

CHATHAM BOROUGH PLANNING BOARD
October 19, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Susan Favate called this Regular Planning Board Meeting of October 19, 2016 to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building. Chrnm. Favate announced that all legal notices have been posted for this meeting.

Name	Present	Absent
Mayor Bruce Harris	X	
Council Member Victoria Fife	X	
Janice Piccolo		X
Chrnm. Susan Favate	X	
Vice Chrnm. Wagner	X	
H.H. Montague	X – arrived 7:35 p.m.	
John Bitar – Second Alternate		X
Tom Gilman – First Alternate	X	
Joseph Mikulewicz		X
William Heap	X	
Wolfgang Robinson		X
Vincent Loughlin, Esq.	X	
Dr. Susan Blickstein	X	

Public Comment

No one came forward.

Resolution #PB 2016-25

The Planning Board meeting minutes of September 21, 2016 were approved as submitted with the Mayor's comments.

Application PB #16-007

David & Katherine Vollmer and BV Realty

8 Overlook Road/24 Bridge Street

Minor Subdivision

Block 110, Lot 6/Block 110, Lot 9

Jason R. Rittie, Esq., attorney for the applicant, came forward.

Atty. Rittie stated that the applicant is seeking a minor subdivision for a lot line adjustment. Both 8 Overlook Road and 24 Bridge Street are located in the R-2 Residential District. The applicant is seeking permission to allow approximately 2,469 sq. ft. of land to be divided off of the existing Lot 9 and essentially annexing the 2,469 sq. ft. to Lot 6.

Atty. Rittie stated that if the minor subdivision were approved, Lot 6 will then conform. Lot 9 will become non-conforming. A variance is also needed for a lot depth for Lot 9 of 98.96 feet. Atty. Rittie noted that the Morris County Planning Bd. issued an exemption notice for this application.

Atty. Rittie called the applicant forward to testify.

David Vollmer, 8 Overlook Rd., the applicant, was sworn in to testify.

Mr. Vollmer testified that he and his family have lived at Overlook Rd. for seven years. He and his business partner are 50% owners of BV Realty which owns 24 Bridge Street.

Mr. Vollmer testified that his house at 8 Overlook Rd. has 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and a one car garage. The house at 24 Bridge Street has 2 bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a one car garage.

Mr. Vollmer explained that his family and the neighbors spend a lot of time outside and congregate in his backyard. The proposed extension would give more room for these gatherings. The rear porch of the backyard at 24 Bridge Street is currently not being used. Mr. Vollmer testified that he had no plans for construction on either 8 Overlook Road or 24 Bridge Street.

Dr. Blickstein confirmed with Mr. Vollmer that 24 Bridge Street was a rental property. One tenant currently rents that home.

P. David Zimmerman, the applicant's planner, was sworn in to testify. He submitted his professional credentials to the Board. The Board accepted them.

Mr. Zimmerman testified that he has reviewed the Borough Master Plan. He has visited the applicant's neighborhood and inspected the subject properties. Mr. Zimmerman stated that Mr. Vollmer is proposing to extend his rear yard for personal reasons. He pointed out that the current tenant at 24 Bridge Street is a single gentleman. Mr. Zimmerman explained that the subject lots are now being adjusted to conform with the scale of the houses.

Mr. Zimmerman submitted the following:

Exhibit A-1: an aerial photograph of the applicant's neighborhood

Exhibit A-2: a tax map of the applicant's neighborhood

Using Exhibit A-1, Mr. Zimmerman pointed out the variety of house sizes in this particular R-2 District. He testified that what the applicant is proposing will be consistent with the neighborhood. The proposals will not be a detriment to the neighborhood. Mr. Zimmerman testified that there will be changes to the density and aesthetics of the neighborhood.

Mr. Zimmerman brought up the benefits and the detriments of this application. He noted that the benefits are chiefly personal. However, he saw no detriments in terms of the neighborhood scheme. Regarding detriments, Mr. Zimmerman testified that the proposal will not have a substantial negative impact on the public good. Additional traffic will not result from this minor subdivision. Noise, lights, and fumes will not be occurring.

With regard to the Master Plan, Mr. Zimmerman testified that the approval of this minor subdivision will not impact the R-2 zoning of this immediate area. The character of the neighborhood will be maintained with this application.

Mr. Montague asked why not move the proposed subdivision line a half of a foot, then the variance would not be needed.

Mr. Zimmerman answered that Mr. Montague made a good point. He would have to speak with the applicant about that suggestion.

Dr. Blickstein said she could see how the applicant and the planner would want the line to run geometrically. Only one foot is in question.

Chrmn. Favate asked Mr. Vollmer whether his partner was in favor of this application.

Mr. Vollmer answered that his partner wasn't present tonight; however, he was in favor of the application.

Mayor Harris confirmed with Mr. Zimmerman that Lot 10, to the south of the Bridge Street property, is also undersized. Dr. Blickstein agreed with this observance.

