



BOROUGH OF NORTH HALEDON
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019

Mayor George read the OPMA statement into the record:

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Notices of this meeting were emailed to **The Herald and the Hawthorne Press** on February 8, 2019, as required under the Statute, and this meeting was advertised in **The Herald and the Hawthorne Press** on February 14, 2019. Said notices were posted on the bulletin board on February 8, 2019, and have remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

Proper notice having been given, this meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Clerk was directed to include this statement in the minutes of this meeting.

Mayor George led the prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

This meeting was called for the following purpose:

DISCUSSION / PROPOSED SITE PLAN AMENDMENT
920 BELMONT AVENUE

ROLL CALL

Present:

Mayor Randy George

Council Members: Rocco Luisi, Raymond Melone, Borough Engineer, Joseph Pomante

Borough Planner, Michael Kauker

Redevelopment Attorney, Douglas Doyle

Municipal Clerk, Renate Elatab

Absent:

Council Member Raymond Melone (no excuse given)

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED SITE PLAN FOR 920 BELMONT AVENUE

Mayor George advised that during the elections last year, the opposition had alleged that the plan was a done deal. Mayor George advised that when property owners within 200 feet of the Redevelopment Zone had received notice of a public hearing on July 18, 2018, for an amendment to the Redevelopment Plan, only 4 members of the public showed up at the meeting, and one was there to discuss the proposed round-about at the intersection of North Haledon Avenue and Manchester Avenue. The venue of this special meeting had been moved to Eastern Christian High School to accommodate a large number of members from the public so that all could participate in discussions regarding the new plan, and he was disappointed that only 10 members of the public showed up for this meeting. He explained that he does not talk on social media because it appears that people only want to be negative, but that he welcomed people to come to the municipal building to meet with him to go over all his information and also to attend future Planning Board meetings.

Mayor George recapped the major differences between the original plan for 920 Belmont Avenue, which had been approved by the Planning Board and the new plan. The old plan had 25 buildings; the new plan only has 5 – by raising the height by 6 feet, 20 buildings had been eliminated. The old plan came within 15 feet of neighbors' property line, in the new plan it is 182 feet, and much of the old growth will remain. Mayor George made reference to the redevelopment plan in Allendale, where redevelopment plans for the old Black Millwork property call for a 3 story building with 58 units (7 of which are affordable units), a 113,600 square-foot storage building, a 2 story municipal building with an additional 15,000 square feet of municipal storage. Mayor George encouraged everyone to attend the work session meeting of the Planning Board the following week. Mayor George stated that the owner of Belmont Estates Urban Renewal is getting \$3,800 / month in rent, and no developer is going to build section 8 housing to lose money when they can collect higher rents – he stated that there is a need for more housing in New Jersey, and in North Haledon, and some people prefer to rent and do not want to own a home.

Jerry Vogel, the attorney for 920 Belmont Avenue Acquisitions, explained the State Statutes as they pertain to redevelopment. He stated that his client's tract is the largest in the Borough's redevelopment zone, and that the 20% slope presented a challenge to any developer. The new plan has reduced the density and foot print, and it is less intrusive.

Nick Minoia, Managing Partner, is a real estate developer in 5 states. He advised that the current market focuses on rental properties. His business is to design, build, lease, and maintain properties. Young people do not want to be tied down; they want to be able to be mobile, and do not want the responsibilities of home ownership, such as outdoor chores, property taxes, and mortgages. Older people, and empty nesters are down-sizing, and also do not want to do outdoor chores. Mr. Minoia advised that if there was a demand for it, there would be a shuttle to transport residents to public transportation. Mr. Minoia stated that the managing staff also organizes social events for residents.

Eric Keller, the Engineer from Bowman Consulting, stated that the site work was challenging. He mentioned the large buffer that had been maintained along the Molly Ann Brook and other property lines, and that with the new plan sloping down from Louise Place, the residents on Louise Place would only see the tops of the buildings. He also stated that the plan included 387 parking spaces – RSIS only requires 343.

John Raker, the architect, stated that there would be 45 dwelling units in each building; they would have an open floor plan with lots of windows, 9 foot ceilings, granite counters, stainless steel appliances, and tile. He believed that the club house would be well utilized as a place for socializing, and would also include co-work spaces. When asked by Mayor George what was being done to prevent an Avalon Bay type of fire, the architect advised that in addition to fire walls everywhere, there would also be sprinklers.

