, not turf pavers.

MR. WENDELL: I thought that was problematic, as well.

MR. SACHS: Exactly.

MR. BRAVMAN: Yeah, because I didn't see any reference to that, and I remember the board had a lot of discussions on that.

MR. SACHS: Yeah, it should be in there. You know what, though, if you'd like, maybe what I'll do is let me look at it, and maybe I can just put down -- I'll put down something that clarifies that it's not to be anything other than a concrete

or a masonry type of paver. That's fine. I don't have a problem with that.

MR. BRAVMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's a good idea.

Any other board members questions on this resolution before we call for a vote.

MAYOR COHEN: I know that we just got an update.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure, Mayor.

MAYOR COHEN: We got an update about an hour before the meeting tonight, and I really didn't read through 15, 16 pages. Can someone just tell me what the difference was between the original one and the one we just got before the meeting?

MR. SACHS: Three typographical errors that Mr. Lambert was generous enough to tell me about, so that's all. Nothing substantive.

MAYOR COHEN: Nothing material.

MR. SACHS: Nothing material.

THE CHAIRMAN: So Jim was just showing off.

MR. SACHS: He learned from John Kriskowski.

MR. LAMBERT: I thought Mr. Sachs was testing me, to be honest.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Any further board question or comment?

Council Wendell, are you okay on this one?

MR. WENDELL: I'm good. I'm good.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Just want to make sure you weren't on mute.

MR. WENDELL: How often does that happen nowadays? I mean, that's like the bane of our existence, sorry, I'm on mute.

THE CHAIRMAN: We've known each other for quite a while -- you know, Jim, we've known each other for quite a while, and rarely have I ever heard you on mute.

MR. WENDELL: Well done. Well done.

THE CHAIRMAN: So it's been moved and seconded. There are no other comments or questions, so that, Loren, I would ask you to call the roll of those eligible.

MS. MORACE: Miss Cohen.

MS. COHEN: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Hashmi.

MR. HASHMI: Yes.

MS. MORACE: Mr. Philips.

MR. PHILIPS: Yes.  
MS. MORACE: Mr. Criscuolo.  
MR. CRISCUOLO: Yes.  
MS. MORACE: Councilman Wendell.  
MR. WENDELL: Yes.  
MS. MORACE: Mr. Heppel.  
MR. HEPPEL: Yes.  
MS. MORACE: Mr. Bravman.  
MR. BRAVMAN: Yes.  
MS. MORACE: Mayor Cohen.  
MAYOR COHEN: Yes.  
MS. MORACE: Chairman Taylor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. The resolution is adopted. And believe it or not, I think that is the totality of our agenda this evening, so I would ask you, do any other members wish to chime in for the good of the cause, anything to share, or, Mayor, do you want to give us a little update about anything going on in town.

MAYOR COHEN: Well, I was actually going to -- we literally just got a phone call off of our weekly phone calls between -- on redevelopment stuff, so I was just going to ask Jim to maybe give us the --

THE CHAIRMAN: That would be great.

MAYOR COHEN: -- the group a quick update.

MR. WENDELL: I will do that.

MAYOR COHEN: We're up to --

THE CHAIRMAN: Councilman, the floor is yours.

MR. WENDELL: As the -- thank you. As the chair of the redevelopment agency, I just want to let everyone know that the River Development/Russo entity that is going to be redeveloping Route 18 is looking to bring plans to this board within the next two to four weeks, you know, and they are making significant headway on acquisition and all of that, but the expectation is that this board will be seeing something, you know, sometime in April or early May that will represent their views of what that redevelopment plan should look like and what, you know, nothing too far from what has been presented you before.

There will be likely one variance that they're looking for, and we think it's best that it just goes through the planning board as a variance, and the variance is going to be with the redevelopment plan, just that they're looking for some larger units. Right now the redevelopment plan

as approved by this board indicates that they can't have any units more than 1,250 square feet. They're looking to increase that by 75 to 100 square feet due to COVID issues and what they feel COVID is going to look like post, you know, post-COVID world and how people are going to want more in-home or in their own unit, you know, business space, and separated, as well. So I'm real happy the developer is looking toward the future and looking at these things, and I think that, you know, allowing them to increase the square footage does not, you know, concern us because it's still maximum bedroom count and maximum unit count, and we're not changing any of that. If they want to increase square footage, I don't think it necessarily impacts anything from a township perspective, but, you know, you will all be seeing something from this group within the next four to six weeks, and they're looking to start demolition probably mid to late summer on those properties.

