



April 6, 2016 Edison Community Meeting

6:00 pm Council Chambers

Present from Township:

Councilman Patil

Councilman Karabinchak

Councilman Sendelsky

Melissa Perilstein, Administrator of Policy and Strategic Initiatives

Bill Northgrave, Township Attorney

Mark Kataryniak, Township Engineer

Present from Heyer, Gruel & Associates:

Susan Gruel, P.P.

M. McKinley Mertz, Associate Planner

Introduction of presentation from Heyer, Gruel & Associates

- Here to show what we think you wanted for the Area and what our proposals are.
- Explanation of terms – Revitalization, Rehabilitation, Redevelopment – The Area within the Clara Barton neighborhood is technically called a Rehabilitation Area. The final plan that will be produced is called a Redevelopment Plan. The neighborhood is in need of revitalization, which we hope this Plan will assist in.
- There is NO opportunity for eminent domain.
- This is a "tool box" that can be used to revitalize the Amboy Avenue corridor
- In terms of what happens next – Ultimately, this Plan will be adopted by Ordinance by Township Council. For that to happen, a noticed public hearing will occur. The Council will refer the Plan to the Planning Board, who will send it back to the governing body for a final adoption and public hearing.

Presentation of PowerPoint

- Presentation will be available on Edison's website and a few copies will be on file in the Clerks Office



Open up for comments:

Monica Kislak

58 MacArthur Drive

- Concerned that neither meeting (this one nor the January meeting) was widely publicized. Upset and disappointed at this.

Resident

- Concern – the existing ordinance has a maximum height of 40 feet with a limit of 3 stories, 4 stories with a max height of 45 is proposed. Doesn't understand how it's only going to be 5 feet more.
- Will potential developers have a choice of what they want to follow? (as in, the existing ordinance or the proposed Overlay District)
 - Susan – No, the developer has to choose if they want to use the standards from the existing ordinance or the Overlay District
- The existing ordinance has a side setback of 0 feet. If we are proposing 4 floors, can we increase the side setback? Might make people more willing to accept 3 stories.

Fred Wolke

Peak Road

- Can it be clarified what you can do in the Overlay Zone?
 - Susan – confirms the Overlay District only applies to the area that is currently zoned as the Amboy Avenue Revitalization (AAR) zone and the General Business District (G-B). NOT the residential zones.
- What about tax abatements?
 - Susan – There is potential for 5-year abatement. That gives incentives for residents in the single-family residential areas to improve and upgrade their homes.

Some general confusion over proposed Overlay District.

Susan – The Overlay District is an option over the existing zoning that provides additional opportunity for someone to come into the Area and redevelop parcels under the Overlay District standards. It is a softer approach to redevelopment. It tries to create incentives for redevelopment to occur.



Frank Heelan

Board President of the Edison Board of Education

- Concerned that the meeting was not advertised enough
- Noted that the Township is in the process of finishing a new school – James Monroe – Will we have to expand that school with the addition of residences in the Clara Barton neighborhood? What is the Township going to do with additional students? The school systems are already overcrowded. How many more students would be anticipated as a result of developed along Amboy Avenue?
 - Susan – We understand that this is a concern for the Area. We are not at the level of calculating potential school children for our Plan. We don't anticipate that these will be huge units with lots of bedrooms. Usually residential units above retail do not generate that many children.

Virginia White

11 Church Street

- Not from Clara Barton neighborhood but interested in what's going on
- Will apartments be allowed off the main street (Amboy Avenue)? How many units are we planning?
 - Susan – This is just a plan so we don't know exactly how many units will be produced. In the end, the market will drive that. The intent is to introduce certain amount of residential, but not on the first floor. We have not done such detailed calculations. There are parcels along Amboy Ave with some depth where the residential structures will not face Amboy Avenue.

Resident

- How far off Amboy Avenue would apartments be legal?
 - Susan – Shows on Proposed Commercial Corridor Overlay District map on PowerPoint the hatched area – that is the only place the multi-family residences would be permitted. The existing AAR zone already permits residential.

Mildred Rybeck

80 MacArthur Drive

- What will happen to the existing buildings that are within the zone?
 - Susan – This Plan does not require the property owners to do anything. They can stay there if they want. If the owner comes to the Township and wants to change



their building, or if someone wants to buy them out, then they can apply the Overlay standards if they want. The only way to force someone out is to use eminent domain, and that is not what this is about. This is not intended to be a heavy handed approach.

Monica Kislak

58 MacArthur Drive

- Why is the Clara Barton area chosen for all this work? Why not another section of Edison?
 - Susan – The neighborhood and the Township wanted to focus and assist this neighborhood and corridor in revitalization. It's a great area and has great potential but needs assistance. The Township is trying to create assistance for your community.

Mark Lidinsky

Liddle Avenue

- Is there any police presence around the Greenway? Or could there be? We just want to see a cop car drive by once in a while. It's an all senior community. Will they increase security if there are additional bike racks?
 - Susan – The Council will have to speak to that.

Walt Stochel

211 Oak Tree Road

- Can we get a report at the next Council Meeting on any crime that has been reported on the Greenway or in the neighborhood? We need to know what's been going on out there.
 - Susan – Do you consider the Greenway to be an asset?
- Absolutely – it is much better than the railroad.
- There also needs to be signage from the Greenway to Amboy Avenue indicating what businesses are up there – for those that are coming from Metuchen or somewhere else.