Councilwoman Puglisi stated that she wanted more parking – she believed that there should be 2 parking spaces per unit. Mr. Minoia stated that the plan had 10% more spaces than were required by RSIS. He believed that residents would not want to pay for the expenses of ownership or leasing of two vehicles, and would use the shuttle, public transportation, and Uber or Lyft.

Councilman Luisi asked if there would be assigned parking. Mr. Minoia responded in the negative, except for handicapped parking and for those with medical issues. Councilman Luisi asked what kind of buffer vegetation was being considered. Mr. Keller responded that it would be mostly evergreens. Councilman Luisi also asked how residents on the 2nd and 3rd floors would dispose of their trash. Mr. Minoia stated that there would be trash chutes. Councilman Luisi stated that as an attorney he had been involved in litigation regarding construction defect claims in one of Mr. Minoia's developments, and asked if he was currently involved in any litigation. Mr. Minoia responded in the negative, and stated that if they do not do a good job, they will be exposed in social media. Doug Doyle stated that if there is a problem, the developer will fix it because they own and manage the property and will want to take care of it.

Mayor George asked what the occupancy rate of Mr. Minoia's properties was. Mr. Minoia stated that it was 97%. Mayor George asked what the length of a lease was. Mr. Minoia stated that it was one year because they wanted to be able to raise the rent ever year, and also get rid of problem tenants. Mayor George stated that he would be asking for more parking at the Planning Board meetings, and also would ask that the lights in the dog run do not bother the neighbors. He stated that he was glad that there were no garages because people use them for storage, but in this case all the parking spaces would be real parking spaces.

Councilwoman Puglisi inquired if extra storage would be available, to which Mr. Minoia responded in the affirmative. She asked if it would be a dog park or a dog run, and Mr. Minoia responded that it would be a dog run, and that there will also be dog stations around the property. Councilwoman Puglisi also asked what the plan was for snow removal. Mr. Minoia stated that they work with residents to move the parked cars around as necessary when snow plowing, and that sometimes snow has to be removed off site.

Councilman Iacobelli asked if any retail space would be added. Mr. Minoia stated that in some of the buildings he owns, he provides retail to the community, but 180 units would not support any kind of retail business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Motion by Councilwoman Puglisi, second by Councilman Luisi, to open the floor to the public. Upon roll call, all members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Cliff Konnerth, 10 Peters Lane, inquired how recycling would be handled. Mr. Minoia stated that there will be recycling bins in the trash disposal rooms. He stated that he is very much concerned with environmental issues and that his units will have LED fixtures and low-flow water fixtures. Mayor George stated that this issue would be delved into deeper at the Planning Board level.

Mayor George stated that it was a fallacy that the firehouse on Belmont Avenue would be needed to protect this development. He stated that if there were a fire in the development, you could only use the ladder truck, which is housed at the High Mountain Road firehouse, and no members of the former fire company on Belmont Avenue has received any training on the ladder truck. In addition, with the buildings all being sprinkled, the job of firefighting would be much easier.

Mayor George stated that there will be no street parking because the streets are only 23 feet wide, so snow plowing will be easier, and the boulevard entrance was designed so that if there was an accident on one roadway, the other roadway would still be open for traffic. This was finally a plan that worked ...

George Schaaf, 5 Stockton Road, thanked the members of the Governing Body for the transparency regarding the proposed plan. He inquired about how the number of 16 school age children was arrived at. Mr. Minoia stated that Rutgers University had conducted a study which proved that apartments do not generate school age children – that their parents prefer to move to townhouses or houses with gardens.

Mayor George stated that when Squaw Brook Run, Summit Pointe, and Lakeside had been discussed, a study had predicted that there would be a total of 50 school age children from the 3 developments, and that professionals could lose their license if they lied. There are currently 49 K – 12 school age children. He stated that even if twice that many children moved in, there would still be plenty of room because the schools had been built to accommodate 800 students, and there are currently only 644 children. That being said, he had also made it very clear that he was committed to helping the schools if there was an increased burden.

George Schaaf, 5 Stockton Road, asked if one ladder truck was enough. Mayor George advised that the ladder truck is also a pumper, and that the Borough has a mutual aid agreement with Hawthorne, Wyckoff, Prospect Park, and Paterson, which all also have ladder trucks, but the fact that the buildings have sprinklers is what is really going to save lives and property.

Motion by Councilwoman Puglisi, second by Councilman Luisi, to close the floor to the public. Upon roll call, all members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilwoman Puglisi, second by Councilman Pomianek, to adjourn the meeting. Upon roll call, all members present voted in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Mayor George declared the meeting duly adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Renate Elatab, Municipal Clerk

Approved at Council Meeting of April 17, 2019