

APPROVED: January 20, 2009

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION - RMJM Hillier
Draft Redevelopment Plan Presentation

October 21, 2008
(Meeting held at Grover Middle School)

CALL TO ORDER: President Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

This is to advise that the notice requirement provided for in the "Open Public Meetings Act" has been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given and transmitted to The Times and Princeton Packet; filed with the Clerk of the Municipality; and posted in the West Windsor Township Municipal Building at North Post and Clarksville Roads on October 6, 2008.

ATTENDEES: President: Morgan; Vice President: Kleinman; Council: Anklowitz, Borek, Geevers; Mayor: Hsueh; Business Administrator: Marion; Township Attorney: Herbert, Jr; RMJM Hillier Representative: Jaffe; Township Planning Consultant: Madden; Township Traffic Engineer: Davies; Deputy Clerk: Huber

President Morgan opened the meeting and reviewed the process for the evening. He noted that after Mr. Jaffe has given his presentation the Township professionals, Mr. Madden and Mr. Davies, will present what they like and dislike about the plan. President Morgan noted that comments will be taken in the following order: Members of the Township Boards and Commissions, members of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School Board, the public, Mayor Hsueh, and the Township Council.

PRESENTATION BY RMJM HILLIER OF THE DRAFT REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr. Eric Jaffe, Representative of RMJM Hillier, thanked everyone for coming this evening. He gave a quick presentation on Township goals, existing conditions, and the public spaces. Mr. Jaffe noted that the redevelopment area has been broken up into districts to help with the development of the plan. He reviewed the environmental constraints of the redevelopment area, both natural and man made, and showed the current uses of the properties within the redevelopment plan as well as the public/private ownership of the properties. Mr. Jaffe reviewed the current parking within the redevelopment area.

ROAD AND PEDESTRIAN NEEDS

Mr. Jaffe reviewed the local and regional needs of traffic to include adding a second entrance/exit on Washington Road and on Alexander Road, and an additional crossing over the Dinky train line. Mr. Jaffe noted that Alexander Road will need to be widened, and both pedestrian crossing and intersection improvements will be required. He noted that a similar concept will need to be included on Washington Road. Mr. Jaffe advised that the plan includes improvements to primary roadways, secondary roadways, additional crossing over the Dinky line, and noted that the BRT routes have been included.

LAND USE

Mr. Jaffe advised that the land use plan was developed from reviewing all the previous plans and professional comments over the past several years. He reviewed the proposed land use which includes: mixed use retail/residential, office use along Alexander Road, the core area which is prime for parking and development and will include mixed use along Route 571. Mr. Jaffe advised that the Council and residents have commented that both the market and affordable housing elements should be together.

Mr. Jaffe noted that during Phase One roadway improvements, parking structure, some housing, and retail are included. During the second phase, and after Township review of the impact of the development on the Township, additional parking, housing, and office space could begin construction. Mr. Jaffe reminded everyone that this redevelopment plan has a build out of 25 to 30 years and that during the entire time the plan can be reviewed for the impacts on the Township and adjustments made as necessary.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT PUBLIC PLACES

Mr. Jaffe presented several slides showing great public places throughout the country and the world to show the different scenarios that could be used within the redevelopment area.

COMMENTS FROM TOWNSHIP PROFESSIONALS

Mr. John Madden, Township Planner, noted that this plan builds on work that has been done in the past and tries to create something that is more implementable. He noted that the goals and policies set by the Council have been incorporated into the plan. Mr. Madden observed that the ability to adjust the plan as it moves forward has been included. He explained that the street layouts are conducive to pedestrian access, the public gathering space is a quarter mile long, and the station core area has been identified. Mr. Madden advised that the land use patterns presented in the plan are good. He noted that the aspects of the plan that need improvement are: more detail in the traffic circulation, more input from New Jersey Transit, and affordable housing must be reviewed because of the "Roberts Bill". Mr. Madden advised that the Township now has enough information to make intelligent decisions on the plan.

Mr. Gary Davies, Township Traffic Engineer, noted the goals and objectives within the plan are well crafted and that he likes the following elements: addresses the need to remediate traffic congestion and make traffic flow better than today and approves of the general arrangements of the roadways created. He explained that until the land use has been finalized the roadways cannot be confirmed. Mr. Davies noted that finally the plan addresses the core area and that the Township is working with New Jersey Transit to make it compatible with their needs. Mr. Davies advised that there are gaps within the plan but these are being worked on by all the parties involved. He noted that the one thing being fixed by this plan is road alignments. He advised that the Township is currently working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in reviewing how the Penns Neck EIS Study fits into this plan.

