

MINUTES

CRESSKILL PLANNING BOARD

JANUARY 13, 2015

Mayor Romeo opened the meeting at 7:38 PM and announced the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act had been fulfilled. He stated that the first order of business was the election of officers for the year 2015. Mrs. Schultz made a motion to leave the slate as it is with Mr. Vaccaro as the Chairman, Mr. Galdi as the Vice Chairman, Ms. Bauer as the Secretary, and Ms. Petillo as Recording Secretary. Mr. Ulshoefer seconded the motion. All present were in favor of the motion. Mayor Romeo nominated Mr. Azzolina as the Board Engineer, seconded by Mr. Galdi. All present were in favor. Mrs. Schultz made a motion to approve Mr. Steven Schuster as Planning Board Attorney. Mr. Galdi seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

Mayor Romeo turned the meeting over to Mr. Vaccaro.

Members present at roll call: Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Tsigounis, Mr. Vaccaro, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Galdi, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Schultz, and Mr. Ulshoefer. Also present were Mr. Azzolina, Borough Engineer, and Mr. Steven Schuster, Board Attorney.

Mr. Ulshoefer made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 23, 2014, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Galdi. All present were in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

Correspondence

Letter of Introduction from Mr. Edward Rossi, Construction Official dated December 30, 2014, sending Mr. and Mrs. Boiardi to this Board for approval. They wish to construct a new single-family residence at 41 Beechwood Road. Application #1459 was received on January 13, 2015. It is currently under review.

Letter of Introduction from Mr. Edward M. Rossi, dated January 7, 2015, sending Mr. Imer Rraci to this Board for approval. He is proposing opening a new Italian restaurant called Delvina at 172 Piermont Road. Mr. Imer Rraci was present. Delvina has already opened. Mr. Rraci noted that he has two other restaurants in Englewood Cliffs, Cliffs Steakhouse and Café Italiano. Mr. Galdi made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Morgan. All present were in favor. Motion approved. The signs have been changed already.

Letter of Introduction from Mr. Edward M. Rossi, dated December 15, 2014, sending Mr. Lam to this Board for approval. He would like to construct a new single family residence at 52 Grant Avenue. No one was present. Mr. Azzolina noted that this is the little green house.

Notice from Eastern States Environmental Associates Inc. regarding 52 Grant Avenue. They are submitting an application for a permit or approval to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to build a house at 52 Grant Avenue. Mr. Azzolina noted that this property is located in the flood plains of the Tenakill Brook and it has wetlands on the property as well. They need several DEP permits before they are able to develop the property. They haven't made a site plan application yet. Their first step was to file to the zoning officer, but his recommendation in this case was for them to get the DEP permits first because they are going to govern what can and cannot take place on this property.

He has spoken to Mr. Cook and their engineer and asked them to send him complete copies of the application if they have them.

Resolution that Councilwoman Tsigounis be appointed as the Class III Planning Board Member for the term ending December 31, 2015. File

Resolution that the Borough Clerk is hereby designated as the official to make and issue certificates as to whether or not subdivisions have been approved by the Planning Board or Governing Body and in the absence of the Borough Clerk, the Deputy Borough Clerk is hereby designated as such official. File.

Subdivision Committee

Councilwoman Tsigounis introduced Application #1459, 41 Beechwood Road, Robert and Wendy Boiardi, which was received on January 13, 2015, and is currently under review.

Report from the Borough Engineer's Office

Mr. Azzolina noted that at the last meeting we spoke about Application #1458, 59 Westervelt Place, Chika LLC. He has reviewed the architectural and site plan drawing for that project and notes that there are no variances required. The plans are accurate and acceptable as presented. The only comment he would offer is that the builder should be required to remove and replace the old macadam curb that should be replaced with a granite block curb along the entire frontage as well as the concrete sidewalk which is in poor condition now and will most likely become even worse during the construction. With the understanding that the builder will be required to reconstruct that section of approximately 100 feet of curb, he would recommend that the Board approve this plan. Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. All present were in favor. Motion approved. Two copies of the site plan were signed with an approval memo. One copy to the Building Department, one copy to the file.

Resolution for Application #1455, Pulte Homes of NJ LP, 1 County Road. Mr. Azzolina noted that he spoke with the Mr. Schuster and recommended some revisions to the resolution and they have been incorporated and if that were the case he is good with it. Mr. Galdi asked about the heights. Mr. Azzolina noted that they were seeking a variance for the building heights and that is stated in the resolution. He is satisfied with the drainage. Mr. Galdi made a motion to approve, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. On Roll Call: Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Tsigounis, Mr. Vaccaro, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Galdi, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Schultz, and Mr. Ulshoefer all voted yes. Mr. Calder was absent. Motion approved. The original resolution shall become a permanent part of these minutes.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Other Business

None.

