

MINUTES
RED BANK PLANNING BOARD
March 26, 2025

The Red Bank Planning Board held a public meeting on March 26, 2025, at 7 PM in the Municipal Building, first floor, Council Chambers, 90 Monmouth Street, Red Bank, New Jersey.

Chair Dan Mancuso called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. A roll call showed the following members were in attendance:

Mayor Portman	Present	Megan Massey	Absent
Greg Fitzgerald	Absent	Louis DiMento	Present
Dan Mancuso	Present	Kristina Bonatakis	Present
		Barbara Boas	Present
Frederick Stone	Present	Wilson Beebe	Present
Itzel Hernandez	Present	Brian Parnagain	Present

Marc Leckstein, Esq., Shawna Ebanks, P.P, AICP, and Director of Community Development were also present.

Chair Mancuso read the Open Public Meeting Statement Act. In addition, an adequate and electronic notice of time, place, and matter was posted in two newspapers, the Borough Clerk's Office, the Borough's website, outside the council chambers, and on the front door of Borough Hall.

Regular Meeting Minutes: February 12, 2025

Motion: Approved as presented

Moved by: Dan Mancuso

Seconded by: Wilson Beebe

Ayes: William Portman, Kristina Bonatakis, Dan Mancuso, Louis DiMento, Barbara Boas,
 Wilson Beebe

Nays: None

Abstained: Itzel Hernandez and Brian Parnagian

Public Comment on Agenda Item

Mary Ellen Mess, 95 Hudson Avenue, questioned and commented on the validity of the notice for the meeting. Marc Leckstein replied that the notice was sufficient for the meeting and that the section she referenced applied only to the Governing Body. The notice requirement regarding the Open Public Meetings Act for the Planning Board is that meetings should be published 48 hours notice before the posting of the agenda prior to a meeting. There was no notice requirement for the night's meeting; the notice was given at the beginning of the year.

Informal Review: Red Bank Primary School-222 River Street

Shawna Ebanks gave the Board a brief overview of the Red Bank Primary School's improvement. The Primary School will be installing a steel entrance canopy with lighting and signage, removing and infilling two exterior doors closets with doors, installing exterior double doors, removing and

installing flooring, painting, removing, and installing a new wall-mounted unit heater, mechanical and electrical work due to removal and relocation of devices. Reconstruction of existing school driveway; reconstruction and realignment of existing lower school parking lot and associated drainage improvements. The Planning Board reviewed the project as an informal review.

Allen Hill, 64 McLaren Street, asked how the plans involve safe routes to schools. Marc Leckstein replied that this was a courtesy review of the Board of Education's plans, and no notice was required for the plans presented.

Dan Mancuso made a motion to report back to the Board of Education that the Board has reviewed plans and found no issues. However, he would like to comment that there needs to be complete streets and safe ways to school for students to get to school. Barbara Boas seconded the motion.

Ayes: Dan Mancuso, Kristina Bonatakis, Barbara Boas, Wilson Beebe, Itzel Hernandez, Mayor Portman, Louis DiMento, and Brian Parnagian.

Nays: None

Abstained: Frederick Stone

Marine Park Improvements

Michael Reiser, P.E., CME Engineering, Borough Engineer, presented the improvements for Marine Park as a capital improvement project. The site plan included new playgrounds, landscaping, an amphitheater, a seating area around the waterfront, a curved pergola, hammocks, permanent lawn games, a food truck area, and a kayak/jet ski launching area. There will also be stormwater drainage improvements. The playground will be the primary improvement, which will include ADA accessibility and will separate the playground by age groups (2-5 & 5-12). The improvements will require State agencies' approval. The construction of the park will be in late spring- early summer. The entire park will be completed by the end of the year.

Wilson Beebe asked about the different phases of the project and the contracting out of the work. Mr. Reiser replied that the first phase includes constructing the porous parking lot and constructing the new lawn/green space.

Barbara Boas and Itzel Hernandez commented on the ADA features in the new part and said the improvements are among the best things the Borough has done.

Mr. Beebe asked why the mature trees have to be taken down in the park and can't be incorporated into the new design. Mr. Reiser replied that the grading in the area made it challenging for the park manufacturer to integrate all of the trees. Also, to meet the requirements of Jake's Law funding through Green Acres, the layout has to be completely inclusive and ADA-compliant, so the area must be leveled. Because of the retaining wall construction, the trees may not survive.

Chair Mancuso asked how many new trees would be planted. Mr. Reiser responded that 29 shade trees, 28 ornamental trees, and hundreds of new shrubs and perennials would be planted. The Borough has worked with the Shade Tree Committee to identify the species.

Louis DiMento commented that removing the trees was a bad decision and did not see the point of excavating the whole area and disrupting the grading. The park is used for events. The new improvements should have been moved to the parking lot and preserve the existing park area. The excavation and retaining wall will lose the beauty of the hill. Mr. Reiser responded that many options were considered for keeping the existing layout. There will be another area of the park where the grading will not be disturbed. There are different areas that are steep and need to be flattened.

