

CHATHAM BOROUGH PLANNING BOARD  
 April 17, 2019 7:30 p.m.

In the absence of Chrnm. Favate and Vice Chrnm. Wagner, Mayor Harris called the Chatham Borough Planning Board Meeting of April 17, 2019 to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Chatham Borough Hall. Mayor Harris announced that all legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Mayor Bruce Harris	X	
Steve Williams	X	
Council Member Thaddeus Kobylarz	X	
Chrnm. Susan Favate		X
Vice Chrnm. Matthew Wagner		X
H.H. Montague	X	
William Heap	X	
Torri Van Wie	X	
Curt Dawson		X
Vincent K. Loughlin, Esq.	X	

Mayor Harris announced that Kyle Muir has resigned from the Planning Board. He is re-locating to Philadelphia.

Public Comment

There was none.

Resolution #PB 2019-15

Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2019 Planning Board meeting. Council Member Kobylarz seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. The minutes of April 3, 2019 were approved.

Application Resolutions

Application PB #19-04

Luis Da Silva, Jr.

11 South Passaic Avenue

Change of Permitted Use with Request for Waiver of Site Plan

Block 121, Lot 14

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the resolution memorializing the Board’s approval of Application PB #19-04: Da Silva, 11 South Passaic Ave. granting a Change of Permitted Use with Request for Waiver of Site Plan. Council Member Kobylarz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

Mayor Harris           -           yes  
 Mr. Williams           -           yes

Council Member Kobylarz - yes  
Mr. Montague - yes  
Mr. Heap - yes

The resolution was approved.

Mayor Harris informed the Board that problems have recently come up between Mr. Da Silva and the landlord of the building. The proposed restaurant may not come to fruition.

Application PB #18-12  
Estate of Herbert J. Cannon  
18 Garden Avenue  
Minor Subdivision with Variances  
Block 33, Lot 12  
Minor Subdivision with Variances  
Block 33

Council Member Kobylarz made a motion to approve the resolution memorializing the Board's approval of Application PB #18-12 granting a Minor Subdivision with Variances for 18 Garden Avenue. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

Mayor Harris - yes  
Mr. Williams - yes  
Council Member Kobylarz - yes  
Mr. Montague - yes  
Mr. Heap - yes

The resolution was approved.

Discussion Item  
Post Office Plaza Redevelopment Plan: Master Plan Consistency Review  
Mayor Harris recused himself from this discussion.

Council Member Kobylarz then filled in for the Board Chairman as leader of this discussion.

Philip Abramson, AICP/PP, Principal of Topology, 60 Union Street, Newark NJ, was sworn in to testify. He stated that he was the special planner hired by the Borough.

Mr. Abramson noted that all redevelopment plans need to be consistent with the Borough's Master Plan. He will be giving a brief project summary tonight. Mr. Abramson stated that he will concentrate on the consistency points in the Plan. He introduced his colleagues, Michael Martone and Leigh Ann Hindenlang, who helped prepare tonight's documents.

Referring to the cover page of tonight's Redevelopment Plan, Mr. Abramson pointed out the redevelopment area. The Redevelopment Plan was introduced by ordinance on April 8, 2019.

Mr. Abramson reviewed an outline that came out of the March 20, 2019 Joint Session held between the Borough Council and Planning Board.

One of the issues that had been discussed at the earlier Joint Session was how large should a retail business be permitted to be. Mr. Abramson reviewed the sizes of the larger retail businesses that he had researched in Morristown. Also, a potential loop-hole had been removed in regard to building heights.

Council Member Kobylarz asked Mr. Abramson what the actual building height had been reduced to.

Mr. Abramson said the answer would be given at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Abramson noted that the local redevelopment housing law governs redevelopment plans. It is required that the redevelopment plan will not be inconsistent with the Master Plan. If inconsistencies are discovered, Board members can make recommendations on how to make the Redevelopment Plan more consistent. The report must be referred to the Mayor and Borough Council within 35 days.