President Morgan advised that he would like to come out of this meeting with a list of things that everyone likes, dislikes, and discussion of next steps.

COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE WEST WINDSOR BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Ms. Florence Cohen, Chair, Affordable Housing Committee, voiced her concerns that affordable housing not be located in one general area, but interspersed throughout the residential elements as is the Township policy. She noted that the Affordable Housing Committee has reviewed the plan and noted that the ratio should be one affordable unit to every four market rate units.

Ms. Susan Abbey, Vice Chair, Zoning Board of Adjustment, noted that the presentation did not include existing approvals on the Sarnoff Tract and suggested that this be included in the final plan since this is a big part of the redevelopment plan. She voiced her opinion on the roadways and how Vaughn Drive was going to be a through artery with lights and roundabouts, and now the roadway is going through a residential area. Ms. Abbey noted that anticipating only one parking spot for units with two and three bedrooms is not realistic, and suggested that two spots should be included for each unit. She noted that air quality needs to be reviewed, affordable housing needs to be integrated, and floor area ratio (FAR) needs to be reviewed. Ms. Abbey advised that one of the criteria for the plan should be that utilities be placed underground.

Ms. Beth Feehan, Representative of the West Windsor Farmers Market, voiced her support of the redevelopment plan, but inquired about where the civic/public space for the community is located. She noted the plan should address the needs of organizations that will be utilizing this space so that the proper amenities are included.

Mr. John Roeder, Chairman, Zoning Board of Adjustment, noted that the plan does not show PNC Bank and the Rite Aid development. He inquired how the two Main Streets will be connected. Mr. Roeder voiced his concern with the increase of traffic being created by the residential element of this plan and the effect it will have on the Penns Neck area.

Mr. Michael Huey, Chairman, Cable TV Advisory Board, voiced his support for the redevelopment plan and thanked the Council and Mayor for moving the project forward.

Ms. Alison Miller, Parking Authority Member, inquired about the footprints, and advised that more analyses need to be done to include the circulation of commuters to the parking areas and Kiss and Ride. She noted that the Parking Authority will be forwarding their comments to Council within the next couple of weeks. Ms. Miller commented that as President of Friends of West Windsor Open Space they are concerned that fifty percent of the redevelopment area be designated for open space.

Mr. Michael Hornsby, Chairman, Environmental Commission, noted that the Environmental Commission supports the general concepts of both the RMJM Hillier plan and the InterCap plan. He advised that the project should include LEED elements, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, brownfield cleanup, and endorsed more public open space. Mr. Hornsby noted that the plan may need additional fine tuning with regard to the wetlands.

Mr. George Martch, Member of the Cable TV Advisory Board, voiced his concerns with changes going on in the region and how it will affect the redevelopment plan and the Township. He noted that regional planning needs to be addressed and suggested including the Sarnoff proposed roadways and the Penns Neck Bypass on the plan.

COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms. Denise Scott, 23 Scott Avenue, voiced concern about homes being located so close to the train tracks.

Mr. Ken Carlson, President of West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance, noted his approval of the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian friendly design within the redevelopment area. He voiced concern, however, with Alexander Road not being pedestrian and bicycle friendly and encouraged traffic calming measures be considered for this roadway. Mr. Carlson also noted that additional work is still needed to make West Windsor Township bike and pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Curtis Hoberman, 175 Washington Road, noted that he fails to see how this area connects with the rest of the community and stressed that this is a vital element.

Ms. Susan Conlon, 98 Harris Road, voiced her concern with the connectivity of the east and west sides. She noted that the Washington Road Bridge is not bicycle and pedestrian friendly and that she opposes the widening of Alexander Road on the west side. Ms. Conlon also noted that the language has been removed that noted that building design should fit in with existing areas.

Mr. Mike Baxter, 6 Landing Lane, noted that he is 100% behind all residents of the Township being able to park at the train station.

Ms. Amira Scurato, 50 Bear Brook Road, suggested that the Maneely and Sarnoff developments be added to the plan. She noted that there should not be a light at the intersection of Alexander Road and Old Bear Brook Road.

