

**Franklin Borough Planning Board**  
**& Town Council**  
**Workshop Meeting**  
**March 6, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM by the Chairman, Mr. Wes Suckey, who then led the assembly in the flag salute.

Mr. Suckey read the Statement of Compliance pursuant to the "Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, PL 1975."

ROLL CALL OF PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mr. Wes Suckey, Chairman (Present)  
Mr. John Christiano, Vice – Chairman (Present)  
Mr. Nick Giordano, Mayor (Present)  
Mr. Stephen Skellenger, Councilman (Absent)

***Mr. Skellenger arrived at 7:50***

Mr. Floy Estes (Absent)  
Mr. Jim Nidelko (Present)  
Mr. Jim Williams (Present)  
Mr. Richard Knop (Absent)  
Mr. John Friend (Absent)  
Mr. Ted Bayles, Alternate #1 (Absent)  
Mr. Michael Raperto, Alternate #2 (Present)  
Mr. Stephen DeFinis, Alternate # 3 (Present)  
MS. Sharon Schultz, Alternate #4 (Present)  
Council Gilbert "Socko" Snyder (Absent)

***Mr. Snyder arrived at 7:50***

Council Joe Limon (Absent)  
Council John Postas (Present)  
Council Stephan Zydon (Present)  
Council Glenn Soules (Absent)

***Mr. Soules arrived at 7:50***

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Dave Brady, Board, Attorney  
Mr. Tom Knutelsky, Engineer  
Mr. Ken Nelson, Board Planner

**Approval of Minutes:**

There were no minutes for approval

**APPLICATIONS FOR INTERPREATION, COMPLETENESS OR TO BE HEARD:**

There were no applications

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**APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS:**

There were no resolutions

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

There was no correspondence

**OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:**

There was no open public session

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Suckey briefly went over the agenda explaining this was a workshop meeting between the planning board and the town council. Mr. Suckey stated that the meeting will follow the printed agenda. Mr. Suckey also made note that there would be no open public session tonight due to the fact that this meeting is held as a workshop meeting. Mr. Suckey briefly explained why the planning board inquired about having this joint meeting/workshop. Mr. Suckey stated that this meeting should better help both the planning board and town council to work together.

At this time Mr. Suckey introduced Mr. Nelson to give a brief summary on the Main Street Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Christiano stated that he wanted to express his disappointment in the lack of attendance from the council members this evening.

Mr. Suckey stated that it was duly noted.

At this time Mr. Nelson introduced himself and stated that he was not going to go into the long history of Main Street. Mr. Nelson stated that everyone has an idea of what Main Street was at one time and what it is now. Mr. Nelson explained that it will never be what it once was many, many years ago. However, there can be a middle ground and this plan will hopefully do just that.

Mr. Nelson went on to explain that the plan emphasizes that this needs to be a public and private partnership. Mr. Nelson goes on to state that the Borough can not do this by itself and either can the private sector. This plan needs to be a joint effort by both the public and private sectors.

The plan is a fifty plus page document. There is a lot of information and ideas in the document. Mr. Nelson explained as much as they wanted to keep the document at a reasonable length but needed to make sure that all the elements that are going to be required to get main street going.

Mr. Nelson explained some of the positive aspects of Main Street as it is now highlighting areas in which there are businesses. Mr. Nelson mentioned the library, the Municipal building, a number of uses that are important to the community on Main Street. The Borough has also done their part in following through with the repaving of main street.

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Mr. Nelson went on to explain the plan. Mr. Nelson explained that the plan is broken down to three phases. Mr. Nelson briefly explained each phase and where each phase would start and finish. Mr. Nelson explained that the phase one being really the center of Main Street from Junction, Main up to LaRue including the upper portion of the Zinc Mine property. Mr. Nelson stated if we focus on this phase first it could really help with the other phases following suite. Mr. Nelson explained that there could be overlapping in the phases such as working on small portions of Phase two before phase one is completed. Mr. Nelson stated that is just how redevelopment plans work.

Mr. Nelson also states that in the third phase there is a lot of emphasis on making the old theater building a theater again. Mr. Nelson stated that that would be a huge ticket item for Main Street and really help with bringing the draw back to Main Street not only to the community but, also to business owners who would like to bring their business's to Main Street. Mr. Nelson stated that all parties involved have to keep in mind that the Main Street 30, 40, 50 years ago is gone. Mr. Nelson explained that there can be a better Main Street than what the Borough currently has. All parties involved need to realistic and have an open mind. Mr. Nelson explained Franklin has to be open minded to opportunities that we are faced with in the twenty first century not what Main Street was in the Twenty Century.

