

Borough of Rocky Hill  
Planning Board  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
March 21, 2019

The regular meeting of the Planning Board of the Borough of Rocky Hill was called to order by Class IV, Chair Michael Goldman at 7:30 PM followed by the salute to the flag.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**NOTICE OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

**ROLL CALL**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Irene Battaglia	Class III, Council Liaison	Present	
Mark Blasch	Class II, Zoning Officer	Present	
Tim Corlis	Class IV	Present	
Linda Goldman	Class IV	Present	
Michael Goldman	Class IV, Chair	Present	
Connie Hallman	Mayor's Alternate	Absent	
Eric Hintz	Class IV	Present	
Peter Morgan	Alternate 1	Present	
Brian Nolan	Class IV	Present	
Robert Uhrik	Class I, Mayor	Absent	
Frank Yao	Class IV	Present	

Also present: Planner Tamara Lee, Attorney Jolanta Maziarz, Recording Secretary Christine Witt

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Goldman informed the Board that the Historic District Subcommittee approved a change to a roof at 105 Washington Street.

1. 105 Washington Street

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

1. Planning Board - Regular Meeting - Feb 21, 2019 7:30 PM

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [6 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Linda Goldman, Class IV
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Mark Blasch, Class II, Zoning Officer
<b>AYES:</b>	Irene Battaglia, Mark Blasch, Tim Corlis, Linda Goldman, Michael Goldman, Eric Hintz
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Peter Morgan, Brian Nolan, Frank Yao
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Connie Hallman, Robert Uhrik

**OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## APPLICATIONS

None.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Resolution to Approve Bank of America Minor Site Plan Application

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [6 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Mark Blasch, Class II, Zoning Officer
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Linda Goldman, Class IV
<b>AYES:</b>	Irene Battaglia, Mark Blasch, Tim Corlis, Linda Goldman, Michael Goldman, Eric Hintz
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Peter Morgan, Brian Nolan, Frank Yao
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Connie Hallman, Robert Uhrik

2. Public Hearing Master Plan Re-Examination Report

Mr. Goldman opened the public hearing and explained to the members of the public in attendance that the Master Plan is an overview of land use within the Borough with recommendations for possible future changes to meet changing conditions. It is essentially a policy guide for the Borough Council, when and if it acts to amend the Borough's zoning ordinances and does not enact or change any zoning ordinance. A re-examination of the Master Plan is required by State law to be done every 10 years, and that is what the Planning Board is currently undertaking. As part of the Re-Exam process, the Planning Board assesses the current state of the Borough's land use in light of the goals and objectives set forth in the last Master Plan and makes recommendations for potential future changes.

Planner Tamara Lee gave an overview of the Master Plan and the re-examination process. She stated that the current Master Plan was written in 2001 and has been amended eight times. The Board adopted the last Re-Examination report in July 2008. For this Re-Exam, the Board reviewed all of the goals and objectives articulated in the in the Master Plan in light of current conditions. Ms. Lee specifically noted that the two first goals in the Master Plan are to retain both the Borough's traditional residential character and its historic character. The Borough is facing the problems of worsening traffic, aging infrastructure and increased costs. In terms of revenue generating ratables, she noted that the Borough lost the potential tax revenues from the Village Office zone when the parcel was sold by the owner to the County for parkland.

The Board looked for opportunities for commercial uses to help increase the tax base. New office zones are proposed: on the west end of Washington Street near Bank of America that would permit a variety of general and professional office uses; a less intense office zone on both sides of Princeton Avenue in the vicinity of Grove Street that would permit more limited uses that do not generate a lot of traffic; the Mary Jacobs Library site and the adjacent Amy Garrett House site on Washington Street, as well as

the two residential lots next to them to be rezoned business as these properties are large enough to potentially handle parking needs.

The Board determined that any significant expansion of the existing commercial zone would require addressing a lack of available parking, and decided that the parking issues will have to be addressed through a variety of potential solutions. These might include mini parking lots, shared parking agreements between businesses, residential parking permits, and a parking bank.

The Board recommends that the Council update ordinances related to B & B's and institute restrictions on blasting. The traffic problem will require inter-jurisdictional efforts including a regional study by the County and State.

Public Comment:

John Faranetta, 54 Washington Street, expressed his concern over his property being rezoned as business. Mr. Faranetta questioned how this will affect the value of his property.

Fred Serravallo, 56 Washington Street, also expressed concern about his property being rezoned for business use. Mr. Serravallo questioned why he had not been noticed of this proposed change.