Mr. Hemi Nae, 11 Wycombe Way, thanked Council for moving this process forward. He voiced concern, however, about the number of residential units, the infrastructure, and traffic flow. Mr. Nae noted he is concerned about the details of the project and what the cost to residents will be. He advised that the main street along Route 571 has been lost in this process and that the Princeton Junction Overlay ordinance should be incorporated into the plan. Mr. Nae also voiced his concern with businesses and residences being placed so close to a flood zone area.

Mr. Marshall Lerner, 3 Sapphire Drive, voiced his views that the fundamental ideas that started this project have been lost and the need for additional parking for residents has not been fully addressed. He noted his displeasure with the current process and suggested that the community be asked by a referendum placed on a ballot, as previously suggested, to gain the residents' views on the matter.

Mr. David Siegel, 17 Berrien Avenue, voiced his concern with the proposed five-story buildings which are out of scale for the surrounding area. He noted that Vaughn Drive should be a connector roadway and not a main street with retail shopping. Mr. Siegel commented that currently this plan shows two main streets. He noted his displeasure with the proposed plan, and that additional police, emergency services, and public works staff will be necessary.

Mr. Michael DiGioacchino, 2 Roseland Court, noted that he is all for redevelopment and additional parking for residents, but cautioned that consideration be given to the existing residents. He noted that he does not want to lose the charm of West Windsor.

Ms. Julia Rhodes, 31 Scott Avenue, President of the Berrien City Neighborhood Association, noted that the Association had drafted some concepts at the beginning of this process. She advised that the issue of Vaughn Drive going through a neighborhood versus being a bypass is of concern. Ms. Rhodes noted that the scale and size of the project is also a concern especially with five to eight-story buildings being proposed.

Mr. Rustom Bhojti, 5 Park Hill Terrace, voiced his support for redevelopment and encouraged the Council to continue to move forward.

Mr. Steve Goldin, 4 Stonewall Drive, noted that the redevelopment process needs to move forward.

Ms. Tamara Moeller, 201 Varsity Avenue, voiced her support of the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Jim Waltman, Executive Director, Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association, advised that this project can be done with smart growth and goals that are well defined. He suggested that more land be preserved around the redevelopment area to help offset the dense building. Mr. Waltman advised that redevelopment can address water quality and flooding issues within and around the redevelopment area.

Mr. Bryan Maher, 135 Penn Lyle Road, voiced his support for redevelopment, and noted that most residents want Route 571 improved between Clarksville Road and Cranbury/Wallace Road intersections. He noted with proper zoning and incentives for current landowners along Route 571 these properties can be improved over time. Mr. Maher noted that the priorities are misaligned and that residents are looking for parking as a priority. He cautioned to think this process through.

Mr. Andrew Bromberg, 24 Providence Drive, supports the redevelopment plan, but inquired about how the proposed housing affects the affordable housing numbers for West Windsor. He noted that a sense of place means a lot to him.

Mr. Mark Pepper, 43 Providence Court, noted he supports redevelopment and urged the Council to make it a pedestrian and bicycle friendly development. He noted that Route 571 should be connected to Alexander Road via Vaughn Drive as proposed over the years.

Mr. Bob Akens, 32 Windsor Drive, noted his disappointment in the plan and that nothing has been mentioned to improve the drive for the commuter. He advised that the plan does not seem to be beneficial to current residents. Mr. Akens voiced his concern about the financing of this project and how it will affect residents.

Mr. Farrell Delman, 102 Bear Brook Road, voiced his concerns on the scale of the project and that the area should be pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and that the proposed plan is still designed for vehicular traffic. He noted that Route 571 has not been addressed and should be improved first.

Mr. Francois Guillemain, 554 Meadow Road, voiced his concerns about the five-story buildings and would like to see the downtown area and assets be readdressed. He noted bringing in additional residential will only create more traffic, congestions, and school children to name a few. Mr. Guillemain advised that additional traffic lights will only slow traffic down and suggested other alternatives for traffic calming.

Ms. Sandy Duffy, 15 Westwinds Drive, voiced her feelings on the redevelopment plan and the current main street, and felt that the Township needs an area similar to Palmer Square.

CONSULTANTS RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Mr. Davies addressed the Vaughn Drive issue and how the road structure was developed within the redevelopment area versus the initial proposed roadway prior to redevelopment. He reviewed several scenarios for the area to include several pedestrian safety improvements to Alexander Road.