Mr. Beebe asked if Phase I came before the Planning Board. Chair Mancuso responded that there were public meetings at the Senior Center. Mr. Leckstein responded that this was a capital improvement project, so only the next phase was presented to the Board.

Brian Parnagian commented that the municipality needs improvement. He does question whether the hill needs to be removed. Mr. Resier responded that the hill is not being lost; it is being reconfigured from a steep drop to a gradual slope.

Marjorie Cavalier, 1 Bridge Avenue, asked about fencing around the playground for the under-five-year-old section. Mr. Reiser replied that fencing is proposed throughout all areas except the entrance. Fencing is a requirement of Green Acres. Ms. Cavalier also asked if the area could support the Philharmonic event when they return to town. Mr. Reiser replied yes. She followed up on how the event will be viewed. Chair Mancuso suggested that it may be in the new green space. Ms. Cavalier asked about the historic markers in the park. Everyone confirmed that they will remain or will be relocated to the park.

Susan Viscome, 25 Cedar Street, asked about the passive use of the park for adults. There is a lot of smoking in the bathrooms, and something can be done about that. Chair Mancuso mentioned that the hospital workers are smoking in the park. Ms. Viscome also asked about parking spaces and how many ADA spaces. Mr. Resier responded that six spaces are at the bottom of the park, and two will be ADA. There will also be bike racks, but the location is to be determined. There are no exercise areas, but that is something to be considered.

Cathy Morgan, 67 Oakland Street, was concerned about the plaque honoring Katharine Elkus White and whether a memorial for her would still be erected. Mayor Portman replied that they would ensure that something was done in her honor.

Mary Ellen Mess, 95 Hudson Avenue, asked about how the children would use the hill for sledding. Mr. Resier replied that certain areas can be used in the park. She also asked whether the fishing pier and flooring would remain, and Mr. Resier responded yes. She questioned whether the parking lot would be used for park users only and whether the hospital would use the parking area. She wanted to know about how the pumping station would be screened. Mr.

Reiser replied that there would be a landscape screening. She asked whether cars would have a good turning radius for cars. Also, she asked that the gazebo's location be reconsidered and the bathrooms be renovated. She wondered about lighting, and Mr. Resier responded that there would be a new lighting sign with low-level bollard lighting throughout the walkways.

Linda Hill, 64 McLaren Street, asked whether there would be an AED on-site in the park. Mr. Resier was unsure. She also asked about flooding and stormwater management. Mr. Reiser mentioned that there will be stormwater check valves. All the improvements within the flood zone would be designed in accordance with the flood hazard area rules. Ms. Hill also asked about the ziplines, and Mr. Resier answered that there would be ziplines installed. She was concerned about the insurance liability for the zip lines. She wondered how many trees would be removed. Mr. Resier replied that there are 56 trees currently in the park, and 19 will be removed. 7 of which were recommended for removal.

Steve Ansell, 39 Branch Avenue, asked about the kayak and jet ski launch and parking area. Mr. Resier replied that the parking stalls are standard-size.

A resident of 165 Spring Street had concerns about the drainage impacts from the Boat Club Court development, including flooding in the area. Mr. Reiser mentioned that there are plans to improve the drainage in the area.

Mr. Parnagian asked how much of the green surface area would be grass versus turf. Mr. Resier said that the playground area will be turf.

Ms. Hernandez asked if there would be Wi-Fi for the park. Mr. Resier was unsure.

Mr. DiMento asked about the maintenance of the turf and landscaping. Mr. Resier replied that up to

Ten-plus years, the turf would last, and then from there, it's the replacement of the actual carpet of the turf, whereas the subbase material you wouldn't. As for the plantings, these are the new trees that were installed and are dead; those are bonded and will be replaced. We've incorporated a drip irrigation system in all of the latest projects. That was one of the things the Borough worked on with the Shade Tree Committee to ensure that the landscaping could survive. DPW has been involved in the process, and specific selections were made due to maintenance.

Lee Anderson, a resident, had a question about the size of the gazebo. Mr. Resier replied that the specification of the gazebo has not been determined yet.

Dan Mancuso motioned to report to the Governing Body that the Board had reviewed the plans and found no issues. Itzel Hernandez seconded the motion, recommending that the sun's impact be considered for outdoor performances and that the trees in the parking lot be adequately watered.

Ayes: Dan Mancuso, Kristina Bonatakis, Barbara Boas, Wilson Beebe, Itzel Hernandez, Mayor Portman, Louis DiMento, Frederick Stone, and Brian Parnagian.
Nays: None
Abstained: None

Red Bank Train Station Redevelopment Plan Presentation

Susan Favate, AICP, PP, BFJ Planning, presented the Redevelopment Plan for the Train Station Redevelopment Area. She summarized the new uses, bulk standards, and all the other design standards for the off-site improvements that are contemplated.

Mayor Portman asked for a timeline of the redevelopment process and project construction. Ms. Favate replied that it would be a few months because the governing body needs to designate the redeveloper, and the developer has to design their site plan and receive the appropriate approvals.

