

**JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND BOROUGH COUNCIL
AND THE
BOROUGH OF CHATHAM PLANNING BOARD
September 26, 2019 MINUTES**

Mayor Bruce A. Harris called the Joint Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Chatham and Borough of Chatham Planning Board to order on Thursday, September 26, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers in Borough Hall, 54 Fairmount Avenue, Chatham, New Jersey.

SALUTE TO FLAG

Mayor Harris led the assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Harris asked for a moment of silence for those who have given their lives for our country.

STATEMENT OF Pursuant to the requirements of R.S. 10:4-10, adequate notice of this Joint

ADEQUATE NOTICE Special Meeting had been provided to the press on September 19, 2019 and a copy was posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board on the main floor of Borough Hall.

The purpose of this Joint Special Meeting is for the presentation by the Borough's Special Planner, Topology and Chatham River Road Partners, LLC, on the River Road Redevelopment project. Formal action will not be taken at the Joint Special Meeting by either public bodies.

ROLL CALL

On a call of the roll, the following officials were present:

Mayor Bruce A. Harris
Council President James J. Collander
Council Member Victoria Fife
Council Member Robert A. Weber, Sr.
Council Member Thaddeus J. Kobylarz
Council Member Jocelyn Mathiasen
Stephen W. Williams, Borough Administrator/Acting Borough Clerk

On a call of the roll, the following officials were absent:

Council Member Carolyn Dempsey; and
James Lott, Borough Attorney

ROLL CALL BOROUGH OF CHATHAM PLANNING BOARD

On a call of the roll, the following members were present:

Mayor Bruce A. Harris [Class I Member]
Stephen W. Williams [Class II Member]
Council Member Thaddeus Kobylarz [Class III Member]
Chairman Susan W. Favate [Class IV Member]
H.H. Montague [Class IV Member; Zoning Board of Adjustment Member]
Matthew Wagner [Class IV Member]
William Heap [Class IV Member]
Curt Dawson [Class IV Member]
Vincent Loughlin, Board Attorney
Kendra Lelie, Board Planner
Liz Holler, Minute Secretary

On a call of the roll, the following member was absent:

Torrie Van Wie [Class IV Member, Environmental Commission Member]

RECUSALS

Mayor Harris asked if there were any recusals or abstentions to be submitted for the record.

Before turning the meeting over to Ms. Anne Hindenlang, Special Redeveloper from Topology, Mayor Harris informed the audience that the Borough Council and the Planning Board will have an opportunity to further discuss the Redevelopment Plan after the presentation. He stated that the Public Comment is not a question and answer session (Q & A); it is an opportunity for residents to provide their comments. He encouraged residents to submit any questions they may have to Borough officials for further response.

Mayor Harris introduced Ms. Anne Hindenlang of Topology. He then turned the meeting over Ms. Hindenlang.

PRESENTATION

River Road Redevelopment Plan

Ms. Anne Hindenlang of Topology began the presentation by providing a brief overview on the River Road Redevelopment plan. She introduced Mr. Michael Martone who reported that the preliminary process began in September of 2018 to examine the intersection of River Road and Watchung Avenue which is identified as an “area in need of redevelopment”. The area is within a mixed-use zone, consisting of single-use commercial and residential structures. In November of 2018, the Planning Board recommended three specific lots (lots 9, 10 & 11 of Block 135) to be designated as an area in need of redevelopment. Additionally, the Borough Council subsequently designated the area as a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment, stated Ms. Hindenlang.

From May 1, 2019 to June 10, 2019, Topology drafted a redevelopment plan for the River Road project which was presented and adopted by the Borough Council on June 10, 2019, stated Ms. Hindenlang.

Mr. Martone noted the following objectives for River Road Redevelopment project:

- Remediate Contaminated properties in Block 135;

- Create new Ratables;
- Improve a major gateway between Chatham Borough and neighboring towns;
- Support transit-oriented development; and
- Provide affordable housing options.

Mr. Martone stated that the River Road development at the present time is still in the works; therefore, any changes or adjustments can be made. He introduced the developer's architect, Mr. Jack Baker, to further discuss the architectural planning and designs of the project.

