

Hightstown Planning Board
 Regular Meeting
 February 9, 2015
7:30 pm

OPEN SESSION

Fred Montferrat called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and read the Open Public Meetings Act statement: “Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was sent to the Trenton Times and the Windsor-Hights Herald, and is posted in the Borough Clerk’s office.”

Flag Salute

Roll Call

	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE ARRIVAL
Mr. Lane	✓		
Mr. Montferrat	✓		
Mr. Stults	✓		
Mr. Hansen	✓		
Mr. Mulleavey	✓		
Mr. Searing	✓		
Mayor Quattrone	✓		
Mr. Musing		✓	
Ms. Colavecchio	✓		
Mr. Balcewicz, Alt. #1	✓		
Mr. Honsel	✓		

Also in attendance: Sandy Belan, Planning Board Secretary; Gary Rosensweig, Planning Board Attorney; Tamara Lee, Borough Planner; Carmela Roberts, Borough Engineer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Montferrat asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Stults made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Lane seconded. Mr. Montferrat asked for a roll call vote to approve the agenda.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lane, Mr. Montferrat, Mayor Quattrone, Mr. Stults, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Searing, Mr. Mulleavey, Ms. Colavecchio, Mr. Balcewicz and Mr. Honsel voted yes. Mr. Musing was absent. **Motion passed 10-0.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Montferrat noted that the Board did not have an opportunity to thoroughly review the January 12 Minutes. Mr. Montferrat asked for a motion to table the adoption of the Minutes until the March 9, 2015 meeting.

Mr. Balcewicz made a motion to table the adoption of the January 12, 2015, minutes until the March 9, 2015 meeting. Mr. Lane seconded. Mr. Montferrat asked for a roll call.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lane, Mr. Montferrat, Mayor Quattrone, Mr. Stults, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Searing, Mr. Mulleavey, Ms. Colavecchio, Mr. Balcewicz and Mr. Honsel voted yes. Mr. Musing was absent. **Motion passed 10-0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Montferrat opened the floor for any public comments regarding anything that is not on the agenda.

Noel Barnett, Stonefield Engineering & Design, 75 Orient Way, Rutherford, NJ – Property located on 441 Stockton Street, Hightstown. This property is located in both Hightstown Borough and East Windsor Township. Welcome any advice on how to get started on this project since it is located in two jurisdictions. Mr. Rosensweig suggested that he contact the Administrator in Hightstown and the Mayor in East Windsor to discuss the matter. The biggest issue is the dual ownership of the property. There being no further comments, Mr. Montferrat closed the public portion of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Amendment Resolution 2015-07 – The Peddie School – Dormitories Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval, D6 & Bulk Variances and Waivers

Mr. Rosensweig reviewed some minor changes requested by the applicant. These additions further clarify the resolution.

Mr. Montferrat asked for a motion to amend Resolution 2015-07. Motion made by Mr. Searing and seconded by Mr. Lane.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lane, Mr. Montferrat, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Searing, Mr. Mulleavey, Ms. Colavecchio and Mr. Balcewicz voted yes. Mr. Musing was absent. Mayor Quattrone, Mr. Stults and Mr. Honsel abstained. **Motion passed 7-0.**

OLD BUSINESS

2. Portable Sign Ordinance Subcommittee Report: On January 14, Mr. Balcewicz, Mr. Searing and Mr. Musing met with Bill Schmeling, Zoning Officer to discuss portable signs, yard and car sale signs in Hightstown Borough.

Car Sale Signs – Ordinance 2014-16 addresses this issue.

Yard Sale Signs – Yard sales still seem to be an important activity for residents. The main concern seems to be residents who live on interior streets. Signs placed off property are a bigger issue than signs being removed. Our recommendation is that a single yard sale sign be permitted off premises on the day of the sale and removed immediately after the sale. If the sale exists for two days, the sign has to be removed after the first day and reposted for the second day. No signs are permitted on utility poles or traffic signs.

