

# TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLETOWN

Planning Board  
One Kings Highway  
Middletown, NJ 07748-2504

DAVID MERCES  
Chairman



Organized December 14, 1667  
"Pride in Middletown"

AMY H. CITRANO, P.P., A.I.C.P.  
Director of Planning

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## PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES JULY 27, 2023

A Special Meeting of the Planning Board of the Township of Middletown was held in the main meeting room at Town Hall, One Kings Highway, Middletown, New Jersey, at 6:30 P.M. on July 27, 2023. Mr. Mercés read a statement to advise the notice requirements provided for the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied. Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act and Laws of 1975, the Middletown Planning Board notified the Two River Times, and the Asbury Park Press on June 28, 2023. Notice of the meeting was filed with the Township Clerk and posted in Town Hall. All notification for this meeting was given pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act at least 48 hours prior to this meeting.

Roll call was taken with the following members present: Chairman Mercés, Vice-Chairman Rathjen, Mr. Berson, Mr. Rentschler, Mr. Colangelo, Mr. Schweizer, Ms. Eteson

Also present: James Gorman, Board Attorney; Amy H. Citrano, Director of Planning; Stan Slachetka, FAICP, PP, Redevelopment Planner; Erin Uriarte, Board Secretary

A salute to the flag followed.

Ms. Uriarte read the agenda for the record.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**JUNE 7, 2023** – MR. RATHJEN OFFERED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES, SECONDED BY MR. BERSON. ALL PRESENT ELIGIBLE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR BY VOICE VOTE.

**JULY 20, 2023** – MR. RATHJEN OFFERED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES, SECONDED BY MR. BERSON. ALL PRESENT ELIGIBLE MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR BY VOICE VOTE.

### RESOLUTIONS

None

### ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

None

### OLD BUSINESS

None

### **Many Neighborhoods. One Middletown!**

Belford ◦ Chapel Hill ◦ Fairview ◦ Harmony ◦ Leonardo ◦ Lincroft ◦ Locust ◦ Middletown Village  
Monmouth Hills ◦ Navesink ◦ New Monmouth ◦ North Middletown ◦ Nut Swamp ◦ Oak Hill ◦ Port Monmouth ◦ River Plaza

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Public Hearing – Route 36 Redevelopment Study & Preliminary Investigation Report for Route 36 Corridor, Section B** – Stan Slachetka, FAICP, PP, appeared as the Redevelopment Planner appointed by the Township Committee and author of the Redevelopment Study & Investigative Report that is being reviewed this evening. Mr. Slachetka gave an overview of the Redevelopment Designation process, noting that this would be the second of three hearings. They have broken the study area down into three sections. Section A is the section of Route 36 between Palmer Avenue and Main Street, Port Monmouth. Section B is the section between Main Street, Port Monmouth and 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Belford. Section C is the section between Normandy Road and Leonardville Road at the Borough of Atlantic Highlands Municipal Border.

Mr. Gorman advised that proper notice has been given to conduct this public hearing.

Mr. Slachetka explained that the purpose of this study is to determine whether the properties meet the criteria to designate as an area in need of redevelopment. Township Committee authorized this study to take place in 2019 and expanded the area in 2022. There will be no eminent domain or condemnation to take place. Mr. Slachetka explained the Local Housing and Redevelopment Law, noting that there are five steps to creating a redevelopment area and reviewed the criteria that must be met to make said determination. The study area included 506 properties which made up an area of 321 acres over a five-mile corridor. Maps of Study Area B were presented, and the mixed land use types were discussed. Properties identified as an area of need of redevelopment were discussed in detail, with photos of the existing conditions being shown. Mr. Slachetka explained the properties all fall under the A, B and/or D criteria. The sites identified as in need of redevelopment are commonly known as the parking lot for Port Monmouth School, the used car sales on the corner of Main & Route 36, the old Betsy Ross building, which was vacant at the time of the study, the Syres boat storage property across from Foodtown, the Township Hardware property, the old Wilson Avenue Gas station and adjacent parcels, the Backyard Structures property, Belford Motor Company, the NAN building, several properties along Railroad Avenue between Seeley and Main Street, the Nankervis auto repair site, the Grill 36 building which has outdoor equipment storage on site, the Middletown Trailer property and adjacent commercial properties, the former ice cream parlor that is now being used by Executive Landscape and the adjacent properties. Many photos of the sites are included in the report and were displayed for discussion purposes.

Chairman Mercus opened the hearing to members of the public who wish to speak.

Irwin Mandell, 41 Willow Street, was sworn in and asked questions related to the process and clarification on some of the terms used during the presentation.

Mr. Gorman explained the redevelopment process, stressing that there is no eminent domain being proposed.

Ms. Eteson explained the process as well.

Cynthia Bianchi, 49 Florence Avenue, Leonardo, was sworn in and offered comments indicating she is in favor of new businesses of Route 36, but feels they should be reflective of the character of the Bayshore area such as backyard structures, boatyards, etc. She does not want to see Highway 36 become Highway 35.

Edward O'Neill, 118 Eleventh Street, Belford, was sworn in and indicated concern with future eminent domain. Mr. Gorman explained that in the past other towns did abuse the eminent domain process and the Redevelopment and Housing Law has since been amended to prevent that abuse from occurring. Board members echoed this sentiment and explained that they are volunteers that want the best for the town; every step of the Redevelopment process will be publicly noticed and will allow for public comment.

Mr. Slachetka explained that when the Township Committee authorized the Redevelopment Study to take place, they declared it a non-condemnation redevelopment so eminent domain cannot "creep" into the plan.

No further public comments were received.

Mr. Gorman announced this hearing is being carried to August 3, 2023, at 6:30 pm for a presentation on Section C. Members of the public will still be able to ask questions and/or comment on the overall Study. The Board anticipates a vote taking place at the conclusion of the August 3<sup>rd</sup> public hearing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MR. BERSON OFFERED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:52 PM, SECONDED BY MS. ETESON. ALL PRESENT MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR BY VOICE VOTE.

Prepared by:

Erin Uriarte,  
Board Secretary