

Planning Board

February 23, 2023

Meeting
Minutes



THESE PROCEEDINGS WERE HELD VIRTUALLY

CALL TO ORDER

8:01pm

ATTENDANCE

Present

David Barad, MD- Class IV/Chairman
Tsun-Yam Tam- Class II/Borough Historian
Victoria Amitai- Class III/Councilperson/Council Liaison
Ansar Batool- Class IV/Full Member
Conway Wong- Class IV/Full Member/Environmental Commission Liaison
Zachary Messinger- Class IV/Alternate #2
Jason Cherchia, Esq.- Acting Board Attorney
Nicholas De Nicola, PE- Board Engineer
Paul Demarest- Board Coordinator/Secretary

Absent

Dean Paltos- Class IV/Vice Chairman
John Glidden- Class I/Mayor
Robert Di Dio- Class IV/Full Member
Angela Ferullo- Class IV/Full Member
Avia Blum- Class IV/Alternate #1

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Barad read mail received by the Board into the record.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Steven Isaacson, 97 Columbus Avenue, Closter, New Jersey, introduced himself and opined that the Board's non-land use boards and commissions, such as the Environmental Commission on which he served for approximately 20 years, should be able to visit the subject properties of applications under consideration by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of



Adjustment so they can provide informed administrative reports; he believed such Borough entities have the same right as tax appraisers and Building Department inspectors to perform site visits. He also said the Borough could utilize drone technology to capture existing exterior conditions to which the Board was hesitant to agree with.

Mr. Isaacson suggested the Board convenes its Work Sessions and Meetings earlier as has been the trend of other Borough boards and commissions, which have made their start times earlier; Chairman Barad said the Board would take the suggestion under advisement.

Mr. Isaacson expressed his concern that the Governing Body is contemplating downgrading the Shade Tree Commission to a committee; he equated such a move to when the Environmental Commission's jurisdiction over the Borough-owned Mac Bain Farm was transferred to a separate committee as a means, he felt, to prevent budgetary and purchasing powers which committees generally do not enjoy.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilwoman Amitai and seconded by Mr. Tam to approve the minutes for the February 1, 2023 Work Session. The motion passed (6-0-0):

Yes- Messinger; Wong; Batool; Amitai; Tam; Barad;

No- n/a;

Abstain- n/a;

RESOLUTIONS

n/a;

CASELOAD

n/a;

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilwoman Amitai briefed the Board on the following:

- 1.) Governing Body recently held up release of bonds relating to tree removal for 63 Harvard Street, to ensure tree mitigation was fulfilled as part of new 1-family house construction which will be verified by Mr. De Nicola, as well as 84 Herbert Avenue, to determine if ongoing site improvements by new property owner warrant Board approval which will be investigated by Board's subcommittee (Vice Chairman Paltos, Councilwoman Amitai, Mr. Di Dio and Ms. Blum) tasked with identifying particular sites which may have been granted relief by Board but conditions within memorialized Resolutions and/or approved plans have not been adhered to and could now require Amendment Approval;
- 2.) Governing Body recently introduced ordinance to disband Shade Tree Commission and replace it with committee and Department of Public Works taking lead role in both planting and pruning (vote on its adoption is scheduled for March 8th);
- 3.) upcoming musical performance, as part of ongoing series sponsored by Mayor Glidden's Committee for the Arts, will be held at Closter Public Library;
- 4.) late former Mayor and prolific Borough volunteer, Sophie Heymann, will be honored by both Historic Preservation Commission at Harold Hess Lustron House (421 Durie Avenue) and Environmental Commission at Mac Bain Farm;

Mr. Wong briefed the Board on the following:

- 1.) Environmental Commission's Chairperson, Miriam Lockhart, recently announced her resignation with no successor appointed as of yet;

MISCELLANEOUS

Regarding Case P-2022-06 (259 Closter Dock Road/Hardino, LLC), Mr. Cherchia assured the Resolution, previously memorialized, would be corrected in time for the March 1, 2023 Work Session and reflect that the subject parking lot will be reconfigured to consist of 11, not 18, parking spaces.

Mr. Cherchia said he would finalize standards and procedures on virtual proceedings, which the Board has been conducting as of its May 6, 2020 Meeting, for its approval at the March 1, 2023 Work Session.

Councilwoman Amitai asked about the legal parameters by which Board members, and other non-land use board Borough entities, are bound when visiting properties which are the subject of Board applications, noting the Zoning Board of Adjustment is discussing its own options, including providing a consent form in its application packet to be completed by the subject property owner allowing for on-site access. Speaking solely for the Planning Board, Mr. Cherchia replied that its application checklist would need to be amended by ordinance and stressed that no more than 4 Board members, less than a quorum, can gather on-site to ensure the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act is not violated; he noted a standing date and time ahead of Work Session and/or Meeting dates could be reserved for Board members to visit sites, a procedure which would require public notice.

ADJOURNMENT

8:44pm

