

**PLANNING BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

**May 31, 2022**

**CALL TO  
ORDER**

The was called to order at 7:02p.m.  
1 City Hall Plaza  
Rahway, NJ 07065

Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, also known as the Sunshine Law, has been provided by an Annual Notice sent to the City's official newspaper NJ Star Ledger on January 8th, 2022 and posted on the bulletin board of the Municipal Complex, posted on the City website, and filed with the Clerk of the City.

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**FLAG SALUTE**

The Board will then salute the flag.

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**ROLL CALL**

On a call of the roll, the following Board Members and Officials should be present:

**BOARD**

Mr. Raymond Giacobbe, Mayor; or,  
Mr. Eric Miles, Mayor's Designee  
Mr. Jeremy Mojica, Commissioner  
Mr. Frank Spallone, Commissioner  
Mr. Robert Simon, Commissioner  
Mr. Thomas O'Reilly, Commissioner  
Mr. Alexander Shipley, Commissioner  
Mr. William Cladek, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate Commissioner  
Mr. Christopher Brown, 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate Commissioner  
Mr. William Hering, Commissioner Vice Chairman  
Mr. Jeffrey Robinson, Commissioner Chairman  
Mr. Karl P. Kemm, Esq, Board Attorney  
Ms. Jacqueline Dirmann, Board Engineer  
Ms. Leigh Fleming, Board Planner  
Mr. Steven Decker, Board Secretary

Absent from this meeting: Commissioners Mojica, Spallone, Timmons, and O'Reilly which were excused absences.

The meeting was called to order 7:02pm.

Chairman Robinson opened the meeting with the regulations and reading of the agenda into the record.

The following action took place.

The board professionals, Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann and Board Planner Leigh Fleming were sworn in.

## **Hearings**

Meridia Rahway 1900 Urban Renewal

1901 Elizabeth Ave.

Application #02/14A

Block 228 Lot 1.01 & 1.02

Block 227 Lot 1 & 2

Applicant seeking Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval (Amendment)

Mr. Steven Mlenak the applicant's attorney introduced the application. This was originally from March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. It was approved in 2 phases. Phase 1 is currently complete. Phase 2 is preparing to be undertaken. He explained there is a noticeable shortage of parking from an operational view. The applicant is looking to add a temporary parking lot of 164 spaces. This will be considered phase 2b for the applicant.

Richard Adelsohn, of Frank H. Lehr Associates, 101 South Harrison Street, East Orange was sworn in as an Engineer. He was accepted as an expert. He began by confirming that Lot 2 has been demolished and is ready for construction.

Sheet C2 shows the phase 1 and phase 2 building. Phase 2 is a total of 306 parking spaces.

The applicant would like to construct a temporary parking lot at phase 2B. It will be a 46,000 sq ft parking lot with 164 spaces, and 6 handicap spaces. The spaces will be numbered and assigned to tenants in the existing phase 1 building. All spaces will be 60 degree angled parking spaces.

Sheet C4 showed the grading plan. Drainage will be accomplished using porous pavement. It will filter the water to drain.

Sheet C5 showed lighting and landscape plan. The lot will have five utility poles with two downward facing lights. There will be small landscaping along the fence line near the street. Sheet C-3 shows the parking lot will be 2.7 ft back from the property line. The applicant proposes a four foot fence along the front. All landscaping will be in right of way between the fence and sidewalk.

The lot will have a two way circulation, vehicles will enter in main meridian driveway and circle counter clockwise and exit onto Elizabeth avenue. Also, it is possible to enter along Elizabeth Avenue. They will discuss the circulation with the county. And if the county only allows one way turn onto Elizabeth Ave to exit, there will still be an entrance and egress.

Board Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann noted that she had met with the applicant during the process to try to streamline the plan. She asked the timeline and how long this lot will be in place. The applicant answered that once approved, the construction of the parking lot will start. It will take roughly 1 to 2 months to build. They are looking for an amendment to the redevelopment plan. It will be an 18+ month construction cycle for phase 2.

The Planning Board asked that it will be completed within 3 months.

The applicant has accepted the timeline Attorney Karl Kemm has given.

Ms. Dirmann then asked if the lot will only be used by tenants from phase 1 building? Applicant answered yes, that is correct.

The phase 2A building will have sufficient parking.

The northern driveway closer to West Scott Ave. is for temporary lot? C3- 7 spaces near the parking lot.

Board Engineer Dirmann asked to explain the waiver for size of the parking spaces. RSI requires 19 foot parking space. Cars are typically 15-17 feet and will fit comfortably in the 19 foot space.

Ms. Dirmann recommended having no left turns onto Elizabeth Ave. from the exit. The applicant is deferring to the county on this.

The applicant also confirmed that pedestrians will have clear safe pathway out of the parking lot.

Ms. Dirmann then addressed item 10 that there may need to have underdrains for the parking lot. If they cannot achieve the proper drainage during tests the applicant will have to add underdrains.

Colliers Engineering requested a maintenance plan for the porous paving. Richard Adelsohn stated it will be vacuumed.

There will be bollards protecting the lights.

Ms. Dirmann asked where the site will be staging their construction vehicles. It will be staged onsite in the courtyard and will be fenced off. This lot will not be used for staging.