Mr. Abramson testified that the following documents that he and his colleagues had reviewed and will be referring to tonight for the Redevelopment Plan:

- 1) The Open Space & Recreation Plan 2010
- 2) Complete Streets Policy 2012
- 3) Housing Element & Fair Share Plan 2016
- 4) The Re-examination of the Borough Master Plan 2016

Mr. Abramson noted that Kendra Lelie, the Board Planner, issued a memo dated April 12, 2019 concluding that the Post Office Plaza Redevelopment Plan was consistent with the Master Plan. Mr. Abramson reviewed some of the reasons that Ms. Lelie had given in her memo, giving the consistencies she felt were met. One of the Master Plan goals is to promote a desirable visual environment. Mr. Abramson felt that this Redevelopment Plan definitely fulfills that goal. He noted that public vetting had been undertaken, asking people their views on what the Borough looks like and what it wants to look like, from an urban design standpoint.

Mr. Abramson stated that any projects that come out of the Redevelopment Plan will benefit greatly from their location in the Borough. Other areas in the Borough will benefit from this Redevelopment Plan. The Plan will provide and encourage under-represented housing types. Presently there is no housing in the downtown area for older residents. Hopefully this Plan will help these older residents to remain in Chatham, if they so desire.

Mr. Abramson pointed out that the 2016 Master Plan encouraged more diversity in residential housing types. He explained how the Redevelopment Plan will help meet that goal. Mr. Abramson brought up the 2012 Complete Streets Plan. The proposed streets in the Redevelopment Plan have reached the “complete streets” standards. Indoor and outdoor bicycle parking are being proposed. Mr. Abramson noted that incentives have been provided to address

existing traffic congestion that will make the streets safer and more enjoyable. The Redevelopment Plan design will meet or exceed ADA standards.

Mr. Abramson testified that the Redevelopment Plan advances significant portions of the Borough Master Plan. Topology found that the Plan had no inconsistencies with the Master Plan. Mr. Abramson asked that the Planning Board conclude that the Post Office Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Chatham Borough Master Plan.

Mr. Abramson asked if the Board had any questions.

Mrs. Van Wie asked if there was a standard minimum width for the pedestrian/street zones that the developers need to know about before they send their specs for the condo units.

Mr. Abramson answered that in the Redevelopment Plan there are specific minimum standards for streets and cross-sections.

Mrs. Van Wie noted that private funds could be used to get more of this development effort. She asked Mr. Abramson if he had any examples of what other municipalities have been able to leverage.

Mr. Abramson explained that it could be anything from actual hard dollars to physical improvements like shuttles and vans.

Mrs. Van Wie asked if it would be possible for this project to incorporate some aspect of a self-contained grid that later on could be built out with cutting edge technology. Maybe the wires for this area could be buried underground.

Mr. Abramson answered that smart infrastructures could be considered when the Borough Council prepares to receive specific proposals. Council Member Kobylarz pointed out that underground wiring will be installed with this future development.

Council Member Kobylarz asked Mr. Abramson if he could elaborate on the point he had made on the reduction of traffic congestion.

Mr. Abramson explained that Topology had identified certain local intersections on their map. Counts need to be made on the volume and turning movements of these intersections. Then the new demand gets calculated into these counts. Various mitigation measures will be tested.

Mr. Montague asked if there will be more opportunities for the public to give feedback.

Mr. Abramson answered yes; however, Topology won't be involved as much anymore. In the future, developers will be making proposals to the Planning Board, the governing body, and the public. The public can submit their comments when these proposals are presented.

Council Member Kobylarz confirmed with Mr. Abramson that even if the Redevelopment Plan is accepted and was memorialized into an ordinance, it is still subject to negotiation and an interaction between the governing body and the public.

Mr. Williams noted that the Board had received a memo, dated April 12, 2019, from Kendra Lelie, the Borough Planner, who reviewed this Redevelopment Plan. He quoted Ms. Lelie's summation: "I am of the opinion that the Post Office Plaza Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Borough's Master Plan".

At Attorney Loughlin's recommendation, Mr. Abramson's presentation given tonight will be marked as Exhibit B-1.

Council Member Kobylarz stated that he would like the Redevelopment Plan posted on the Borough website.

Mr. Abramson submitted Topology's memo dated April 11, 2019 containing the revisions made to the Redevelopment Plan. This submission was marked as Exhibit B-2.

Mr. Montague asked how will the Historic Preservation Commission be giving their views.

Mr. Abramson answered that Topology had met with the Historic Preservation Commission Chairman and Commissioners. They seemed supportive of the standards that were established. Mr. Abramson was certain that the governing body will be seeking the advice of the Historic Preservation Commission when the different proposals come forward.

Council Member Kobylarz added that the governing body and the Planning Board can specifically ask the Commission's views when the time comes and keep them engaged.