Brian Parnagain asked if all the information from the public meetings was considered while drafting the plan. Ms. Favate confirmed that they were. He further asked whether the illustrations in the plan were the proposed designs, and Ms. Favate responded that the images were based on concepts provided by the developer. However, what was presented may not be the plans submitted for site plan approval.

Mr. Parnagain asked about the façade massing for the north building and whether the plan language should require meaningful vertical breaks in the façade to give the Board an opportunity to decide. Ms. Favate agreed to make the change.

Wilson Beebe had a concern about the 5-foot setback for West Street. He asked what some tradeoffs for the plan were. Ms. Favate mentioned that the potential to bury the high-tension wires was not possible, and stormwater management relates to the limitation of the permeable pavement. She also agreed that the one façade should be broken up.

Mr. Beebe continued to comment on page 19 examples of entrances and whether the language should be more detailed. Ms. Favate, yes, it is possible to firm up the text about the entrances on West Street.

Liam Collins, 120 Wallace Street, asked about the project's cost. Marc Leckstein said the question was more for the Governing Body. Mr. Collins asked if the developer could include the HPC Design Guidelines in the new building design. Chair Mancuso said that even though the area is not within the HPC's jurisdiction, the Board can consider the HPC's design guidelines.

William Pouku, 90 Bank Street, asked what provisions in the plan address gentrification in the Borough. Ms. Favate responded that there is no displacement happening within the redevelopment area. Gentrification is challenging; however, affordable housing is set aside, which can benefit low-income residents, but not much can be done.

Marjorie Cavalier, 1 Bridge Avenue, had questions relating to pages 21-23, 31. She asked about putting the bus operations on West Street, which is residential. Ms. Favate answered that NJ Transit would further analyze and investigate the location. Chair Mancuso also said that nothing was binding on the layout. Ms. Cavalier also questioned where the historic train station and the historic marker will be located. Ms. Favate said that the historic features will be incorporated into the design.

Susanne Viscome, 25 Cedar Street, asked about the cannabis licenses. Chair Mancuso answered that there would need to be another license for retail cannabis to be there. Ms. Viscome also asked about the height of more than six stories. Ms. Favate said that the cap height is six stories. Ms. Viscome questioned whether there was enough infrastructure to support the project. Ms. Favate replied that it would be addressed during site plan approval. Engineers will have to review that the applicant must submit documentation that there is adequate infrastructure to handle. Ms. Viscome followed up with whether a redevelopment agency was being hired for the redevelopment project. Chair Mancuso and Mr. Leckstein said the Council will employ a professional to help with the redevelopment process.

John Anderson, Red Bank RiverCenter, asked what the maximum square footage of the commercial space would be for each parcel. Ms. Favate replied that there is no firm maximum. Some of it is limited by all the nonresidential uses that are not retail only. Space is going to be building itself. There are limits on the overall height and the residential density. So, residential will fill the upper floors and is not prohibited from the ground floor. So, we expect that there'll be some ground floor residential space as well. It's not all going to be nonresidential. Mr. Anderson asked how many acres the north and south parcels are. Mr. Favate replied that the North Parcel has a minimum lot size of 3 1/2 acres, and the South Parcel has 4 acres. The North Parcel also includes a minimum amount of open space, which accommodates the Plaza and New Street. The South Parcel includes a shared street proposed as the Oakland Walkway. Mr. Anderson asked how big the parcel was, and Ms. Favate said it was in the designation study and would be available at the next meeting. She also added that the proposed permitted uses were selected based on comments from community meetings. Mr. Anderson then asked if there could be any consideration for improving subcategories of sublimation on retail, restaurants, and offices so that it doesn't compete with the downtown. Ms. Favate replied that including that limitation would require an applicant to go before the zoning board to permit use.

Steve Ansell, 39 Branch Avenue, asked how the size of the development was determined. Chair Mancuso replied that many factors are involved in determining the building size.

Mary Ellen Mess, 95 Hudson Avenue, asked why the lack of development space is being considered in the density requirement. Ms. Favate replied that the buildable acres ratio has not yet been determined. It is the overall number. The areas for infrastructure and open space have not yet been determined. Ms. Mess asked for clarification about the number of surface parking spaces. Ms. Favate responded that it would be determined at the site plan review. Chair Mancuso added that NJ Transit only requires 150 spaces for commuters. Ms. Mess also challenged the

need for a pedestrian street. She believes that it will add to the congestion in the area. Ms. Favate answered that the plan is a proposal and will need input from the Borough's professionals.

Mr. Beebe stated that there is a great need for affordable housing, and this project brings in 80 units. The Borough's population has declined, and had the town's growth continued since 2010, then the Borough would have had 1000 more residents. Ms. Mess commented that the biggest cohort of residents are empty nesters moving into luxury apartments, and the town needs families.

Wilson Beebe motioned to carry the presentation to April 9, 2025, seconded by Itzel Hernandez.

Wilson Beebe made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Fred Stone.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Shawna Ebanks
Acting Board Secretary