

**Town of Westfield
Planning Board
MINUTES
May 3, 2021**

The Westfield Planning Board met on May 3, 2021 at 7:30 pm. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was held remotely through Zoom Webinar. The public was provided with access to join the webinar through Zoom.

In compliance with Chapter 231 P.C. OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT in the State of New Jersey, adequate notice of this meeting was provided to all members of the Planning Board and the newspapers that have been designated to receive notice, the Star Ledger and the Westfield Leader.

REGULAR MEETING:

Chairman Ash called the meeting to order and opened the meeting by calling all present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENT: Michael Ash, Mayor Shelley Brindle,
Anastasia Harrison, Councilwoman Linda Habgood, Michael La Place,
Ross Goldstein, Asima Jansveld, Matthew Ceberio,
Alexandra Carreras, Ann Freedman

ABSENT: Kris McAloon

ALSO PRESENT: Alan Trembulak, Planning Board Attorney, and Donald Sammet, Town Planner

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Chairman Ash called for a motion to adopt the minutes of the April 5, 2021, meeting. Councilwoman Habgood made a motion to adopt the minutes as modified; Ann Freedman seconded.

ALL IN FAVOR: Michael Ash, Anastasia Harrison, Councilwoman Linda Habgood,
Michael La Place, Mayor Shelley Brindle, Ross Goldstein, Alexandra
Carreras, Matthew Ceberio, Asima Jansveld

OPPOSED: None

ABSTAINED: Ann Freedman

ABSENT: Kris McAloon

Motion carried.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS:

Chairman Ash called for a motion to adopt the following resolutions for the applications acted upon at the April 5, 2021, meeting.

PB 20-11 440 North Avenue, LLC., 440 North Avenue, Block 3202 Lot 7

Applicant sought approval of a 10-unit residential development with two affordable units contrary to Section 11.27E1, 11.36I, 11.36G2 of the Land Use Ordinance to allow a front yard setback of 1 foot where the Ordinance requires a minimum front yard setback equal to the height of the principal building, but not less than 15 feet; to allow a parking area setback of 2 feet where the Ordinance requires a minimum of 5 feet for a parking area setback; to allow an exterior wall length longer than 50 feet without a four-foot offset where the Ordinance does not allow an exterior building wall longer than 50 feet without a four-foot offset. Application approved with conditions.

Matthew Ceberio made a motion to adopt the resolution; Anastasia Harrison seconded.

ALL IN FAVOR: Michael Ash, Anastasia Harrison, Councilwoman Linda Habgood, Michael La Place, Mayor Shelley Brindle, Ross Goldstein, Alexandra Carreras, Matthew Ceberio, Asima Jansveld

OPPOSED: None

ABSTAINED: Ann Freedman

ABSENT: Kris McAloon

Motion carried.

PB 21-03 Villane Building & Development, LLC., 121 Effingham Place

Block 709 Lot 13

Applicant sought approval for a subdivision retaining the existing dwelling, garage and driveway and constructing a new single-family dwelling contrary to Section 12.04F1 and 12.04F3 of the Land Use Ordinance to allow a building coverage of 21.7% for lot 13.01 where the Ordinance allows a maximum building coverage of 20%; to allow a building coverage with a porch of 26.2% for lot 13.01 where the Ordinance allows a maximum building coverage with a porch of 24%. Application approved with conditions.

Anastasia Harrison made a motion to adopt; Ross Goldstein seconded.

ALL IN FAVOR: Michael Ash, Anastasia Harrison, Councilwoman Linda Habgood, Michael La Place, Mayor Shelley Brindle, Ross Goldstein, Alexandra Carreras, Matthew Ceberio, Asima Jansveld

OPPOSED: None

ABSTAINED: Ann Freedman

ABSENT: Kris McAloon

Motion carried.

NEW APPEALS:

None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Review General Ordinance #2214- An Ordinance Amending the Land Use Ordinance to designate 923 Central Avenue, Block 4813, Lot 32 as a historic site.

Mr. Sammet described General Ordinance #2214 as an ordinance which would amend the Town Land Use Ordinance and Zoning Map, to designate 923 Central Avenue as a local historic landmark. Mr. Sammet stated that the property is identified as a historic site in the Historic Preservation Element of the Town Master Plan, and that the Planning Board heard and approved a recent subdivision of the property. He explained that a condition of the Board's approval was that the applicant/owner seek local historic designation.

Mr. Sammet further stated that the ordinance is before the Board for a Master Plan consistency review and provided his opinion that local designation of the property is consistent with the Town Master Plan given the property's identification in the Historic Preservation Element.

The Board discussed the ordinance and Master Plan consistency. Mr. La Place, Councilwoman Habgood, and Chairman Ash all expressed their gratitude towards the owner of the property for seeking local designation. Chairman Ash also stated that this historic designation is a success story, and reflects how the Town's Historic Preservation Ordinance is intended to work.

Michael La Place made a motion to recommend to the governing body that General Ordinance #2214 be adopted as introduced, finding it consistent with the Town Master Plan; Councilwoman Linda Habgood seconded.

ALL IN FAVOR:	Michael Ash, Anastasia Harrison, Councilwoman Linda Habgood, Michael La Place, Mayor Shelley Brindle, Ross Goldstein, Alexandra Carreras, Matthew Ceberio, Asima Jansveld
OPPOSED:	None
ABSTAINED:	Ann Freedman
ABSENT:	Kris McAloon

Motion carried.