Mr. Madden addressed Ms. Cohen's concern with District 3 and the affordable housing that may be generated by the non-residential development. He noted that the additional affordable housing generated could be between 66 to 120 units. Mr. Madden advised that the amount of housing in District 1 is 700 market rate, 249 affordable units; District 2 which is along the railroad 2 affordable units; District 3 66-120; District 4 3-4 affordable units; District 5 could be a park and/or preserved land with no affordable units; Districts 7, 8, 9 will have no affordable housing obligations. Mr. Madden addressed the concerns for the Farmers Market space and the need for electric and storage space. He agreed that the Penns Neck Bypass and Sarnoff should be on the plan. Mr. Madden noted that Mr. Jaffe wants to show the Sarnoff property and his proposed changes to Sarnoff's plan. He noted the challenge is with connecting the east and west sides.

Mr. Jaffe addressed the Main Street issue and that there should be a connection between the redevelopment area and the Route 571 area and noted both areas should be pedestrian and bicycle friendly. He explained the civic area is approximately 75 feet wide by 1500 feet long. He noted there were some good observations made and he will consider them when revising the plan. Mr. Jaffe commented that integration of the surrounding areas will also be addressed

COMMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Hsueh thanked everyone for coming this evening, and explained that residents must understand the difference between the redevelopment statutes and the municipal land use laws. He noted that this is the first draft of the redevelopment plan and that it will need to be reviewed to ensure it meets COAH regulations. He advised that the next step is to negotiate with County and State officials and property owners for funding, and to address the flooding that occurs along Washington Road. Mayor Hsueh explained that once the plan is approved the project can be phased as necessary to help minimize the impacts to the school district and roadway. Mayor Hsueh noted that there are several issues he wants addressed:

- taxpayer money will not be used to fund the project;
- negative impact will not be allowed on the school district;
- positive improvements must be met for the traffic circulation;
- clear commitment from State and County agencies must be received before moving forward;
- the Township will go through the RFP process for redevelopers;
- redeveloper will have to submit specific studies similar to the Planning Board process for review by the public;
- the adoption of the redevelopment plan is only the first step;
- the plan will be bicycle and pedestrian friendly design;
- it will be an environmentally friendly design;
- additional parking for West Windsor residents will be provided;
- more than the minimum State environmental constraints must be met;
- positive property tax revenues for the Township budget;
- transparent decision-making process

Mayor Hsueh advised that if the plan does not meet these criteria he will not sign it.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Kleinman advised that the focus should be to review the plan and get the descriptions to document the Township's vision. She noted that Vaughn Drive still needs to be reviewed as a through roadway, and that Main Street could be a mile long. Ms. Kleinman advised that the zoning should be reviewed because it is critical that Main Street not be two separate areas of retail development. She noted that she still has questions about the 1,000 housing units and how that relates to the amenities. Ms. Kleinman encouraged the Council to set up a meeting next week to focus on the plan to review and add community comments.

Ms. Geevers thanked everyone for coming and for their e-mails. She noted that one of the challenges is the scale and scope of the redevelopment project. Ms. Geevers requested a fiscal analysis showing how the number of housing, retail, and office units relates to the various amenities requested within the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Anklowitz thanked everyone for coming this evening and voiced his concern with the number of housing units proposed and advised that it is still too high, and not enough focus has been placed on Main Street improvements between Alexander Road and Cranbury Roads. He noted his concern about the Vaughn Drive connector and the need for Route 571 improvements to be addressed. Mr. Anklowitz advised that the next step is to discuss how to move this project to the Planning Board level. He suggested a working session be scheduled to move the plan forward.

Mr. Borek thanked everyone and noted that this is a work in progress. He commented that everyone would like to see a downtown area within the Township. Mr. Borek advised that Council will continue to move the process forward.

President Morgan noted that the Township still remains a house divided; however there are two things that Council agrees on: additional parking for residents at the train station, and a Main Street. He noted that at Monday evening's Council meeting he will be proposing a Declaration to move forward on the parking garage now which will not affect the redevelopment plan. President Morgan agreed that a working session is needed and that he will have the Clerk's Office schedule a meeting.

Mr. Jaffe requested that Council provide a list to help him move the process forward. He noted that his next step will be to include the Sarnoff development, street widths, bike and pedestrian graphics, and will be meeting with NJ Transit on the core area.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Anklowitz
Second: Borek
VV: All approved

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Sharon L. Young
Township Clerk
West Windsor Township