

**Borough of Rutherford
2007 Master Plan Process
Master Plan Advisory Committee
Minutes of Work Session
February 12, 2007**

Present:	Mayor McPherson	Councilman Frazier
	Vice Chairman Rizzo	Mr. Boyle
	Mr. Kuruc	Mr. Neumann
	Ms. Russell	Mr. Uhl

Absent: **Chairman Elliot**
 Ms. Watson

Mayor Bernadette P. McPherson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led those assembled in a flag salute. Borough officials in attendance were noted by Mayor McPherson and included Timothy Stafford, Borough Administrator; Chief Steven Nienstedt of the Rutherford Police Department; Anne Marie Rizzuto, Borough Attorney; Jane Fisher, Library Director; Mary Kriston, Borough Clerk, Caryn Miller, Tax Collector; Brian O’Keefe, Health Officer; Lori Rosenbower, Recreation Superintendent; Councilman John Genovesi and Denise Ross of the Rutherford Board of Adjustment and Downtown Partnership.

The Recording Secretary took roll call. All members were in attendance with the exception of Chairman Elliot and Ms. Watson. The Mayor stated that Vice Chairman Rizzo is chairing the meeting due to the death of Chairman Elliot’s father and extended sympathies to his family.

Councilman Sommer had a change to the minutes of the January meeting on page 7 regarding “families outside of town” in the second paragraph. Councilman Sommer wanted to clarify his intent was that input should come from families inside town.

A motion was made by Mayor McPherson to accept the minutes and was seconded by Mr. Boyle. Councilman Frazier commented on the exclusion of the remarks of Councilman Genovesi at January’s meeting. Vice Chairman Rizzo pointed out that Councilman Genovesi’s comments are recorded on page 9.

The Recording Secretary took roll call and all affirmed with Vice Chairman Rizzo abstaining.

Mayor McPherson made a motion to propose that the Master Plan Advisory Committee add an element to the Master Plan that we consider the impact of greenhouse gases on the earth, specifically as we go forward with the construction and zoning boards. The Mayor and Council have been contemplating and have adopted a resolution supporting the Kyoto protocol. Rutherford has an agreement with the Meadowlands Commission to

explore how to implement solar power in Borough owned buildings. The Mayor would like to adopt it as a policy going forward to bring all the individual efforts together. Mayor McPherson stated she has discussed this issue with the construction official as well as possibly amending the fee ordinance to offer incentives, such as possibly a free construction permit, to residents if they desire to include solar energy in their construction projects. The Mayor further stated that this issue will be discussed at the upcoming council meetings and she will forward any information to other Master Plan Advisory Committee members as it becomes available.

Councilman Frazier seconded the motion made by Mayor McPherson. The Recording Secretary took roll call and all affirmed.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION DURING THE 2007 RUTHERFORD MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The Vice Chairman turned the meeting over to the Borough Planner, Mr. David Maski, who reviewed the process of drafting a new master plan and introduced a new document entitled Issues for Consideration During the 2007 Rutherford Master Plan Process which includes all issues and concerns identified at the meeting on January 9, 2007.

From the 2003 Reexamination Report

1. Review land use goals and objectives & conduct a Borough-wide land use study.
2. Review the Park Ave. business district and the potential for mixed use as part of its growing role as a transportation hub.
3. Assess the Redevelopment potential of the “West End” business district on Union Ave.
4. Analyze the “gateway” corridor along Meadow Road to Route 17.
5. Assess zoning in the B-1 Business District and compatibility with surrounding area.
6. Assess commercial and light industrial parcels on the eastern side of Route 17.
7. Consider consolidation of the zoning districts to reflect a more uniform plan of development for the Borough.
8. Update circulation plan element to address the roundabout at Station Square, the Secaucus Transfer Train Station, NJDOT Route 3 widening, and the Highland Cross and Golf Course Redevelopment Areas.
9. Assess parking management in the downtown area.
10. Prepare a general assessment of existing community facilities and determine what areas are in need of short- and long-term improvements.
11. Provide an inventory of park and recreation areas available to the Borough.
12. Consider an economic plan measuring the commercial activity occurring in Rutherford.
13. Consider an historic preservation element with recommendations on how to best preserve historically and architecturally significant structures.
14. Address concerns about how to preserve the character of Rutherford’s neighborhoods.

From the 2004 Vision Statement

1. Maintain existing residential neighborhoods as attractive, high quality areas and

ensure that renovations and new construction are compatible with existing neighborhood character.

2. Provide housing options for all generations, serving both existing and new residents.
3. Continue to restore the harmony and appearance of the downtown streetscape by encouraging restoration of classic buildings that have been inappropriately altered and ensure that all new construction and alterations fit harmoniously within the framework established by the historic and classic architectural character of the downtown.
4. Continue to encourage a mix of quality commercial businesses, retail, entertainment, dining, and upper story residences in the downtown area to create vibrancy and to serve local and regional markets.
5. Manage traffic and pedestrian issues and ensure adequate parking in the Downtown.
6. Preserve, maintain, and develop a comprehensive open space and indoor/ outdoor recreation system that provides: active and passive recreation opportunities for all age groups and ability levels while meeting or exceeding state and/or national safety standards.
7. Improve the “Gateway” entrances into Rutherford.
8. Revitalize the West End area; and, on a borough-wide basis, prevent properties from deteriorating into a substandard underutilized condition.
9. Promote local transportation programs and ensure that regional transportation projects will improve the overall quality of life in the Borough.
10. Provide better access to the Meadowlands area and to waterfront properties.
11. Create a “bike friendly” environment in Rutherford where riding around town on a bike is a safe and viable alternative to driving.

