

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.
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PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 3, 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 August 3, 2023. Mr. Merces 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 Merces, Vice-Chairman Rathjen, Mr. Berson, Mr. Rentschler, Mr. Schweizer, Mr. AmecAngelo, Ms. Eteson

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

A salute to the flag followed.

Ms. Yuro read the agenda for the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing – Route 36 Redevelopment Study & Preliminary Investigation Report for Route 36 Corridor, Section C – Stan Slachetka, FAICP, PP, appeared as the Redevelopment Planner

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

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 third 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 12th 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 C 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 Wild Scallion (now under construction), MoGas, Crantek Welding, Liberty Gas Station, Red Zone Bar & Grill, Car Sale Lot at Avenue D property owned by Peter Alvarez, House Lifter owned by Grand Slam 13, LLC, 2 small parcels on the jughandle, 2 sites on both sides of Highway 36 owned by Julian's Bait & Tackle, small Township owned lot. Many photos of the sites are included in the report and were displayed for discussion purposes.

Chairman Merces asked if board members had questions of Mr. Slachetka. There were no questions asked by board members.

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

Kate McKiernan, 129 Mohawk Avenue, Julian's Bait and Tackle was sworn in and asked for clarification about what a redevelopment plan is and the ramifications of the plan. She also stated that no one likes public shaming of their property and that she has met with the Township Administrator and Planning Director and that they have been doing a lot of work on the property. This should be an opportunity to learn and help property owners.

Mr. Gorman explained the redevelopment process, stressing that there is no eminent domain being proposed. There may be Zoning changes, but the property remains grandfathered you can continue to do what you are doing even if the zoning changes and the options may be more beneficial. There is a misunderstanding of the photos of cars we are not focusing on it, not shaming you or your property it falls under the statutory criteria. It's not meant to be negative you may be very happy you are being looked at in the negative.

Mr. Merces stated this is just step one. The Town develops a plan.

Cynthia Bianchi, 49 Florence Avenue, Leonardo, remained sworn in and offered comments about Julians Bait and Tackle, Jeans Canvas, Mariner's Mart and the property that sells gazebos and these are the types of maritime properties that should be along Route 36. She also

mentioned Arizona no longer using black pavement and that materials in many cities are trending those more resistant to heat. Mrs. Bianchi said that any empty, treed lots should remain that way.

Michael Tartaglione, 517 Broadway, was sworn in and asked about residential properties in the study. He does a lot of work on his home, and he doesn't want someone to put up condos.

Mr. Slachetka explained that no residential properties are designated and if your property wasn't called out it was not recommended for redevelopment.

Mr. Berson stated there are no homes in the study.

Vincent Moran, 39 Brevent Avenue, was sworn in and asked questions about the process, eminent domain, when the study began, dates of the photos, has Mr. Slachetka been back out to see the changes to the Wild Scallion and Julian's Bait and Tackle. He wanted to know if someone is going to go back out to take pictures.

Mr. Mercus commented that no one is saying we don't need tackle shops.

Mr. AmecAngelo comment that this is flexibility for these property owners being in a Redevelopment Plan there could be changes to the zoning or possibly financing. We don't know where it's going to go.

Danielle, 69 South End Avenue, was sworn in and read the statute from her phone and asked questions about condemnation.

Mr. Gorman and Mr. Slachetka both responded that this cannot change from non-condemnation to condemnation. The Township would have to go back to the beginning.

Emad Elgohail, 881 Route 36, was sworn in and asked Mr. Slachetka to explain why his property is considered hazardous and why the Academy Bus property was skipped. Mr. Elgohail said their diesel is killing birds and asked that hazardous conditions, DEP, EPA be explained. Mr. Elgohail mentioned that he has been in business for years. He asked why some properties are included and some excluded.

Mr. Slachetka explained the criteria, circulation, parking, driveways, defined storage areas and would the board agree to the property now if there was a site plan.

Mr. Mercus commented that the Academy Bus property doesn't meet the criteria.

Mr. Schweizer commented that there are no ramifications for being included.

Mr. Gorman commented that there is a misunderstanding there are benefits to the property owners, many properties come to the Township to be put in the plan, this is not a negative but a positive. Academy Bus should be here asking to be in the study. The plan is going to wind up giving the property owners more flexibility and better zoning, the intent is to do something for everyone.

No further public comments were received.

Mr. Gorman reviewed the statute for the board and that a motion should be made to make recommendation to the municipal governing body that the study area is in need of redevelopment.

MR. BERSON OFFERED THE MOTION TO DETERMINE THAT A TOTAL OF 87 STUDY AREA PROPERTIES MEET STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION AS AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT SECONDED BY MS. ETESON WITH THE FOLLOWING ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: MR. MERCES, MR. RATHJEN, MR. BERSON, MR. RENTSCHLER, MR. SCHWEIZER, MR. AMECANGELO, MS. ETESON.

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: MR. SETTEMBRINO, MR. COLANGELO, MR. BANASIAK

ADJOURNMENT

MR. BERSON OFFERED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:10 PM, SECONDED BY MR. SCHWEIZER. ALL PRESENT MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR BY VOICE VOTE.

Prepared by:

Debra Yuro,
Board Secretary