



**Borough of Stockton
County of Hunterdon
Planning Board**



April 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The Stockton Borough Planning Board was held via Zoom and called to order on April 2, 2024 at 7:00pm by Chair Bonanni. Mr. Bonanni read the following statement: Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by a notice mailed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and The Trenton Times posted on the Borough Website, on the window of Borough Hall, and filed with the Borough Clerk as required by law.

Mr. Bonanni read the following: The Board’s General Policy is to end the presentation of testimony on applications and Board discussions by 9:00 PM and to conclude all Board business by 9:30 PM. When necessary, the Chair may permit a reasonable extension of those time limits. This meeting is being held via Zoom, a cloud-based web conferencing program. This meeting is being conducted pursuant to guidance from the Division of Local Government Services (“DLGS”). <https://www.nj.gov/govconnect/news/general/#8>. All members of the public participating in this meeting will be muted during the meeting. Please keep yourself muted until instructed to unmute yourself in order to prevent unnecessary disruptions. If you have a question or comment during the designated public comment period, please click “raise your hand”; at the bottom of your screen. You will need to have the “participants” window visible in order to see the “raise your hand”; button. You will be instructed to unmute yourself and turn on your camera (if able). If you have called into the meeting, please press *9 to raise your hand. The moderator will call on you and will need to press *6 to unmute yourself when it is your turn to speak. Please be advised that if you called into the meeting, you will be identified by your telephone number. The moderator will, if needed, acknowledge you by the last 4 digits of your telephone number. Your telephone number will be visible to all participants in the meeting and will be visible to anyone that watches a recording of this meeting. Before you begin your comment, please state your name and address for the record. If you are having technical issues, please use the chat function to alert the moderator. Please do not use the chat function for any other purpose during the meeting. Public comments and questions will not be accepted via the chat function.

Roll Call and Attendance

MEMBER	PRESENT	ABSENT
Constance Bassett	X	
Steve Giocondo	X	
Thomas Hunt	X	
Mayor Aaron Lipsen	X	
Joe Martino	X	
Kate Meltzer	X	
Robert Miller	X	
Robert Wallace	X	
Chair John Bonanni	X	
Lisa Hendricks Alt #1		X
Kathy Brown Alt #2	X	
PB Attorney Tara St. Angelo	X	
PB Planner Joanna Slagle	X	
PB Engineer Adam Wiszniewski		
PB Secretary Monica Orlando		X



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Flag salute done by all.

Open to the Public - Agenda Items (5-minute Limit)

Chair Bonanni opened the meeting for Public Comment.

Seeing no comments, Chair Bonanni closed the public portion.

Approval of Bills

a) Planning Board Invoices - Planning Board Account

- Gebhardt & Keifer – Inv# 97972 – dated March 13, 2024 - \$374.00

At 7:09pm Mayor Lipsen announced that Ms. Hendricks joined the Zoom meeting.

Motion by Mr. Hunt to pay the bill as written. Second by Ms. Bassett.

Ayes: Constance Bassett, Steve Giocondo, Thomas Hunt, Aaron Lipsen, Joe Martino, Kate Meltzer, Robert Miller, Robert Wallace, Chair Bonanni

Nays: none

Motion carried

New Business

Mayor Lipsen introduced Borough Council Ordinance 2024-02 Tree Removal-Replacement Ordinance to the Planning Board. Ms. Brown asked if tree neglect is covered by this ordinance and who evaluates or enforces this. Engineer Adam said that the ordinance is to reduce the amount of trees that are removed from the properties and not to regulate neglected trees.

Adam introduced Borough Council Ordinance 2024-04 An Ordinance Regulating Stormwater Control in the Borough of Stockton and Replacing Ordinance No. 21-01 Adopted March 2, 2021 to the Planning Board. This is a DEP mandated ordinance to enforce additional requirements. Bob Miller, zoning officer, had no comment on this ordinance as it's a mandate from the state.

Chair Bonanni closed this portion of the meeting.

Old Business

Chair Bonanni asked Joanna, Planner, to review the memo regarding Stockton Borough Ordinance 18-01 entitled Amending Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinances Regarding Off-Street Parking Requirements in the CR (Commercial Residential) District.

There is a need to balance the needs of residents and needs for parking for businesses. With the Stockton Inn the need for more parking is more than ever. One of the suggestions to be considered is to evaluate the Borough's parking standards as the ordinance is from 1979. The standards and requirements are outdated and need to be reviewed and changed. It is unlikely additional land will be found, so the Borough has to work with what it has. Joanna is working with Adam for solutions. Option number 1 is restoring a minimum parking standard in ordinance understanding that the burden is on the property owner to seek a variance so that the Planning board can review and decide if there are other parking options. Another option is to reduce the parking requirements, but land is scarce in the Borough so that is not ideal. The third option is to keep it as it



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is, which removes parking requirements all together for that CR district unless there is an expanded footprint, but then the Board has no power over parking. Another issue to consider is parking enforcement in the Borough and to have better communication with the NJSP before a bigger issue occurs. The Borough can also reach out to the DOT for help with parking issues and any improvements along Route 29.

