

# MINUTES OF THE VERONA PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 27, 2024

## PRESENT:

Chairperson Jessica Pearson  
Mayor Christopher Tamburro  
Mr. Al DeOld  
Mr. Tim Camuti  
Mr. Jeremy Katzeff

Councilman Alex Roman  
Vice Chairman David Freschi  
Mr. Greg Mascera, Planning Board Attorney  
Ms. Kathleen Miesch, Zoning Officer  
Ms. Malak Metwaly, Board Secretary

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## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:31 PM by **Chair Pearson**.

Absent from the meeting: Mr. Ten Kate

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Open Public Meetings Act Statement is read by **Malak Metwaly, Board Secretary**

## PUBLIC HEARING

**Chair Pearson** asks if anyone from the public would like to address the Board on topics not on this meeting's agenda.

A member from the public, **Kathleen Nitti** states she's been trying to determine the tax implication of the affordable housing development with the effects of the number of students coming in. Chair Pearson points Mrs. Nitti towards George Librizzi and Pam Priscoe the town's tax assessors. **Mayor Tamburro** refers Mrs. Nitti to the Public Presentation presented at the Town Council Meeting by the developer that can answer most of her questions.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Chair Pearson** asks if all Board Members have read and received the minutes for the February 22, 2024 Planning Board meeting and if there are any comments or corrections. Hearing no corrections Chairperson Pearson asks for a motion to approve the minutes for the regular meeting held on February 22, 2024. **Mr. Katzeff** makes the motion, **Chairperson Pearson** seconds.

### Votes in the Affirmative

Mr. Katzeff  
Mr. Camuti  
Mr. DeOld  
Councilman Roman  
Mayor Tamburro  
Chairperson Pearson

### Absent Members

Mr. Lilley  
Mr. Hyndman  
Mr. O'Sullivan  
Mr. Bernardo

### Abstain

Vice Chairman Freschi

**Chair Pearson** asks if all Board Members have read and received the minutes for the March 28, 2024 Planning Board meeting and if there are any comments or corrections. Hearing no corrections Chairperson Pearson asks for a motion to approve the minutes for the regular meeting held on March 28, 2024. **Mr. Camuti** makes the motion, **Mayor Tamburro** seconds.

**Votes in the Affirmative**

Mr. Katzeff  
Mr. Camuti  
Mr. DeOld  
Councilman Roman  
Mayor Tamburro  
Vice Chairman Freschi  
Chairperson Pearson

**Absent Members**

Mr. Lilley  
Mr. Hyndman  
Mr. O’Sullivan  
Mr. Bernardo

**Abstain**

There were no votes against. The motion passes. Minutes are approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**San Chavan, Township Planner** presents 320 Bloomfield Avenue and 11 Church Street Redevelopment Study Presentation to the Board (See Attached).

**San Chavan, Township Planner** presents Area in Need of Redevelopment Preliminary Investigation Report to the Board (See Attached).

**Chair Pearson** opens to Board members to ask questions.

**Mr. Katzeff** asks planner if the possibility of workaround spot zoning was taken into consideration.

**Planner Chavan** clarifies it would not be spot zoning. Redevelopment as per the statues, enables a municipality to identify areas that satisfy the criteria to designate them as an area in need of redevelopment. **Mr. Katzeff** asks Board Attorney to clarify on what implications would arise with property owners in the Town Center and Extended Town Center, using the redevelopment plan as a mechanism to get other projects approved. **Board Attorney, Greg Mascera** states every application and property stands on its own. **Planner Chavan** adds the report is thorough in order to prevent any possibilities. **Mr. Katzeff** asks Council Members about updating the zoning in the Town Center and Extended Town Center...Board has dialog regarding updating the zoning code.

**Councilman Roman** asks are there other possibilities on this parcel absent in area in need of redevelopment or an opportunity to put the land into more productive use without adding a six-story building.

**Mr. DeOld** emphasizes there is no question this area is in need of redevelopment. **Mr. Camuti** asks planner Chavan why not criterion “A” versus criterion “D”. Planner **Chavan** explains criterion “D” was chosen because she did not go into the interior of each building. While working on the report, the planner took a holistic approach in order to satisfy the criteria with enough documented evidence. **Mr. Camuti** asks what would cross the threshold into criterion “D”. **Planner Chavan** explains when there is no stormwater management on a site that’s fully impervious, a deteriorating building and existing zoning failing for certain properties. The state of New Jersey has a regulation in place such as the “LRHL” (Local Redevelopment and Housing Law).