Mr. Nelson briefly touched on another element in the plan. There is a national organization called National Main Street Center. The Organization works with municipalities for a fee. Mr. Nelson explained that the Organization does not necessarily have to come out and do work with the Borough. Mr. Nelson suggested following their Principals. The four principals being:

- Design
- Organization
- Economic restructuring
- Promotion

Mr. Nelson again stated that this needs to be a group effort with not only the private sector but also with the public.

Mr. Nelson stated that he wanted to take a minute to discuss the upper portion of the Zinc Mine property. The key element of the plan is to repurpose the change house. Making the change house the focal area of the upper portion of the Zinc Mine property. There has to be a redevelopment for the entire upper portion of the Zinc Mine property. Mr. Nelson stated that is not a huge portion of property but can certainly hold and provide for more then what is currently there now. Mr. Nelson explained that the National Main Street Center Organization is just another recourse on helping with ideas and thinking outside of the box when it comes to redeveloping Main Street.

Mr. Nelson stated that was the end of his presentation that he and Mr. Suckey spoke before the meeting both agreeing to keep the presentation short and highlighting key points. Mr. Nelson believes he has done just that and would like to hear from the

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members both council and planning at this point. Mr. Suckey asked if there was anyone who had any questions for Mr. Nelson at this time.

Mayor Giordano stated that he would like to have on the record that Mr. Snyder, Mr. Soules and Mr. Skellenger arrived at the meeting at 7:50PM

Mr. DeFinis asked if there was any flexibility in phases meaning does phase one have to be phase one. Mr. DeFinis asked is there any flexibility to where the plan starts. Mr. DeFinis said for example, the lower portion of the Zinc Mine property where there is access to the railroads. Mr. Nelson stated that there could be some overlap within the phases. Mr. Nelson briefly explained that there has been a lot of discussion, debates on the Zinc Mine Property in particular the lower portion which has access to the railroads. Mr. Nelson stated during discussions it was brought up that area might be best suited for industrial rather than residential. Mr. Nelson stated that this needs to be addressed further on the council level.

Mr. Nelson stated to answer Mr. DeFinis's question yes, there is some wiggle room in the plan but, the residential zoned area needs to be changed to industrial first. Mr. Nelson stated that it is important to stay focused on a manageable portion. Keeping the focus on that area for a short period of time and by short period of time it would one, two or three years.

Mayor Giordano stated that it would be worth noting and explaining that the Zinc town property has recently been subdivided into three separate lots. Mayor Giordano explained one section can be zoned one way and the other two lots can be zoned for something different.

Mr. Suckey stated that the plan was approved by the planning board and was passed on to the town Council. Mr. Suckey explained that now it is in the council's hands and they need to review and accept the plan as is or they need to give their recommendations. Mr. Suckey stated that if the council does not give the planning board any feedback then the plan stands as it is. Mr. Suckey explained that the council would have to change the residential and industrial zones. Mr. Suckey explained that is also something that the council would need to address.

Mr. Nelson explained and wanted to make sure the public understood that although it is a plan it is actually a zoning document and the council has the control. Mr. Nelson stated that it has to be adopted from the council with input from the planning board. The council would need to hold a hearing for the public before it was adopted. Mr. Nelson went on to explain that there is a list of things within the plan that need to be acted on one way or the other. Mr. Nelson gave a brief summary of the list that is explained on page 30,31, 32 of the Main Street Redevelopment Plan document.

Mayor Giordano explained that Councilman Postas is the chairman of the new neighborhood house committee and could give a brief update on where things are at currently. Mr. Postas briefly gave an update on the neighborhood house project. Mr. Postas stated they are waiting to hear from USDA funding and researching other grants and avenues. Mr. Postas stated that it is important to keep in mind that this project

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needs to be a combined effort with the Borough along with the property owners on Main Street. Mr. Postas explained that the committee and himself are working and meeting about this monthly. Mr. Postas stated though it will not happen tomorrow, it will happen. Mr. Postas has confidence in the committee members and the town council.

Mr. Nelson stated that the historic character should remain within any new construction. Mr. Postas agreed.

Mayor Giordano briefly went over the items that Mr. Nelson listed that are on pages 20, 21, - 32 on the Main Street Redevelopment Plan. Mayor Giordano gave an update on each item and what has been discussed on the council level. Mayor Giordano stated that this will not sit on a table. Mr. Giordano stated that this will receive action.

Mr. Suckey stated that he just wants everyone to work together on the same plan. Mayor Giordano suggested that all the committees all meet and have a workshop meeting quarterly. This would help better discuss and share the different committee's ideas. A quarterly meeting might be helpful to make sure that everyone is working in sync. Both Mayor Giordano and Chairman Suckey agreed.