Mr. Vaccaro opened the meeting to the public. Mr. Martin Santini, an architect, 29 Loman Court, wished to be heard. He has been a resident since 1987. He was present at the Forward Planning Committee meeting and asked if he could appear before the Planning Board because he had a concept for the downtown which they were discussing. He is not asking for any approvals or anything, this is just an informal, informational discussion.

Mr. Santini noted that on December 4, he attended a meeting that was advertised in the paper for people with any interest or comments about how to improve the downtown area here in our community. He came to this meeting and sat for an hour and there were no ideas proffered forth whatsoever. All of the comments were about the school board and about what to do with school parking and things of that nature. He thinks Mayor Romeo was very upset about the fact that there were no other residents that brought any kind of an idea. Mr. Santini brought an idea that he thought would be a pretty viable kind of thing for this Board and this community to consider. It is based on what he calls place-making.

Right now in the downtown area, along Union and some of the other streets that intersect with the downtown, there is no sense of place. He knows that all of the Board would probably agree with that. Mr. Santini stated that he has been doing a lot of research about community place-making, research that has been proffered forth from the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects and the National Main Street Center. He doesn't know if anybody is familiar with the National Main Street Center. Mayor Romeo stated that he has gone on their site. Mr. Santini thinks it is very important to be able to get their ideas that they are talking about. He put together some thoughts and he read what he had.

"Many communities are involved in some level of downtown revitalization activity. The renewed efforts have elevated the discussion among government officials and business community, (which they were lacking that night) and the general citizenry. So what does the research say about trends and the relative emphasis surrounding downtown improvements and why are so many communities exerting energy on downtown vitality matters. It is because they are trying to create a sense of place." Mr. Santini thinks that is the key that they should be striving to do. "The downtown represents the heart and soul of most communities. The need to revitalize downtown commercial districts is clear since a healthy viable downtown is crucial to economic growth and civic pride." He thinks all of them would agree with that. "Research has also demonstrated that the strategies that have been most commonly used strongly correlate with the downtown's ability to project a strong sense of place or people friendly places that feel good, are unique and authentic, and have a variety of services and are well used and active." Mr. Santini noted that he has more but he thinks the Board gets the gist of what he is trying to say.

On December 4, he came here and he just illustrated the graphic that he presented which he thought is something that they could consider that would have some structural lightweight aluminum trusses that would be supported by the streetlights that we have currently. These trusses would be LED lightweight lighting trusses that would go across the street, supported by street poles and then the primary feature would be to have vertical wind turbines so as to make them sustainable that they can light up the lights that would be proposed in these particular locations in our community. Mr. Santini showed a diagrammatic sketch over a google photo of one part of Union and he just wanted to illustrate what he is proposing and what it could look like in concept. There are no real drawings about this. There are no real structures about this. It is an idea that he has that would help create a sense of place for our community. What you would have is the vertical supports with the LED lights on the bottom of the trusses that would be illustrated in the locations that are on the aerial photograph. The first one would go from Washington Street to the end of King's property on the south side of Union. The next one would go on the north side of Union from Allen Street to Piermont and the third piece would be related to Veteran's Park. This particular idea is to have these elements and you could also put advertising panels that would

be perpendicular. For the purposes of illustrating them he put them parallel to the street so you could see them. But they could be perpendicular to the sidewalk and they could have rotating electronic signs that would be revenue generators. The beauty of this particular concept is that it could be sustainable. It wouldn't cost any money to operate it. It obviously would have some installation costs. He couldn't tell you what that would be. He thinks that there would be some interesting ideas and some interesting things that could result with this, keeping a glow in the evening hours of our town and making perhaps a statement so that there would be a sense of place here in Cresskill.

Ms. Bauer asked where the lights would be mounted. Mr. Santini stated that they would be mounted on the trusses and they would be LED lighting fixtures. You would also have the street light. The LED lights would be wind driven by the vertical turbines. He pointed out where the wind turbines were on every post. They would generate the power to light up the lighting making it sustainable. Ms. Bauer asked if they make noise. Mr. Santini stated that they don't. They are very, very quiet. Mr. Vaccaro asked if there were any towns that have this that they could go look at. Mr. Santini didn't know if they could look at this exactly but he could get them locations of where they have this concept. There are some in Connecticut and some in Massachusetts. There are also a lot in the Midwest. They are very popular in the Midwest.