Mayor Quattrone noted that the Borough sponsors two yard sales per year (spring and fall).

Mr. Hansen – Are there any regulations on the design of the sign? Real estate and political signs are professional looking. Usually the yard sale signs are more homemade – not professional.

Mr. Stults – The problem seems to be the removal of the signs once the sale is over.

Mr. Montferrat – Bill Schmeling is looking for direction to enforce. Currently no yard sales are permitted.

Mr. Balcewicz – This is the current Yard/garage sale ordinance: “Yard or garage sale - Such signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet; shall not be erected more than 48 hours prior to such sale; and shall be removed immediately after the sale. No premises shall be permitted to erect such signs more than four (4) times in any calendar year and no off premises signs are permitted.”

Portable A-Frame Signs – Mr. Balcewicz - These signs block the street and are not visually appealing. There are currently 30-40 businesses that have sign permits. During our meeting there was discussion that the portable signs for “first floor” businesses seem redundant given that they have façade signs. The portable signs do make sense for the “second floor” businesses which are not as visible to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The subcommittee is recommending a temporary moratorium on the issuance of any new sign permits. Existing permits would be permitted to be displayed through their approval period. Subcommittee also suggests that we contact Downtown Hightstown to get their feedback on this. The question of whether the signs actually provide any value in increasing traffic to the stores (displaying the business name every day in this manner may just cause it to become “invisible”) and given the signs are generally moved closer to the street, their visibility is blocked by parked cars.

The ordinance states that the signs should be professional. However, there is no concept or design approval for these signs.

Mr. Stults – Other towns have similar signs, but they are very professionally done.

DISCUSSION

1. Downtown Hightstown Design Manual– Rick Pratt gave a brief overview of the proposed Downtown Design Manual. Manual contents: History of Hightstown; What is a Design Manual? Why a Design Manual? Statement of Intent; Zoning Map – Proposed; Design Review Process; Design Guidelines; Design Principles; Traditional Façade; Storefront Design; Detailing; Maintenance and Repair; Paint Color; Masonry; Windows; Signs and

Graphics; Lighting; Pedestrian-Oriented Design; Pedestrian Access; Storefront Elements; Landscaping; Visual Screening; Parking; Infill Structures.

This is an excellent tool for residents and business owners – guidelines with photos and diagrams to promote the historic character of Hightstown. Copies of this document will be emailed to the Planning Board for discussion at the March meeting.

DVRPC Grant Project: Ms. Lee reviewed this program. This is a yearly program Transportation & Development Initiative Grant – most contain some element of transportation.

Project summary:

- Connect the two East Windsor projects
- Include NJDOT, making it a multi-governmental effort
- Involve transit design by improving the corridor and include bikes and pedestrians.
- Develop criteria for a form based ordinance for the DTC and DTG zones, which would improve the character of downtown and bolster the pedestrian experience.
- Establish designs for a series of projects that would implement many of the policies of the Borough's Re-Exam.

We have a lot of details in the Re-Exam and the Downtown Hightstown Design Manual. The grant will contain a series of plans which we already have. Next step is to establish a grant writing subcommittee.

2. Main Street Redevelopment Plan – Mayor Quattrone – The Borough Council has reviewed the Plan and forwarded this document to the Planning Board for their review and recommendations. Planning Board will review at the March meeting and respond to the Council. It was suggested that this document also be circulated to the Environmental Commission, Parks & Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Montferrat will email the document.
3. Businesses in Residential area – The subcommittee (Mr. Balcewicz, Mr. Searing & Mr. Musing) will meet with Bill Schmeling to discuss.

Mayor Quattrone – Questioned when the Planning Board should step in to determine if the business is appropriate?

Mr. Rosensweig – With proper notice, the Zoning Officer can inspect the business.

COMMITTEE AND PROFESSIONAL REPORT – No reports

CHAIRMAN AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - None

Mr. Balcewicz moved to adjourn. Mr. Hansen seconded. All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Belan, Planning Board Secretary