Council Member Kobylarz asked if the public had any comments.

Jack Drew, 32 Inwood Road, felt that Topology did a thorough job delineating each property in the Post Office Plaza and explaining why it should be subject to redevelopment. However, he believed that Topology had applied the criteria rather loosely. Mr. Drew noted that most of the properties have been designated as "blighted". He believed that the law requires that a property have dilapidation conditions, overcrowding, lack of ventilation, etc. Mr. Drew noted that all the properties in the subject properties are occupied and appear in good condition on the outside. Mr. Drew believed the building inspectors could deal with the faulty wiring conditions and any basement water issues. Mr. Drew felt that the Redevelopment Plan does not taken into consideration the over-all area. He believed that the traffic situation will be getting worse with the developments being constructed in nearby towns.

Mr. Drew claimed that he saw nothing in the Redevelopment Plan that mentioned solar panels or a wind turbine.

Council Member Kobylarz pointed out that solar panels had been mentioned in the Plan.

Mr. Drew felt the only blighted conditions he could see in this area were the dumpsters kept behind the Main Street stores. The parking situation behind these stores could also be improved on. He recommended that situation be included in the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Drew asked what would be the consequences of adopting this Redevelopment Plan? Will property owners have to comply with this Redevelopment Plan? Will their property values be affected? Mr. Drew questioned whether the Redevelopment Plan was feasible. He urged that the estimates and costs be looked into.

Fran Drew, 32 Inwood Road, discussed the serious parking situation that existing on the corner of Main Street and Center Street, between 6 a.m. and noon. The yoga business at that location serves 160 clients during those weekday hours. That Center Street East parking lot is packed with vehicles at that time. Unfortunately, this impacts the nearby businesses serving customers. Mrs. Drew stressed that parking is seriously needed in downtown Chatham. She showed Board members a photo of the parking garage in Millburn, NJ. Mrs. Drew suggested a small parking garage be constructed in the south end of Post Office Plaza, close to the train tracks. Such a garage would be very helpful to local commuters. The commuters currently walk through Post Office Plaza when they get off the trains in the evening. Mrs. Drew also suggested “green space” parking could be created for customers who visit the stores on Main Street. Mrs. Drew knew of an experienced architect who would be willing to design this green space parking. She emphasized that the local stores’ serious need for parking.

Matthew Conn, 200 Country Club Drive, Chatham Township, came forward. He felt that the Redevelopment Plan will help bring Chatham up to the same level as Morristown and Summit, with regard to being “user-friendly”. He asked if there is a requirement envisioned for the Redevelopment area to construct a parking garage.

Mr. Abramson explained that surface parking will be turning into vertical space to pre-empt, so other spaces could be freed up for other uses. He confirmed with Mr. Conn that a parking structure is envisioned for this area.

Mr. Conn felt that to keep younger families moving to Chatham from Hoboken and Jersey City, the Borough’s downtown could be made more livelier and pedestrian-family.

Mr. Conn asked at what point is the designated re-developer chosen.

Mr. Abramson explained that decision is really a municipal process. At some point “the baton is handed off” to the private sector. He noted that three or four companies have already submitted ideas for the Redevelopment Plan to be discussed. Some of these ideas have been vetted.

Mr. Conn asked what happens if deals cannot be reached with the private property owners in the subject area. Would this negate the possibility of effectuating the redevelopment plan?

Mr. Abramson agreed that if the private owners refuse to deal with the Borough it would make things more difficult.

Mr. Conn stated that he was very much in favor of the Redevelopment Plan.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mr. Montague made a motion that the Planning Board deems the Post Office Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Chatham Borough Master Plan. Council Member Kobylarz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Williams	-	yes
Council Member Kobylarz	-	yes
Mr. Montague	-	yes
Mr. Heap	-	yes
Mrs. Van Wie	-	yes

Attorney Loughlin had a resolution prepared memorializing the Board's decision made tonight on the Redevelopment Plan.

Mayor Harris re-joined the meeting. He did not believe the Planning Board had any pending applications in the immediate future.

The next Planning Board meeting will be on Wednesday, May 1, 2019, 7:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers, Chatham Borough Hall. It will be a Joint Meeting of the Planning Board and Borough Council to hear a presentation on the River Road Redevelopment Plan.

At 9:50 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Holler  
Recording Secretary