Stacey Bachrach, 57 Washington Street, lives across the street from the two houses that are proposed to be rezoned. Ms. Bachrach stated that she is not in favor of the proposed rezoning because the potential for unwanted businesses and worsening of traffic are greater than the possible increased revenue.

Marjorie Yuschak, 55 Washington Street, also lives across the street from the two properties proposed for rezoning. Ms. Yuschak asked the Board to reconsider this zoning change. Ms. Yuschak's objections to the proposal were that this rezoning is not in character with the historic nature of the town, would not be practical because of a lack of parking, and would add to traffic. Ms. Yuschak suggested adding parking in the Community Land near the rescue squad. She also questioned the projected revenue shortfall and how much revenue would be generated by the rezoning.

Chuck Cook, 73 Washington Street, described living in Rocky Hill his whole life and the changes he has seen over time. Mr. Cook said that he has chosen to live here and enjoys the small-town qualities, but he questioned how the rezoning would help the current problems.

Brad Bradhering, 101 Washington Street and Treasurer of the Rocky Hill Community Group, pointed out the Community Group is a separate entity from the library but appears to part of the library on the proposed zoning map. Mr. Bradhering also noted that most of the library parking is on property that is owned by the Community Group.

Mr. Bradhering asked if the Board has considered rezoning the library residential. Mr. Bradhering stated that he would prefer a tax increase to changing the zoning.

Monica Lange, 6 Montgomery Avenue, questioned how the Borough could prevent the library from becoming something objectionable if it were rezoned for business. Ms. Battaglia replied that permitted uses within any zone can be very specific.

David Maccarone, 133 Washington Street, suggested that the Board should rezone Washington Street eastward from the current business district and focus on making the Borough walkable and inviting. Mr. Maccarone owns a building that he is currently renting to a massage business, and he said that no other business was interested in renting at that location. Mr. Maccarone also suggested that the Borough purchase the Shedd/pottery property and turn it into a parking lot.

Courtney White, 49 Washington Street, remarked that the proposed business district is in a traditional residential area and rezoning would detract from the quality of the neighborhood. Ms. White also commented that there are vacant commercial properties all around us and questioned if the library could be zoned residential.

Jill Cook, 73 Washington Street, asked if the Board will be voting on the proposal at the current meeting. Mr. Goldman responded that the Board members will discuss the public comments and decide if they want to vote tonight.

Marjorie Yuschak, 55 Washington Street, asked if there is a deadline for adopting the Master Plan re-examination and urged the Board to find a solution to the parking problem before changing the zoning.

Richard Dienst, 81 Washington Street, suggested that the Board should be pursuing the best case scenario for the Borough and not let the future of the library drive decisions. Mr. Dienst asked the Board to keep the town residential.

Analiese Reckhow, 70 Crescent Avenue, explained that she moved to Rocky Hill in September 2018 for the residential nature of the town. Ms. Reckhow said that she found the Master Plan Re-Examination report to be well written and understood why the proposed changes to zoning were being made.

Tom Bremner, 17 Crescent Avenue, suggested that although it is the Council not the Planning Board that will ultimately make zoning changes, the Council may defer to the Planning Board's recommendations. Mr. Bremner suggested that the library be rezoned as limited use business rather than general use to reduce the impact.

The floor was closed to public comment and the Board deliberated on the comments. Ms. Goldman suggested that the Board amend the draft Re-Examination report before adoption by removing 54 and 56 Washington Street from the business zone and changing the library to a limited use office zone rather than a general business zone.

A straw poll of the Board was taken and the proposal to remove 54 and 56 Washington Street from the business zone was favored 5-4.

A straw poll of the Board was taken on whether or not to change the zoning of the library from business to office use, and the majority favored keeping it business 7-2.

Ms. Goldman moved to adopt the Master Plan Re-Examination Report with the modification of removing 54 and 56 Washington Street from the business zone. Mr. Nolan seconded, and the motion was approved on a roll call vote.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED AS AMENDED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Linda Goldman, Class IV
<b>AYES:</b>	Irene Battaglia, Mark Blasch, Tim Corlis, Linda Goldman, Michael Goldman, Eric Hintz, Peter Morgan, Brian Nolan, Frank Yao
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Connie Hallman, Robert Uhrik

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**FINAL OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

Courtney White, 49 Washington Street, asked who has the authority to decide what type of entity can go in the library building if it is sold. Mr. Goldman responded that if the building is sold now a use variance would be required, but if the zoning is changed, Council will decide the permitted uses.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**RESULTS OF EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF ANY)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 PM.