**Mr. Camuti** states looking at the parking lot strategically, it would make more sense to redevelop the entirety of parking lot 19 as opposed to an L shape section of it. **Chair Pearson** states there’s two separate properties with two separate owners and the property owner has to want the redevelopment. **Mr. Camuti** states the Board has to be assertive and opinionated with their recommendations to the governing body in order for redevelopment plans to leverage the town. **Mayor Tamburro** asks if there were not declared an area of redevelopment, what will happen to the parcels and what are the potentials underlying zoning. **Planner Chavan** explains the parcel would remain the way it is. 11 Church Street is a 7,700 square feet lot not requiring the ETC Zone criteria. If Conventional Zoning was feasible, everyone would request to go through the redevelopment route which is a time consuming process. Having a redevelopment plan then going in front of the Planning Board for a full site plan

review. **Councilman Roman** states redeveloping depends on the lot size and considerations of lots. Unless someone was able to create a larger assemblage of land by merging lots for a larger project, it would be unlikely for it to be rebuilt to the current standard given the lot sizes.

**Planner Chavan** explains with both lots consolidated there's room for a decent project but the redevelopment plan would control what is going on the lot. Things to consider while designing is how will the site be improved by the new project, with a need to revitalize the Bloomfield Avenue corridor while not changing the character of the neighborhood. **Councilman Roman** agrees and states the direction of the governing body's concerns is the scale of large developments proposed to be on the Bloomfield Avenue corridor.

**Mayor Tamburro** states in regards to the parking lot west of the property mentioned by Mr. Camuti, the property owners that asked to be considered for an area of redevelopment did not purchase the property. Looking at the concept plan, the parking would be behind the buildings off of Church Street and the building would be on Bloomfield Avenue. The biggest issue with the property is the significant grade right in the middle of it, making it difficult to develop and make unified. The topography of the property creates another issue to get a good use out of it. This area is considered because there is a thoughtful concept of its potential, the property as is isn't adding value to the community. The redevelopment would add to the residential traffic and business development, fulfilling the goals of the towns' master plan.

**Planner Chavan** states she's been in contact with the owner's attorneys, expressing concerns and recommendations. The owners have been receptive to all the information. **Chair Pearson** adds it's not an oddly shaped lot but two lots that are adjacent to one another owned by one owner. **Mr. Mascera** states the vote is for each lot, considering an area of redevelopment combines both lots together.

**Planner Chavan** agrees, both lot individually and combined meet the criteria for an area of redevelopment.

**Chair Pearson** asks for a motion

**Mr. DeOld** makes a motion to find both lots meets criteria "D" and "H" to be considered as an area of redevelopment.

**Mayor Tamburro** seconds the motion.

**Chair Pearson** asks Board members if they have recommendations to send with their votes.

**Mr. Camuti** recommends the Board writes the plan with the towns' planner and attorney

**Mayor Tamburro** agrees.

**Chair Pearson** adds the Board could have significant input on what the outcome of the development would be.

**Chair Pearson** asks for a roll call vote:

**Votes in the Affirmative**

Mr. Camuti  
Mr. DeOld  
Councilman Roman  
Mayor Tamburro  
Vice Chairman Freschi  
Chairperson Pearson

**Votes Against**

Mr. Katzeff

**Absent Members**

Mr. Lilley  
Mr. Hyndman  
Mr. O'Sullivan  
Mr. Bernardo

**Chair Pearson** the motion passes.

**Adjourn**

Seeing no new business, **Chair Pearson** asks for a motion to adjourn. **Mayor Tamburro** makes the motion and **Chair Pearson** seconds. There was a unanimous agreement to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Malak Metwaly**  
Verona Township Secretary – Planning  
Board

*PLEASE NOTE: Meeting minutes are a summation of the hearing. If you are interested in a verbatim transcript from this or any proceeding, please contact the Zoning Office at 973-857-4772*