Master Plan – Unified Land Use and Circulation Element Working Draft Review.

Presentation by the consulting team: H2M and WSP

Mr. Sammet introduced a discussion of the working draft of the Unified Land Use and Circulation Element of the Town Master Plan. He stated that the consulting Team of H2M and WSP have been working to finalize the document, after holding meetings with the Planning Board and Master Plan Steering Committee over recent months. He also stated the intent to have this element of the master plan ready for the Board's adoption at their June 7, 2021 meeting. Mr. Sammet then introduced the consulting team present that evening including Ms. Sanyogita Chavan and Mr. Paul Cancilla of H2M; and, Mr. John Federico of WSP.

Ms. Chavan described the content of a master plan as required by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law. She also described how a municipal master plans provide policy guidance for a community in land use matters once adopted by the local Planning Board.

Ms. Chavan continued by providing an outline of the plan, describing how land use and circulation are interrelated, and how the New Jersey Department of Transportation published a document entitled "Mobility and Community Form", which includes guidance on how to prepare master plan elements which address both land use and circulation issues within a single master plan element, rather than as separate.

Ms. Chavan then described the public participation process utilized to create the draft plan before the Board which included meetings with various stakeholders, the Master Plan Steering Committee, and also public comments and other information received and gleaned from the recently completed Master Plan Reexamination Report.

Continuing, Ms. Chavan explained that the plan includes a study of existing conditions, including existing zone districts, the roadway network, mass transit network, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. She stated that the Community Form Analysis section of the plan analyzes both physical shape and form of the Town's built environment. She also stated that a buildout analysis was conducted to help decision makers decide how the Town can best guide development.

Ms. Chavan then described the Community Form Plan contained within the draft. She explained that it includes recommendations for the types of buildings, spaces, and uses emphasizing that these are in the form of recommendations, and are not a zoning ordinance. Amendments to the Town's zoning ordinance would need to be prepared based upon the recommendations in the plan, and only after careful consideration of neighborhood conditions. Ms. Chavan also stated that the plan contains broad based recommendations for redevelopment areas, not specific ones. These include a recommendation to incorporate or utilize the arts as part of downtown revitalization, to create public spaces, to utilize architectural design guidelines, to encourage office uses, and to strategically locate ground floor retail. She also stated that the Town should explore opportunities to use powers contained within the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law outside of the downtown area.

Ms. Chavan concluded her presentation by addressing the issue of residential teardowns that was raised in the Master Plan Reexamination Report. She stated that the plan includes some recommended zoning techniques that can be built into Westfield ordinances. She explained that a zone-by-zone analysis should be conducted before any bulk standard amendments are adopted, to ensure that few non-conformities are created by an ordinance change. She also stated that ordinance amendments should require building that is in scale with neighborhood conditions.

Next, Mr. John Federico described the circulation recommendations contained within the plan. He stated that the plan includes a number of both short and long-term recommendations, with an emphasis on multi-modal transportation to reduce dependency on the automobile and demand for parking. The multi-modal recommendations include prioritizing a sidewalk improvement plan, town-wide pedestrian crossing improvements, bicycle networks, improving train station access, and bus stop improvements. He also stated that the plan includes a recommendation that there be an off-road connection between the Lord and Taylor site on North Avenue with the Westfield train station.

Mr. Federico continued by describing recommended roadway improvements. These include traffic signal upgrades, new traffic signals at recommended intersections, and road diets for parts of North and South Avenues. He then followed by describing parking and loading recommendations including curbside management which includes the creation of pickup and drop-off areas, the consideration for a payment in lieu of parking program, a reconsideration of downtown parking ratios and requirements and recommendations regarding bicycle parking requirements.

Mr. Federico completed his summary of the circulation portion of the plan by describing the roadway, streetscape, and public realm guidelines that are recommended in the plan. He stated that street typologies have been identified based upon existing conditions and that there are streetscape design standards recommended for each street typology. He stated that these are guidelines which may be incorporated into various redevelopment plans, development projects or municipal projects.

Ms. Chavan then indicated that the hazard vulnerability assessment that is now required to be included in the plan as per the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law is near completion and will be included in the final draft. An identification of additional areas for electric vehicle charging stations will also be included. Finally, an implementation matrix which lays out the tasks recommended in the plan will be included in the plan, similar to what was in the Master Plan Reexamination Report.

The Board discussed the working draft of the Unified Land Use and Circulation Element of the Master Plan. Mr. La Place recommended the inclusion of statements which encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings. Ms. Freedman, thanked the consulting team for a comprehensive report, recommended an executive summary section be included, and that what issues that the community felt most strongly about should be highlighted. Councilwoman Habgood asked that the document be re-shared digitally. Finally, both Mayor Brindle and Mr. Goldstein recommended that the 333 Central Avenue multi-family project should not be described necessarily as a successful building project, but as an example of how to integrate parking into a development while screening it from public view. Finally, the Board recommended that a photograph of 603 Clark Street be included in the plan, to highlight a locally designated historic landmark.

The consulting team thanked the Board for their feedback and the presentation was concluded with an understanding that the plan would be ready for the Board's adoption at their meeting on June 7, 2021.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board entered into executive session to discuss pending litigation.

After reconvening in public session, and there being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. La Place, seconded by Mr. Goldstein and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald Sammet, PP/AICP
Town Planner and Acting Planning Board Administrative Secretary