

**Meeting Minutes
Hightstown Joint Borough Council & Planning Board
Special Meeting
September 30, 2015
6:30 pm**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Quattrone at 6:35 pm and he read the Open Public Meetings Act statement which stated, "Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was sent to the *Trenton Times* and the *Windsor-Hights Herald*, and is posted in the Borough Clerk's office."

Roll Call

	PRESENT	ABSENT
<i>Councilmember Bluth</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Hansen</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Kurs</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Misiura</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Montferrat</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Stults</i>	✓	
<i>Mayor Quattrone</i>	✓	

Also in attendance: Debra Sopronyi, Borough Clerk; Henry Underhill, Borough Administrator; and Fred Raffetto, Borough Attorney.

Roll Call

	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE ARRIVAL
Mr. Lane	✓		
Mr. Montferrat	✓		
Mayor Quattrone	✓		
Mr. Stults	✓		
Mr. Hansen	✓		
Mr. Searing	✓		
Mr. Musing	✓		
Mr. Mulleavey	✓		
Ms. Colavecchio	✓		
Mr. Balcewicz	✓		
Mr. Honsel			✓ 6:40 pm

Also in attendance: Sandy Belan, Planning Board Secretary.

The flag salute followed Roll Call.

Councilmember Stults moved the agenda for approval, Council President Hansen seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Council members Bluth, Hansen, Kurs, Misiura, Montferrat and Stults voted yes.

Agenda approved 6-0.

Planning Board Member Mr. Lane moved the agenda for approval, Mr. Searing seconded.

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Roll Call Vote: Planning Board: Mr. Lane, Mr. Montferrat, Mayor Quattrone, Mr. Stults, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Searing, Mr. Musing, Mr. Mulleavey, Ms. Colavecchio, Mr. Balcewicz and Mr. Honsel voted yes.

Agenda approved 11-0.

Mayor Quattrone then introduced Brent Rivenburgh, Chair of Downtown Hightstown. Mr. Rivenburgh thanked the Mayor, Council and Planning Board for the meeting; and the public for attending.

Mr. Rivenburgh noted that what is about to be shown is a “vision plan” and is not a definite plan; there will be changes. Downtown Hightstown is not handing the project off to the Borough; they would like to be involved in the project should it move forward. He then advised that not one dollar of taxpayer funds was used for the study that has been done, Downtown Hightstown paid for the study to be performed.

Mr. Rivenburgh reviewed some of the history of the lakefront in Hightstown and commented that is hoped that re-developing the lakefront would bring Hightstown back to what it once was. This is an amazing opportunity to take advantage of a beautiful natural resource, Peddie Lake. He then introduced Jim Constantine, the Planner who developed the plan that is being presented.

Mr. Constantine gave a public presentation on the Vision Plan for Hightstown Borough Lakefront. He noted that the plan was developed through intensive workshops with the community and stakeholders. He then reviewed the planning process and schedule, with the focus on Main Street and the Lakefront of Peddie Lake. The presentation included project goals, the lakefront and Main Street in the early 1900’s, the vision to activate the waterfront, parking, uses, traffic and pedestrian safety concerns, and possible shared space design. (A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes and is made a part thereof.)

Mayor Quattrone opened the public comment period and the following individuals spoke:

Frank Rivera, 110 Broad Street – thanked Mr. Constantine for the presentation and recognizing that various waterfront properties are a magnet for people; he congratulated Downtown Hightstown for including the community in the discussion and evaluation. He commented that art in public places goes hand in hand with the project, and the Cultural Arts Commission stands ready.

Lynne Woods, 315 Park Avenue – congratulated Downtown Hightstown for developing a plan that encompasses what many want; commented let’s make it happen. Ms. Woods commented that she hopes this happens more quickly than the bridge.

Jane Cox, East Ward Street – commented that we should make this plan happen, the lakefront should be attractive.

Mayor Quattrone advised that the bridge work is scheduled for the spring; the federal paperwork is being finalized.

Ted Spann, 200 Franklin Street – inquired about tree removal around the lake; how much space will be taken by residential properties, and parking availability.

Councilmember Stults commented that during the Farmers Market addition parking space near the church is utilized and it works very well. We need to look at ways to use this property more effectively. We need to make better use of what we have and could possibly share parking. Additional trees will be reincorporated throughout the design. Trees are a key element of the downtown area.

Mr. Spann inquired as to what the benefit to the taxpayer would be.

Councilmember Stults responded that there would be an increase in property values as well as new rateables.

Wendy McDade, 125 South Street – commented that she is looking forward to the project and inquired as to where the project goes from here, what is the process?

Councilmember Stults responded that the Council will accept the concept by resolution, and the Planning board will also accept the concept. Then the Master Plan must be changed to make the area a redevelopment area. After that is

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accomplished, there will be conversations with various consultants to assist with the process.

Doug Mair, 536 S. Main Street – commented that he does not understand taking on a project of this size in the flood zone prone area; we do not have a Borough Hall because it was in a flood zone.

Councilmember Stults commented that the Borough Hall property is a valuable asset to the development of the Rug Mill, not because it is in the flood zone.

Mr. Mair then commented that certain members of Council were involved with circulating the petition to rescind the bond ordinance for Borough Hall, how can they be in favor of this plan?