Chair Bonanni asked about a mechanism outside of Planning Board meetings to implement the first 2 options discussed. Joanna said variances can only be heard in front of the Planning Board. Adam spoke to parking demand in the Borough and the possibility of an analysis study as a starting point to determine the best way to handle this.

Mayor Lipsen spoke about the possibility of lining parking spaces along Main Street in the future. Chair Bonanni and Adam spoke about the burden on applicants for a design waiver versus variance for parking. Vice Chair Meltzer thanked Joanna and Adam for their remarks. She believes option #1 is the best so that the Planning Board will continue to have oversight over the parking situation, and possibly a design waiver for applicants. She asked about a change in use and if there is any ordinance for parking – specifically if a wedding venue was proposed. Joanna said there is no special event ordinance in the Borough which would provide additional guidelines and requirements for businesses hosting special events such as large weddings. These ordinances implement guidelines for large special events within a town which is something Stockton could consider also.

Vice Chair Meltzer also stated she encouraged everyone to consider what new parking would look like and how it would affect residential parking. There are concerns about narrow streets in the Borough and how that can be addressed. Joanna spoke about a discussion years ago for residential permitted parking that didn't come to fruition.

Mr. Hunt stated he also favored option #1 that Joanna presented.

Chair Bonanni spoke about having to make sure the needs of the residents and the businesses are balanced. Mr. Giocondo believes that the ordinance should be repealed and wants to make that recommendation to the Borough Council.

Ms. Brown also supports option 1 and wants to know if the requirements that date back to the 1970s will also be reevaluated at the same time. Joanna said that the recommendation to the Council should be to evaluate all the parking ordinances. Ms. Brown said that all the parking issues aren't always necessarily businesses, but sometimes weekenders that come into the Borough for the day and wanted to know if there is anywhere to advertise public parking for these guests. Joanna said not at this time. Ms. Brown said that with such limited land allowing them to park in the park or the firehouse would be helpful.

Vice Chair Meltzer again encouraged the Planning Board to be proactive and reassess the parking situation because this is clearly needed.

Chair Bonanni broke down the commentary to a punch list for Ms. St. Angelo to include in the memo to Borough Council: repeal ordinance 1801, look at alternative minimum parking standards, special events ordinance, potential expansion of parking in borough, parking enforcement, and residential parking issues. Joanna said that not all those items are in the purview of the Planning Board, but recommendations are okay. Motion by Mr. Hunt to authorize Ms. St. Angelo to send a letter to the Borough Council regarding repeal ordinance 1801, look at alternative minimum parking standards, special events ordinance, potential expansion of parking in borough, parking enforcement, and residential on street parking regulations and issues. Second by Ms. Bassett. Mr. Giocondo asked to discuss this motion and that it is too large that the Borough Council wouldn't be able to do all of that. He suggested a simpler motion and recommended repealing ordinance 18-01 and showing the Planning board intent to rethink parking within the CR zone. Mr. Hunt amended his motion to state the letter should be regarding repealing ordinance 18-01 and recommend the



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Council asks the Planning Board for other items to consider and report back on. Second by Ms. Bassett. Mayor Lipsen abstained. All others that were present in favor. None opposed. Motion carries.

Open to the Public – Agenda Items

Chair Bonnani opened the meeting for Public Comment.

Michael Odenwald, resident spoke of the property at Bridge St in the area of firehouse to foster collaboration between DRCC and businesses in the area to fix the parking situation in the area which he believes there's 40 parking spots that are untapped in the area.

Mr. Giocondo asked Ms. St. Angelo if this would be an application and/or variance and if this is a conflict listening to Mr. Odenwald if he comes before the board.

Mr. Odenwald asked if there was really stormwater management training and if he could review it. Ms. St. Angelo directed him to the DEP website to view it.

Mr. Odenwald spoke about making a left on Route 29 from the Stockton Inn, and if there is no traffic light, that area is a hazard and needs to be reviewed.

Seeing no further comments, Chair Bonanni closed the public portion.

Mayor Lipsen spoke regarding DOT and the Council request for traffic measures at the location in front of the Stockton Inn. A speed study will be set up on Route 29, safety barriers are another option to increase safety in that area. Mr. Miller stated the resolution mandates that the Stockton Inn had to send their plans to the DOT and get their approval as well.

Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Meltzer to adjourn. Second by Ms. Bassett. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Orlando
Planning Board Secretary