In order to create this follow through and a sense of place, you just can't put these things up and see what happens. Mr. Santini took the liberty of trying to create a plaza at Veteran's Park, using Mr. Kosta's plan. It would have some hardscaping, benches, monuments, flagpoles and the sign that is already there and it would have a real structured sense of place. This would be the last piece of the light structure. Imagine people driving into the town and seeing this kind of thing. He thinks that it would create the vitality that we are looking for to attract new people to come into our community. That is basically it in a nut shell. He doesn't have any cost ideas or anything like that at this particular point in time. It is basically just conceptual. He thinks there are some things that have merit to this. He would be happy to present this if you wanted to gather another group of people, if the Board is all interested in at least promoting some kinds of ideas like this to the community.

Ms. Bauer asked if this was off-the-shelf hardware. Mr. Santini noted that the structure is off the shelf. The trusses are simple trusses that you can get from the New Jersey State Highway Department. In fact, they are all lightweight materials. Obviously, it would have to be engineered. This would be a sustainable venture for the community and why not? The truss material is aluminum. It is lightweight and it would stand between the light pole structures and it weathers fine. It is like any building product that is aluminum. There is a company called Windspire, who he has been working with on a couple of other projects that make the vertical wind turbines. They would engineer it, they would tell you what you would get and you don't need a lot of wind to have these things rotate. There would be a battery system that would store the energy. That would be something that would be a way of creating something unusual and unique and he thinks it would be relatively attractive to bring people into this community.

Mr. Galdi noted that he might want to make a comparison to solar panels. Mr. Santini noted that he has been hearing bad things about the solar panels. He asked if he has seen the panels that control the street lights. Mr. Santini noted that they are not working that well. Mr. Galdi stated that that is why he should do a little research on both and do a little evaluation. Mr. Santini stated that if the sun is not out, they don't work. You don't need a lot of wind to make these things rotate and generate.

Mr. Santini is asking the Board for their understanding and their feelings about this and would like any comments. He left the presentation boards with Mayor Romeo. He is able to come back. Mayor Romeo noted that he was going to bring them to the Mayor and Council meeting. He was planning on having another meeting for just property owners in February where he just has a small group of people that didn't come because they were either too busy or weren't available. Mr. Santini noted that he was very offended by the fact that there was not anyone else at the meeting except people from the schools. He would just like some kind of reaction from the Board. Mr. Galdi noted that it would make a good establishment point for the residents when you have Memorial Day or something where you have a real nice set up and it brings the town together. Mayor Romeo wants the downtown to be revitalized and that was the whole point of the meeting. Mr. Santini thinks that this is an idea that could do it. He doesn't have all the technical data. Mr. Galdi noted that it is enough to generate the questions.

Councilwoman Tsigounis noted that what is nice about it is he is establishing a sense of place for the community without actually building anything. It is positive in that respect. She has never seen it and it is very unique. She is going to check out the website. What should interest the community is at least they'll see that the town is trying to do something and maybe they will become more interested seeing that effort. Mr. Ulshoefer would like to go see something like this and asked if Mr. Santini had towns that had this. Mr. Santini knows of places that have the turbines. He doesn't believe there is anybody that has this type of lighting setup. Mr. Ulshoefer noted that when he looks at the structure that he has, it kind of jumps out and reminds him of going into the Bronx. Mr. Santini doesn't think that is what it is. He also mentioned that it doesn't have to be just aluminum. It could be painted, it could be a color. The beauty of the lights that are inside the truss is they could be seasonal and you could change colors on them, which is really something that is very exciting and could be great for the downtown and retail facilities. He thinks it would be something that doesn't impact the buildings, you are not asking for the facades to be improved.

On another note, Mr. Santini wanted to know how Mr. Daibes could put all the meters on the outside of the building where everybody sits in traffic and has to look at them. He should put up some screening or something because it is very ugly. Mr. Galdi noted that now is the time to get him to do something to hide the meters.

Mayor Romeo thanked Mr. Santini for his ideas and told him he is going to take the boards to the Mayor and Council meeting tomorrow night. Mr. Santini told the Board that he thinks their heart is in the right place.

Mr. Ulshoefer made a motion close the meeting to the public. Mrs. Schultz seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

Motion was made by Mr. Galdi to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 PM, seconded by Mr. Ulshoefer. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

The next four regular Planning Board meetings are scheduled for January 27, February 10, February 24, and March 10, 2015, at 7:30 PM in the Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M. Petillo
Recording Secretary