Councilmember Misiura commented that the police Department should not be located in a flood zone.

Planning Board Chairperson Fred Montferrat then noted that this is a presentation regarding the Downtown Vision, and has nothing to do with Borough Hall.

Mr. Mair inquired as to why the flood zone was an issue a year ago, but is not an issue now.

Mr. Montferrat noted that this meeting is regarding the Vision from Downtown Hightstown; they are looking for the Borough's support.

Mr. Constantine noted that the flood zone mapping is being re-evaluated and there will be discussion with NJDEP prior to the project; this plan is not detailed to that extent.

Rick Pratt, 214 Stockton Street – referenced the possibility of podium parking under buildings and the plaza and noted that other towns use this process to address parking; commented that the area could be raised and still have active connectivity to Main Street; the Borough needs a creative edge to create somewhere people can go, and want to go and visit.

Jim Douglas, 25 Barton St. – commented that the town could go one of two ways, and this plan will make it better; he hopes this goes through, it is a great idea.

Leanne Trent, 567 S. Main Street – commented that she wants to spend family time they have to go to Princeton, her vision is to spend her money in her own town; she inquired as to how this could branch out to benefit the remainder of the businesses in town.

Mr. Constantine commented that by adding vibrancy to the waterfront, it will benefit businesses not on the water.

Daniel Trent, 567 S. Main Street – thanked Downtown Hightstown for their efforts; commented that he owns a guitar lesson business and think this is a breathtaking vision of what Hightstown could be; change is inevitable and this is positive change. He noted that pedestrian safety is currently a concern, what is presently being done to improve pedestrian safety?

Councilmember Misiura noted that traffic on Main Street is a challenge because it is Route 33 which is a state road, and the Borough has no control over it at the present time. It is hoped that it can be put under local control.

Mayor Quattrone noted that parking is traffic calming, and if parking is on Main Street, the trucks would begin to use the Route 33 By-Pass.

Beverly Asselstine, 326 Franklin Street – inquired if there has been discussion with the property owners downtown who would be affected.

Councilmember Stults noted that there has been brief discussion and they are waiting to see what the Borough is going to do.

Anita Freslone, East Windsor – noted that she is the Marketing Director for Princeton and that it benefits families to offer
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downtown activities and recommended that shared office space also be offered because of the easy access to New York and Philadelphia from Hightstown.

Cappy Stults, 408 S. Main Street – noted that he was involved in the Main Street project 12 years ago and Main Street was changed from a four lane highway to two lanes with a median, NJDOT permitted the changes back then and will be willing to work with the Borough to follow the vision.

Megan Dwyer, 248 Franklin Street – commented that Hightstown is a historic town and needs to be pedestrian safe.

Councilmember Bluth commented that she is very excited and embraces the vision.

Councilmember Montferrat thanked Mr. Constantine for the presentation and the public for attending.

Councilmember Stults thanked everyone for attending and noted that this has been a dream for along time; he is glad to see that the community and stakeholders are supportive of the vision.

Bob Von Riegen, 108 Etra Road – commented that he fully supports this project and would like to help; he inquired as to the next step.

Councilmember Stults replied that it would be for the Council and Planning Board to adopt a resolution of support for the vision; then we can meet with landowners.

Doug Mair, 536 S. Main Street – commented that this plan should be put to referendum before any resolutions are passed. Mayor Quattrone noted that the plan is not that far along yet, it is still a vision; this will not go to referendum.

There being no further comments, Mayor Quattrone and Planning Board Chair Montferrat closed the public comment period.

Planning Board Chair Montferrat then noted that the Planning Board will go back to its professionals to draft a resolution of support and that it is very important and it is desirable for the public to actively participate in the project.

Councilmember Kurs commented that this is the first time he has seen the vision and thanked Downtown Hightstown for the vision and everyone for attending. He noted that this is a great opportunity for Hightstown Borough and he looks forward to its progress.

Councilmember Misiura thanked Downtown Hightstown for the vision and commented that he fully supports this project; he noted that the project would be completed with developer funding, the Borough puts the land use regulations in place. Mr. Constantine and his firm did a great job.

Council President Hansen commented that she is very excited about this and something needs to be done to bring property values up to where they should be; and development is needed to bring in rateables. She noted that this vision will be a private developer project, not a taxpayer project and she will endorse it.

Planning Board Chair Montferrat spoke for the Planning Board members - thanked Downtown Hightstown for all their work on this project to date and encouraged residents to attend Planning Board meetings as this project moves forward.

Mayor Quattrone thanked Downtown Hightstown and Mr. Constantine for the vision and noted that he has been in Hightstown a very long time; Hightstown needs people downtown and to be a destination with art and music. The Borough will work with the State and whomever needed to bring the vision to reality. He thanked everyone for coming.

Mayor Quattrone asked for a motion to adjourn from the Borough Council. Council President Hansen moved to adjourn at 8:15 pm, Councilmember Bluth seconded. All ayes.

Planning Board Chair Montferrat asked for a motion to adjourn from the Planning Board. Mr. Balcewicz moved to adjourn at 8:15 p.m., Mr. Mulleavey seconded. All ayes.
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Respectfully Submitted,

Debra L. Sopronyi, RMC
Borough Clerk

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandy Belan
Planning Board Secretary

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