As far as the other properties, 110 Tices is moving forward, and -- as this board has approved, and you will be seeing something pretty soon from another property owner on Harts Lane. One of the salvage yards on Harts Lane is being brought, you know, as we originally looked and this board approved several years ago under Mayor Stahl that those properties, those salvage yards on Harts Lane met the criteria for redevelopment. The council at that time chose based on the property owners' inability to want to be included in the redevelopment zone, we excluded them, but you're going to be seeing one property owner coming forward with a redevelopment plan for one of those salvage yards that's going to take it to a very, very enclosed recycling facility for used auto parts as well as some flex warehouse space. So nice to see those properties being cleaned up and, you know, changed into a much prettier and more appealing property.

But that's about all I have from a redevelopment position, but that's what we will be -- we as a planning board will be seeing in the near future is something from both the redeveloper of the Route 18 parcel as well as the redeveloper as soon to be designated for the Harts Lane parcel. So everything is moving along. We're doing good, and Edgeboro Road -- the Edgeboro Road parcel is going to be occupied probably late second quarter, early third quarter of this year, and that's going to be a

great win for the town, being that we're taking property that was previously county owned property and now putting it back for the most part on the tax rolls as a PILOT payment as this -- the developer for 39 Edgeboro is now leasing property from the MCUA and they're going to give us -- give the municipality a payment for that property. So lot of good things happening and lot of work coming up that you're going to be seeing.

MAYOR COHEN: And on the 110 Tices property, the back 8 acres, part of that deal is to deed that back to the town, and the town is already working on plans, site plans, and for the hockey rink that we intend to build there. So hopefully, you'll even begin to see that sometime this year. So I think there's a lot of stuff on the -- just around the corner that are exciting projects that you'll all be part of putting on the books here. So I think it's good.

THE CHAIRMAN: And any board -- if you guys, the mayor and councilman don't mind, any board members have any questions that they might want answered? Okay. Well, thank you. You know, I think I can speak for the entire board. We are happy and excited to be partners in the redevelopment of this vital area of East Brunswick, and I know that I'm excited to dig in and get a look, and I know that my fellow board members are, and I think, you know, we're doing great work and just can't wait to do our part of it and then get -- kick that can right on down the road and get the development really going in high gear, and I think it's fabulous that we have for at least this year Councilman Wendell as part of our planning board team because there's no one who, you know, has worked -- you've worked as hard as anyone and you are intimately familiar with these redevelopment plans.

And, Mayor, I know it's your vision because I, you know, said you and the township's vision because I sat at plenty of those early meetings, and it's really impressive how much public input was woven into this whole plan. So I'm very excited about it.

MR. WENDELL: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I just want to let everyone know process of this is going to happen in such format as the redeveloper is going to -- the redeveloper is going to submit his plans to the redevelopment agency's planner, and the planner will review --

THE CHAIRMAN: Just hold on one second. Someone is not on mute. If you're not speaking -- mute your microphone. Thanks. Okay. Go ahead, Jim.

MR. WENDELL: But the developer is going to submit his plans to the redevelopment agency planner, who will review and then make a presentation to this planning board to give the planning board an understanding as to the compliance with the redevelopment plan, and they will make the presentation prior to the developer providing any testimony and anything of that nature. So, you know, it will show compliance, what items may be in or out of compliance and all of that, and we've worked with DMR Architects before. Chairman, you're familiar with Fran Reiner from DMR and all that, and as such, I think it's a cleaner process to let everybody know how and where this plan complies with the redevelopment plan that was approved previously by this board, so, you know, just makes it a smoother and easier application for all of us to review when we understand that it is, you know, how compliant it is. So that's what we're trying to do, and that's what we expect to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Councilman. Okay, then our next meeting is when,

Loren?

MS. MORACE: April 14.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry?

MS. MORACE: The next meeting is April 14.

THE CHAIRMAN: April 14?

MS. MORACE: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, so that means that everyone have a safe and happy St. Patrick's Day, you know, one of my national holidays.

MS. MORACE: Wait, you know what --

MR. WENDELL: Steakhouse 75 is doing corned beef and cabbage for takeout.

THE CHAIRMAN: There you go.

MS. MORACE: I'm sorry. I was thinking it's the end of March already. Sorry. It's March 24.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's still after St. Patrick's Day, and, you know, my middle name happens to be Patrick so, you know.

MR. WENDELL: There you go.

THE CHAIRMAN: So I have to --

MR. WENDELL: You're my St. Patrick this year.

THE CHAIRMAN: There you go. So look, everybody stay safe. Everybody enjoy, and we'll see everyone virtually in a few weeks, and everyone please stay safe. Light's at the end of the tunnel. Have a good night, all.

MR. WENDELL: Motion to adjourn.