Mr. Baker noted that the approval for the development was granted several years ago, but with less land. However, within the last year, the developer acquired additional land; therefore, allowing the project to expand in size. He stated that the architectural design chosen for the project will fit within the community. The design is broken into two styles; one has a pitched roof elevation with dormers that open into the roof to create a story top; while the second style provides an industrial look to the building. The lower level consists of garage parking. The exterior of the building will be designed with high-quality materials, such as brick, fiber, cement, siding, metal panels and metal railings. However, the corner building will be designed to look more industrial. The scale surrounding the buildings have been designed to blend into the environment, stated Mr. Baker.

The luxury apartment building will have plenty of amenities for its residents: a fitness center, a lounge, a dog wash station, a greenspace, a small fireplace and outdoor areas with small gas firepits. The units are one-and two-bedroom(s), open concept style, consisting of a kitchen, dining room, living room and bedroom(s). Each unit is equipped with a laundry area and windows on both sides of the walls providing great view as you enter the apartment. A two-bedroom apartment is around 1,150 sq. ft. However, some of the outside corner apartments can be up to 1,250 sq. ft, stated Mr. Baker. The project developer, Johnathan Schwartz, came forward to discuss traffic improvements related to the project.

The parking ratio is 1.8 cars per unit, which exceeds the Borough's parking requirement, stated Mr. Schwartz. With respect to the school's impact, Mr. Schwartz referred to a Rutgers study which shows approximately 30 school-age children being produced from projects involving affordable housing units.

Ms. Hindenlang confirmed that the architectural style and design of the buildings in the redevelopment area will incorporate features that are both respectful and complimentary of surrounding buildings. Changes can be incorporated or redefined depending on feedback, and those changes will be finalized into the Redevelopment Agreement.

Mayor Harris asked about the statistics provided regarding the increase in children in the community and the number of units being created.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the building will provide between two hundred and fifty (250) or two hundred and sixty (260) housing units. The development anticipates generating approximately 20 to 30 school-aged children. The information is currently based upon a Rutgers study which takes variables of different possibilities with units of one-bedroom size of 750-800 sq. ft. and two-bedroom units between 1,050-1,200 sq. ft., which does not typically attract a lot of school-age children into communities. Furthermore, the calculation of the number of school-age children is based upon real impact analysis. The River Road development is going to offer 15% affordable housing units which provides more family renters versus singles and couples, stated Mr. Schwartz.

Planning Board Member Heap questioned the caliber of residents attracted by luxury apartments.

Mr. Schwartz reported that the target audience are singles. The market also targets young couples with no children or young couples with a baby.

Planning Board Member Favate stated that she is satisfied with the architectural design. However, the pitch top building appears more industrial.

Mr. Schwartz stated that changes can be made to the pitch top building with color or by pulling the limestone out.

Planning Board Chair Heap inquired about renter parking locations.

Mr. Schwartz stated that all parking will be underground with a courtyard in between the building. There will be an entryway for vehicles, in addition to a drop-off lobby entrance to keep traffic off the main streets.

Council Member Fife questioned the distance between the building being constructed with a courtyard in between.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the distance is 100 feet.

Council Member Weber inquired whether the facility will offer a shuttle service for renters going to Main Street and to the train station during morning and evening hours.

Mr. Schwartz stated that a shuttle plan is in place for the residents use in the morning and evening hours.

Ms. Hinderlang asked the council and the residents to provide input on the design currently established for the redevelopment of River Road.

Council Member Mathiasen stated that the building should appear more industrial with retail stores nearby.

Council Member Fife inquired about the placement of power utility wires.

Mr. Schwartz stated that all the above-ground utility wires, provided by JCP & L will be buried underground. Additionally, he hopes to also bury all wires underground for Verizon and Comcast.

Council Member Weber inquired about the number and the square footage of the dwelling units.

Mr. Schwartz stated the projected living space is divided into one-and-two-bedroom units, which are split equally.

Council President Collander stated that he is pleased with the 1.8 ratio of cars per unit and would appreciate additional analysis to confirm the ratio figure. He also questioned the plan for widening the street.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he intends on widening River Road but only to his property lines.