From the Master Plan Advisory Committee Meeting on January 9, 2007

1. Incorporate an Historic Preservation element into the plan.
2. Maintain the Borough’s diversity.
3. Make the master plan process inclusive.
4. Provide incentives for renovating properties.
5. Provide green buffers along the highways.
6. Too many single-family homes are being replaced with townhouses.
7. Support the conversion of abandoned rail rights-of-way to bike and pedestrian trails.
8. Reestablish the recycling center.
9. Analyze the impacts of Encap and Xanadu on the Borough.
10. Provide a master plan forum on the Borough’s website.
11. Take a comprehensive rather than incremental approach to curb and sidewalk replacement.
12. Analyze the impacts of high density development.
13. Address cut-through truck traffic (18 wheelers) particularly between Routes 21 and 17 and Riverside and Route 3.
14. Provide incentives for renovating historic houses.
15. Address the Meadowlands in the master plan.
16. Go green. Explore alternative energy sources and development techniques.
17. Incorporate the forestry management plan.
18. Address transitional or “vulnerable” areas to ensure zoning reflects/protects the surrounding neighborhoods.

19. Expand the notification process for use variances.
20. Consider stricter controls/limits on condominium and apartment development.
21. Prohibit tear-downs without an approved building plan.
22. Protect parkland.
23. Control on-street parking. Residential streets are being used by commuters and shoppers.
24. Preserve the single-family character of the Borough.
25. Address overcrowding in the Borough.
26. Create attractive gateways to the Borough.
27. Address the future of the west end shopping district.
28. Create a plan for Jackson Street between Erie and the Knights of Columbus building.
29. Prohibit residential development in the Highland Cross redevelopment project.
30. Provide art in public places.
31. Attract niche markets to the downtown through innovative design.
32. Enable residents to age-in-place by providing moderate priced senior-oriented housing.
33. Adopt design guidelines that ensure compatibility within a given neighborhood context.

2007 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Mr. Maski then introduced two working draft documents; 2007 Master Plan and 2007 Community Profile. These two documents will be amended as the process continues; only the introductory chapters are provided at this meeting. Mr. Maski reviewed and explained the baseline for where Rutherford is today and how this relates to drafting a new master plan.

Please see Addendum A: Working Draft: Community Profile

Mr. Maski explained that Rutherford lies in the Southwest area of Bergen County. Discussion ensued regarding the source of the figures used in the draft documents. Mr. Maski explained that he used figures from the NJ Transportation Planning Authority, a notable source used by the NJ DOT and other agencies which provide a guideline.

WORKING DRAFT: 2007 MASTER PLAN

Vice Chairman Rizzo asked that the Goals and Objectives chapter of the Working Draft: 2007 Master Plan be discussed.

Please see Addendum B: Working Draft: 2007 Master Plan

Mr. Maski states that the vision statement on page 2 is taken verbatim from the Rutherford Vision Statement. The Goals and Objectives are comprised of those identified issues from the January 9, 2007 meeting as listed on the above referenced document and are divided into 13 Goals and multiple Objectives regarding Land Use, Circulation, Utilities, Community Facilities and Economic Development which may change based on the Advisory Committee's prerogative and will be added to the Master Plan when complete. Applicants to the Land Use Boards must prove that their applications are in line with the Master Plan; if the Master Plan is specific, then applicants will know what the Boards are looking for and the job of the Boards will be easier as they can refer applicants back to the Master Plan Goals and Objectives. It is better to have a more specific and clear master plan goals and objectives section. If the Committee feels some issue is important to say at the beginning of the Master Plan process, to get across the certain message of what you want this community to be and what it will look like, it should be included even if you don't know where to fit it in. This is a short section of the Plan but is very important.

Mayor McPherson wishes to draw the Committee's attention to Goal #10: Preserve the Borough's natural resources to protect water quality, manage stormwater, reduce the potential for flood damage, protect endangered habitats and provide open space. Mayor McPherson would like to amend this Goal to be less passive and include solar energy options and would like to acknowledge Councilman Reyes' efforts and leadership on this and other environmental issues in the Borough.

Mr. Maski pointed out that the fourth objective under the heading of Community Facilities, reads: Explore the potential for incorporating the use of the LEED Green Building Rating System for public buildings. We can expand that objective to meet your needs regarding solar energy uses. Mayor McPherson reiterated her wish that it be stated in the Goals as well.

Vice Chairman Rizzo opened the meeting to the public for comments.

Paul Blum, 42 Ridge Road

Will this process and master plan document lower the taxes for residents and make Rutherford a better place for the next 25 years?

Mayor McPherson answered that she believes that all the goals and objectives, as stated here, will make Rutherford a better place to live. The Mayor then read a few of those goals that she believed support her statement and stated that draft documents will be available during this process.

Vice Chairman Rizzo then closed the meeting to the public.

Borough Attorney, Anne Marie Rizzuto questioned the content for the next meeting. Mr. Maski stated he will expand the sections of the draft documents presented tonight. In between each meeting, Mr. Maski is assembling information and sections for presentation to the Committee at each monthly meeting. Going forward, each meeting will have a little more information on all the components of the Master Plan. Later meetings will discuss policy specifically.

The Mayor stated that all documents presented will be available in draft form on the Borough's website. There will be an email address that residents may use to submit comments which will be recorded and addressed at later meetings.

Councilman Sommer wished to further address Mr. Blum's request to obtain copies of the documents presented. Mayor McPherson stated that draft documents in hard form can be provided.

The Vice Chairman concluded the hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Sartori
Recording Secretary