

CHATHAM BOROUGH PLANNING BOARD
November 13, 2013 7:30 p.m.

In Chairman Favate's absence, Vice Chairman Matthew Wagner called this Chatham Borough Planning Board Regular Meeting of November 13, 2013 to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building. Mr. Wagner announced that all legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Mayor Bruce Harris	X	
Council Member Fife	X	
Chairman Susan Favate		X
Vincent DeNave	X	
Matthew Wagner	X	
Donna Cali-Charles		X
H.H. Montague	X – arrived 7:40 p.m.	
James Mitchell	X	
John Bitar		X
Joseph Mikulewicz	X	
Richard Crater		X
Vincent K. Loughlin, Esq.		X
Dr. Susan Blickstein	X	

Attorney Keith Loughlin, Esq., served as Board Attorney this night, in his father's absence.

Open to the Public

No one came forward.

Adoption of Minutes

The Board postponed voting on the meeting minutes of 11/6/2013. They needed more time to review this document.

New or Returned Applications

There were none.

New Business

Adoption of proposed Master Plan Amendment for M Districts

Dr. Blickstein noted that the current Master Plan gives very little guidance on the M-1 and M-3 Districts. The current zoning in those districts allow a limited number of uses. A number of the uses currently operating in the M-1 and M-3 Districts are presently not permitted by the Borough's zoning regulations. For instance, storage of outdoor materials and equipment are currently not allowed by zoning regulations in those districts.

Dr. Blickstein stated she would like to review the key objectives for the vision laid out in the Master Plan document. She reminded everyone that the Master Plan is a long-range planning document.

Dr. Blickstein reviewed the key objectives:

- Establishing a greenway along the Passaic River
- Creating a well-defined entry into the Borough, by improving and expanding pedestrian accessibility & enhancing the streetscape
- To provide public access to Borough-owned properties along the Passaic River and to work with private property owners to assemble conservation easements along the Riverfront to achieve a greenway for passive recreation use
- Improving the appearance & function of individual sites and public streets
- Providing larger scale pedestrian oriented multi-family & mixed use development in the River Rd./Watchung Ave. Gateway area.
- Providing a wider range of non-residential uses along Commerce Street, Summit Ave., Watchung Ave., and River Rd.

Dr. Blickstein reminded the Board that there is no “crystal ball” for these districts. She and the Board cannot predict the real estate market in the years ahead and other factors that influence investment and development.

Dr. Blickstein stated that the Gateway that is being proposed is an overlay concept. As such, it will not change the underlying zoning in the M-1 and M-3 Districts. However, it does allow another set of uses and another set of bulk regulations as an option for future development.

Dr. Blickstein pointed out that the focus for the Gateway is in strengthening the connection between that particular entry into the community and the rest of the Borough, and providing opportunities for a wide range of uses and a wider range of housing types. The emphasis is to make the Gateway more pedestrian friendly. An attempt will be made to integrate the Gateway into the community and to define its character.

Dr. Blickstein brought up the possibility of having a small hotel in the Gateway section. **An** emphasis will be put on a wider range of commercial uses.

Dr. Blickstein noted that there are recommendations for the M-1 District and the M-3 District as a whole.

Regarding the M-3 District, Dr. Blickstein recommended the following:

- The site circulation access should be coordinated to limit the addition of new curb cuts onto River Road and to develop standards to allow outdoor storage of materials with provisions for containment, enclosures, and buffers
- To allow for shared parking, particularly for smaller properties that can negotiate or arrange cooperative parking agreements
- To create a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape
- To allow multi-family homes in the M-3 District, as well as apartments over commercial uses
- A wider range of neighborhood-scaled commercial uses

Regarding the M-1 District, Dr. Blickstein recommended:

- Auto repair garages should be allowed on Commerce St., with some standards in place
- Thought should be given to a future possibility of using the easement to the rear of the properties that front the northeast side of Commerce Street, as a pedestrian connection from Commerce Street to the future Gateway area & possibly running on to the river
- Some enhancements could be made to Summit Ave., a secondary Gateway to Chatham, by improving sidewalks and installing appropriate signage.

Mr. Wagner asked if the Board had any questions for Dr. Blickstein.

Mayor Harris asked about the easement behind the Commerce Street buildings. Who is that easement in favor of?

Mr. DeNave clarified that this is an access easement. Suburban Florist owns the property behind Pascarella Brothers' deli where the recorded easement exists.

Mr. Mitchell asked where and how the property line runs for the Passaic River. What control would the Borough have, if an access for the public were proposed?

Dr. Blickstein answered a good part of the riverfront near River Road is owned by the Borough and is designated as a conservation district. At a point it turns into private ownership.

Mr. Mitchell brought up the auto repair shops in the M districts that would be allowed. Vehicles have been parking on sidewalks.

Dr. Blickstein clarified that her recommendation had been for the Borough to permit auto repair shops on Commerce Street. Standards could be established regarding parking and where repair work could actually be done.

Mr. Wagner asked if the public had any questions or comments.

Jeffrey Garfinkel, stated that he was the head of Acquisition Development for Sterling Properties in Livingston NJ. He asked how a developer would get a dialogue going with the Borough. What would be the first step for Sterling Properties regarding available Borough-owned property?

Dr. Blickstein answered that all Borough-owned properties are shown on the Open Space inventory. Right now, she recommended completion of the vision document for the M-Districts and the zoning in place. In the interim, there may be possibilities for Sterling to hold informal discussions with Borough representatives about any ideas on properties.

Mayor Harris and Dr. Blickstein clarified that there is no Borough land that is not restricted by Open Space designation.

Mr. Mikulewicz informed Mr. Garfinkel that the Board appreciated his interest, however the actual zoning level hasn't been discussed yet by the Board. Currently, the Board is just working on these Master Plan amendments for the M Districts.

Mr. Garfinkel thanked the Board for their time.

There were no more comments from the public.

There were none.

Mr. Wagner asked if the Board had any further comments or questions.

There were none.

Mayor Harris made a motion to approve the proposed Master Plan Amendment for the M Districts in Chatham Borough. Council Member Fife seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

Mayor Harris	-	yes
Council Member Fife	-	yes
Mr. DeNave	-	yes
Mr. Mitchell	-	yes
Mr. Mikeulewicz	-	yes
Mr. Montague	-	yes
Vice Chairman Wagner	-	yes

Dr. Blickstein reminded the Board that the adopted version of the plan has to be sent to the two neighboring towns and the county. She also advised Mr. DeNave that the blocks and lots of the two Borough-owned lots in tonight's amendment, have to be appended to the Borough Zoning map, as properties that have been re-zoned for conservation.

Dr. Blickstein and the Board decided to discuss this further at the next meeting. A resolution will have to be done on this matter.

Council Member Fife thanked Dr. Blickstein, Mr. DeNave and the M-District Subcommittee for all their hard work.

Ordinance Amendment for Porticos

Dr. Blickstein reported that First Reading of this ordinance amendment has taken place. She stated that allowing residents to cover their existing outdoor staircases would be consistent with the Master Plan's goals on residential character, and residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Montague made a motion to approve the Master Plan consistency for the Portico Amendment. Mr. DeNave seconded the motion. All Board members present voted "aye".

Mayor Harris noted that the public hearing for this ordinance amendment will be held at the Borough Council meeting scheduled for November 25th.

Regarding future applications, Mr. DeNave reported that Washington Ave. School will come before the Planning on January 22, 2014 for a Capital Review for their proposed parking lot.

At 8:10 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held December 4, 2013, 7:30 p.m., Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Holler

Elizabeth Holler
Recording Secretary