Mayor Harris inquired about crossing the road.

Mr. Schwartz stated that information regarding crossing the road will be provided once available.

Council Member Kobylarz questioned if an environmental analysis has been performed on the Crown Oil properties and how extensive it was.

Mr. Schwartz stated that all three (3) properties have remedial action work plan in place according to LSRP regulations. Site remediation professionals have conducted testing for the last year to understand what is out there to remediate under the LSRP guidelines. The area will be remediated to residential standards, stated Mr. Schwartz.

Council Weber questioned the size of the buildings.

Mr. Baker stated the size of the building will be split between 3 and 4 levels.

Mayor Harris stated that sidewalks on River Road needs upgrading and should be examined during construction.

Mayor Harris proceeded with opening the meeting for public comments.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT TIME LIMIT

Mayor Harris opened the meeting to the public.

Hearing of citizens during the Public Comment section of the Agenda is an opportunity for any member of the public to be heard about issues which are/are not topics scheduled for Public Hearing tonight. To help facilitate an orderly meeting, and to permit all to be heard, speakers are asked to limit their comments to a reasonable length of time.

Rozella Clyde - 33 Carmine Street, Chatham Borough: Ms. Clyde stated that copies of presentations should be available for the residents. She stated that the developers should offer condominiums as an option. She also voiced concerns with respect to the lack of commercial retail nearby.

Michael Dean - 181 N. Passaic Avenue, Chatham Borough: Mr. Dean expressed concerns with regards to the children in the community and the potential tax implications. He further questioned the developer's financial obligation versus the investment in the redevelopment project.

Matthew Gilfillan - 43 Johnson Drive, Chatham Township: Mr. Gilfillan, Vice President of Chatham Borough Board of Education and Board Member of the Finance Committee requested full [financial] disclosure. He stated that the Rutgers study does not depict the actual reality, further expressing that the numbers are extremely low. As people increasingly move into rental units, the increased population may cause an impact to the school system, stated Mr. Gilfillan.

Fran Benson - 66 Watchung Avenue, Chatham Borough: Ms. Benson expressed concerns with respect to the traffic impact. She further stated that low income housing should not be looked upon solely as an opportunity for new millennials but also an opportunity for older residents seeking to downsize.

Earl Davis - 822 River Road, Chatham Township: Mr. Davis expressed concerns about the building height and whether it complies with the borough's code. Additionally, should an irrigation system be installed, it should comply with the necessary regulations and standards. He also expressed concerns with respect to the potential traffic impact in the morning between Watchung Avenue going towards Short Hills Mall.

Betty Scholl - 67 Candace Lane, Chatham Township: Ms. Scholl expressed concerns with respect to the potential traffic impact. She believes the development will contribute towards greater traffic congestion within the area.

Paul Peyton - 67 Candace Lane, Chatham Township: Ms. Peyton expressed concerns with the potential traffic impact. She stated that the county line intersection between rush hour need to be addressed; and traffic lights coordination should be examined.

Stewart Carr - 3 Crestwood Drive, Chatham Township: Mr. Carr expressed concerns with the potential change in the quality of life due to the potential increase in population from the new development. With regards to environmental remediation, he stated that all safety procedures should be taken to ensure the Borough is not exposed to any toxicity in the environment. He also requested information with respect to tax revenue vs. cost information to be supplied to the residents.

The Borough Engineer, Vince DeNave, informed the residents that he is working with neighboring counties and municipalities (Union County, Morris County, Summit) in an effort to remediate the traffic issues, and to coordinate timing of traffic lights from the City of Summit to Fairmount Avenue and Watchung Avenue. As a timeframe is not yet available, neighboring municipalities are working together to lessen the traffic impact, stated Mr. DeNave.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to conduct at the Special Joint Meeting, Mayor Harris asked for a motion to adjourn. Council President Collander made a motion to adjourn the Special Joint Meeting at 9:35pm. Motion was seconded by Council Member Kobylarz. All were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted:

Stephen W. Williams
Acting Borough Clerk
BOROUGH OF CHATHAM
November 11, 2019