Board Planner Leigh Fleming asked regarding lighting, to make sure it will not impact neighbors or headlights shining through. Mr. Adelsohn replied that all LED fixtures comply with dark sky and will not have any glare issues.

Ms. Fleming asked about the landscaping since it is a long amount of frontage. Will they be tall enough to block headlights since they are in clusters? The applicant stated that the shrubs are tall

enough. However, the ground cover will be small gaps. The landscaping will be subject to approval of the county since it is in the right of way.

Ms. Fleming asked if there is a possibility of doing a decorative fence across the front area. The applicant is planning of black chain link but will look into alternate types of fences. The Board Planner and Engineer recommended a vinyl slatted fence.

Chairman Robinson commented that even though the fence is temporary it may be up for 2 years, so the city would like something nicer looking.

Planner Fleming would like to see taller shrubs with less gaps. The applicant will add additional shrubs to eliminate the gaps and hide the fence.

Vice Chairman Hering asked why the parking has been an issue, and why there now needs to be more parking. He believes the original approved plan seemed to have enough parking.

Commissioner Brown asked why this issue has arose and the current occupancy of the building.

Commissioner Miles asked if there will be a fee for the residences to park in the new temporary lot.

Craig Ryno, from Capdagola is in charge of the real estate for the company. He explained that the original plan called for 1:1 parking. They currently are in 90% occupancy at the building. The applicant reached out to the city that they would like to add more parking. Upon leasing units they realized it was more than a 1:1 ratio that is needed.

The building management is currently valeting the cars for tenants. One parking spot is included with each apartment. There was a poll sent out to tenants to see how many spots they would need. The parking will be expanded in phase 2.

Commissioner Brown asked what the future of the parking is looking like.

The applicant will follow RSIS standards and relying on their analysis for the gap in phase 1.

Karl Kemm commented that the applicant is doing a study talking to tenants, and that phase 2 will have increased parking with a parking analysis and layout. The applicant has agreed to use the lot at the corner of West Scott Avenue and Elizabeth Avenue and will number those parking spaces.

The applicant has agreed with the all conditions that were spoken about.

Commissioner Brown believes there should be guest parking as well. They said they are considering that.

Commissioner Shipley asked about the parking for building phase 2A.

Mr. Ryno stated most parking will be in the back near the railroad tracks, and underneath the building. Eventually a parking deck in the back will accommodate the vehicles.

Commissioner Shipley asked about the side of the building that faces the railroad tracks, does it have the same façade as the front of the building. Rick Adelshon stated there is an architectural façade that will be used.

Commissioner Miles asked if there are fees for the parking spaces and that is why people are parking in the streets.

Mr. Ryno stated he does not know if there are fees. Every tenant gets 1 spot included with the rent.

Commissioner Miles is concerned that tenants may be choosing between paying for lot and parking on the street.

Attorney Kemm reminded the board when 2A is built the temporary parking lot will come down.

Kathryn Gregory of 96 Linwood, Plaza Fort Lee, NJ was introduced as a planner. She has testified throughout the state, and is accepted as an expert.

Ms. Gregory stated they are looking for a variance. She believes this is a C2 variance and the benefits will outweigh detriments. Waivers- Not allowed to park in the front yard. There is a setback requirement of 5 feet. This is due to the lot needing to be pushed forward in order to have a staging area for Phase 2A.

Exception for the RSIS standards. 18' width needed for parking stall. The ends have smaller spaces. There is striping and not curbing at the end, so the cars will have room.

Ms. Gregory believes the positive criteria is benefiting the public by getting the cars off the street. It will not impact light, air or open space to adjacent properties.

This is a safe and efficient design for free flow of traffic.

There is no detriment to public good, and they are working to get the cars off the street. RSIS standards will be met for phase 2 and do include visitor spaces.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment:

Francisco Perez, was sworn in by the board. He would like to know how many units will be built for phase 2A.

Phase 2 will have 187 units.

Mr. Perez asked what will happen to the two temporary lots that are currently being used across the street. He also wanted to know what it is zoned for.

Mr. Ryno stated nothing has been planned for those lots at this time.

Karl Kemm noted if they want to put anything there it will need to go before the board.

Mr. Ryno wanted to clarify that the 164 spaces to add are for phase 1.

Public portion of the meeting was ended.

Vice Chairman Hering made a motion to approve this application with conditions of improving landscaping to narrow the gaps, a fence with slats that are aesthetically pleasing, and lighting that will be facing down and not impact neighbors, and all of the conditions that were agreed upon and county approvals.

**Motion: Commissioner Hering                      Second: Commissioner Simon**  
**Yes: Commissioners Miles, Simon, Shipley, Cladek, Brown, Hering and Chairman**  
**Robinson**  
**No: None**  
**Absent: Commissioners Mojica, Spallone, Timmons and O'Reilly**  
**Abstain: None**

**Motion was approved.**

Commissioner Hering made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion: Commissioner Hering                      Second: Commissioner Simon**  
**Yes: Commissioners Miles, Simon, Shipley, Cladek, Brown, Hering and Chairman**  
**Robinson**  
**No: None**  
**Absent: Commissioners Mojica, Spallone, Timmons and O'Reilly**  
**Abstain: None**

**Motion was approved.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.**