Mr. Nelson stated that parking was also going to be another issue that would need to be addressed on the council level. Mr. Nelson explained that the Main Street redevelopment Plan touches and makes some suggestions on parking. Mr. Nelson stated that there would need to be an overall parking plan for Main Street with more community parking areas.

Mr. DeFinis asked if there was a way that we could find out that our street would be able to up hold the volume of traffic that the new main street would bring to our small roads.

Mr. Christiano stated like any other application that comes forward we would have to do a traffic study on our own project. Mr. Suckey stated that they would work on specific area of the plan when both the planning and Council agree on the plan. Mr. Suckey stated right now the plan is in the council's hands and once they review and accept or accept with revisions then we can move forward with working out specific details within the plan. came to a conclusion when the plan comes back from the council level.

Mr. Zydon asked Mr. Suckey what kind of time line he would be looking for. Mr. Suckey replied by stating within 30 days for the council to review and send it back to planning board. Mayor Giordano stated that he would be willing to have a tighter time line.

Mr. Suckey stated that the ideal time to have it all wrapped up would be by June. Mayor Giordano stated that he would put it on the agenda for the next Council meeting (March 12, 2019) all the members were in agreement with the time line.

Mr. Suckey stated that he would like to move to the next agenda item.

**New Jersey Council Plan and Conformance Plan.**

Mr. Suceky asked for Mr, Nelson to give a brief update on the New Jersey Council Plan and Conformance Process.

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Mr. Nelson explained that the council approved moving ahead with conducting various studies to determine if the borough should bring their planning and zoning polices into conformance with the Highlands master plan.

Mr. Nelson distributed the scope of work that has been approved by the Highlands Council. (**planning Area Plan Conformance Scope of work**)

councilman Zydon asked Mr. Nelson how the Highlands will impact Main Street.

Mr. Nelson beliefs it would have a positive influence.

Mr. Suckey thanked Mr. Nelson and asked if anyone else had any questions. There not being any questions. Mr. Suckey moved forward with the agenda.

**Escrow Payments, Replenishments and Procedures**

Mr. Suckey stated that the next item on the agenda was escrow payments, replenishment and procedures. Mr. Suckey briefly explained that it was brought to his attention that the professionals have outstanding invoices. Due to the lack of funding in some of the applicants escrow funds. Mr. Suckey stated that he has recently developed a planning board ordinance review committee, made of himself, Mr. Williams, Mr. Christiano, and Mr. Estes. This committee's purpose its to review the ordinance regarding escrow. Mr. Suckey stated when reviewing the ordinance, they noticed some flaws and some improvements that needed to be made. Mr. Suckey stated that the committee is working on improving the ordinance, giving it better language to make it fair for both the applicant and the professionals.

Mr. Suckey stated that when the committee is finished drafting up the new proposed ordinance, they will present it to the council. The council can then approve or make their recommendations. Mr. Suckey stated everyone should see a big improvement. With the improvements to the escrow ordinance. Mayor Giordano stated that whenever the planning board was ready to send it to council, he would address it at a council meeting. Mayor Giordano also stated that the town council was currently looking into a few ordinances that are dated and need some tweaks.

Mr. Suckey also gave a brief update to the council that the TCC committee has been meeting with a few applicants that have some ideas that they would like see happen. Mayor Giordano also suggested that there be a way that a resident in the borough of Franklin could have a TCC meeting and not be charged the \$ 500.00 escrow fee. Mayor Giordano stated that the meeting would not consist of professionals it would be a meeting with just a few of the planning board members. Mayor Giordano stated that this would be a way to help the residents and keep costs down.

Mr. Suckey explained to that if that was to happen there would have to be changes to the fee ordinance.

Mr. Knutelsky stated that he does not foresee any problems with having the TCC meetings with out the professionals for the smaller or "easier" applications.

Mr. Knutelsky suggested reaching out to Sparta Township. Mr. Knutelsky believes that their TCC Committee members meet once a month before their regular meeting. Mr.

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Knutelsky stated that it seems to work for Sparta and he believes that it should work for Franklin as well.

Mr. Suckey suggested that the mayor and council draft a letter requesting the planning board to look at it and see how the board feels about the ordinance change and give their recommendations back to the council.

Mayor Giordano took a quick poll of his councilman on their thoughts of drafting a letter to change ordinance fees. The councilman were agreement and mayor Giordano stated he would have something drafted and get it to the planning board in the near future.

Mr. Nelson asked if the Main Street Redevelopment would be placed on the website for the residents to have access too.

Mr. Suckey stated that was up to the council. Mayor Giordano stated that he would like for it to be posted on the website as soon as possible.

Mr. Suckey stated that the only other item on the agenda is adjournment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Suckey asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Mr. Friend made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Christiano.**

**All were in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Babcock  
Planning Board Secretary