Bill Northgrave

Township Attorney

- Will have a report at the next Council meeting to address if any crime is being created



Lois Wolke

- Also has a concern about more school children.
- The area already has a developed approved with 22 one-bedroom apartments. Can we limit developers to one bedroom? One bedrooms will not have as many students.
- Can we get more clarification on the opportunity sites?
 - Susan – Opportunity sites – These are sites that we see as underutilized sites that don't have new development, and are an opportunity for redevelopment. They are susceptible to change. We will check a to see whether legally we can limit development to one bedroom and whether that is an option here.

Larry Deutchman

Owner of Downtown Plaza (one of the "bookend" mixed-use developments)

- Have any developers been interested in the area? Have they approached you to get a bid?
 - Susan – We understand that there are people interested as potential buyers but we have not met with anyone. We have heard there is interest.
- Metuchen has renovated their area and building apartments and parking decks in less than two years. How long will this development take?
 - Susan – We do not know. The market will control that.
- Have any residences (other than apartments) been approved for the area?
 - Susan – None that we are aware of.

Bernie Toscano

- There are a series of open questions that have not been able to be answered at this meeting – can we do this again before the Town Council meeting?
 - Susan – No. You do have the opportunity to come to that meeting though. There is some info that simply will not be in the final plan. There will be no assessment and evaluation of how many school children will potentially be generated. That is not appropriate for this type of Plan. We can't get to that level of detail. This Plan will provide the basis for future development. Whenever this plan is approved, in whatever format, there is still a process if someone comes in to redevelop – they still have to go through the normal site plan process – submit an application, public hearing, etc. That level of detail that you're talking about will be appropriate in those kind of applications.



Art Nasser

59 Pleasant Avenue (behind the former Stewart's Root Beer site)

- Is the application for the Stewart's site going to be 4 stories? It will invade privacy as residences will overlook his house.
- There are trees that abut their property line and limbs are always falling into his yard. Can't cut them because they aren't on his property.
- Concern with parking situation – has to fight to park in front of his house. Even with the permit parking that is employed, sometimes still has to park on another block. New apartments means new cars, and that is a concern
- What effect will the new developments have on property values?
 - Susan – For specific questions like trees you should attend the Planning Board meeting for that application. That is the kind of detail we will not go into in this Plan but will be on the application.

Mark Edwards

5th Street

- Wants to clarify the concerns from previous resident (Mark Lidinsky) – community wants the access from Amboy Avenue to Greenway to be safe for people and make sure people feel okay leaving their bikes at bike racks there.
- What does it mean that the developers can't pick and choose zoning options?
 - Susan – The developers cannot choose certain standards that they want to use from the regular zoning and then pick different ones to follow from the Overlay standards. They can't mix the two together. Have to use one or the other.

Robin Both

- Do you have a certain amount of parking defined for the kind of building's that are shown?
- In the beginning the town told us the maximum height was 2 and a half stories, then 3 stories were built. With the existing parking problems, is there going to be enough parking on the spot that they don't have to go onto the street? The Hookah Bar people are on the streets till 2 am leaving garbage. If there's going to be 30 apartments with three stories, where's the parking?
 - Susan – You can't limit who uses the public streets/parking. We know that parking is an issue and there is not just one fix to that problem. We have opportunities to have more public parking and opportunities for on-site parking. Township will



make ultimate decision about where to put additional public parking. But these are our recommendations.

Joe Coyel

4055 Woodbridge Avenue

- Likes Amboy Avenue and supports its growth and development
- Likes the Overlay District
- Likes 4 story opportunity
- Wants to clarify - each property square is owned by an individual. That person has to want to sell, then find a buyer, before anything could happen. So the Area isn't going to change overnight.
- The AAR zone was passed in 1997 and only two buildings have been constructed. Today, we really need to hope someone wants to invest in the Area. There needs to be a balance of economics for that to happen.
- Can you identify incentives of the zone and how parking requirements might change?
 - Susan – the existing zoning is the exact footprint of the Overlay District. We did not change the boundaries. We are looking at and evaluating the parking situation to determine the best parking scenario.

Esther Nemitz

- Has a two page draft with a number of issues
- First – Dr. Acello changed his application to allow for more residences. Where are all these new units going to park?
- At 979 Amboy Avenue – they want to build down Liddle Ave. The application says there will be parking on the ground floor with two floors of apartments above. They are proposing parking on Liddle, which is a private street. That location on the corner of Liddle should be parking for Amboy Avenue (a lot of people likes this).
- Dr. Kishyk, whose developing the old Stewart's lot, wanted to develop only half the property but the town told him he had to develop the whole thing because parking has to be behind the building. So now there are 5 commercial units. Where is the parking for this?
- In terms of resurfacing Amboy Avenue – the Township has applied for a grant to do resurfacing so we will be patient with that.
- In terms of street to street development (development of a whole block end fronting Amboy Avenue) – There are no places on Amboy Avenue that building could go from



side street to side street because everything is made up of small lots, so development will be small.

- There is impracticality for the way the ordinance was designed to begin with.
- Don't think lots are deep enough for 3-4 stories with parking.
- Doesn't think any of the residences that are currently on Amboy Avenue will sell.
- Wants the Planning Board and Zoning Board to pay attention and look at Clara Barton when development proposals come through to them.

****END MEETING****