Chrmn. Favate noted that if the minor subdivision was approved, the lot on Bridge Street will become a stumpier L-shaped lot. Because of this, the outdated house on Bridge Street could probably not be added onto in the future. Dr. Blickstein agreed with Chrmn. Favate's point, even though a small rear addition may be possible.

Mr. Heap asked Mr. Vollmer if he and his family will be living at 8 Overlook Road for a number of future years.

Mr. Vollmer answered yes.

Mr. Gilman had concerns that if the Board approved this minor subdivision, it may set a precedent in the future.

Dr. Blickstein pointed out that each application has to make its own case.

Chrmn. Favate asked if the public had any questions or comments.

John Cafiero, 135 Hillside Ave., noted that he lives next door to the Vollmer family. He supported this application. Mr. Cafiero confirmed Mr. Vollmer's testimony that his backyard at 8 Overlook Road is a neighborhood gathering place.

Joe Sofo, 5 Overlook Rd., which is across the street for the applicant's home, supported Mr. Vollmer's application. He reiterated Mr. Cafiero's statement that Mr. Vollmer's backyard is a popular gathering place, especially for the neighborhood children.

Jeff Truppo, 10 Overlook Rd., who lived next door to the applicant, supported Mr. Vollmer's application.

Frank Johnston, 15 Bridge St., noted that his property runs perpendicular to Overlook Road. Mr. Johnston supported Mr. Vollmer's application. He didn't think the proposed subdivision would impact the neighborhood.

A motion was made/seconded to approve Application PB #16-007: Proposed Minor Subdivision at 8 Overlook Rd./24 Bridge St. A roll call vote was taken:

Mayor Harris	-	yes
Council Member Fife	-	yes
Vice Chrmn. Wagner	-	yes
Mr. Montague	-	yes
Mr. Gilman	-	yes
Mr. Heap	-	yes
Chrmn. Favate	-	yes

Discussion

Master Plan Re-Examination

Dr. Blickstein reported that she has received comments on the Master Plan draft from four Board members. She has made revisions in response to these comments.

Dr. Blickstein recalled that at the previous meeting, she had asked Board members to consider the frontage from Main Street to the beginning of the R-2 District, where the train station parking lots are located. She had asked the Board members whether they had wanted that frontage to stay in the B-2 District. None of the Board members had given her any feedback on that idea.

Dr. Blickstein noted that she had received feedback from Mrs. Piccolo. She also addressed comments that she had received from Chrmn. Favate, Mayor Harris, and Mr. Gilman. She felt all the feedback received from the Board was very productive.

Council Member Fife stated that in Summit NJ there was a plaque indicating a Federally Historic listed district. Why doesn't Chatham Borough doesn't have this type of recognition? Did the Borough choose not to have this recognition?

Mayor Harris answered that was a possibility. That decision was made before his term in public office.

Dr. Blickstein added that the Borough's Federally Listed area is the B-3 District. The core of the Borough's downtown is designated an historic district on a local level.

Dr. Blickstein felt that the Master Plan draft was in good shape. She will do a final read-through. Dr. Blickstein will send a copy of the draft to the Borough Clerk so that something could be posted on the Borough website. Ms. Kline can also do the necessary notifications regarding this Master Plan to the neighboring municipalities. Electronic copies of the Master Plan will be sent to Board members.

Dr. Blickstein recommended the public hearing for the Master Plan be held on November 16th. She could do a slide presentation.

Mr. Gilman commented, along the Passaic River, there is a nice connection is being proposed that would run from Stanley Park all the way down to the ballfields in Shepard Kollock Park. He felt it would be a beautiful asset for the Borough. Mr. Gilman commented that the Gateway area was in flux, in a sense, and that now is the time to make this connection happen. Once development begins, the opportunity for this connection (trail) could be lost. What measures could be taken to prevent this from happening?

Mayor Harris noted that particular proposed trail has been part of the Open Space Plan for a long time. The most difficult section to extend this trail would be between Summit Ave. and Watchung Ave. Negotiations are taking place regarding easements for this trail. A trail currently exists between Main Street to Summit Ave. The Borough has recently applied for a grant to upgrade this existing trail.

Dr. Blickstein added that the Borough will be negotiating with property owners over time to fill in those gaps along the proposed trail.

Dr. Blickstein and Chrmn. Favate confirmed that the Master Plan hearing will be held on Wednesday night, November 16th. Dr. Blickstein will touch base with the Borough Clerk about the necessary notification.

Mr. Montague asked if the Zoning Board of Adjustment members should receive a copy of the Master Plan draft to review. Mayor Harris and Dr. Blickstein stated that the draft Master Plan will be available on the Borough website. They suggested Mr. Montague encourage Zoning Board members to look at it. A hard copy of the Master Plan can also be made available at Borough Hall.

Dr. Blickstein suggested that the attendees of the Master Plan workshops be contacted about the hearing on November 16th. Many of them had provided their e-mails at the sign-in table.

Chairman Favate and the Board tentatively cancelled the November 2, 2016 Planning Board meeting.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 7:30 p.m., the Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Elizabeth Holler
Recording Secretary