

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

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Chairman Elliot</b>	<b>Councilman Frazier</b>
	<b>Mayor McPherson</b>	<b>Mr. Boyle</b>
	<b>Vice Chairman Rizzo</b>	<b>Mr. Kuruc</b>
	<b>Mr. Neumann</b>	<b>Ms. Russell</b>
	<b>Mr. Uhl</b>	<b>Ms. Watson</b>

Chairman Glenn Elliot called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and led those assembled in a flag salute. Borough officials in attendance were noted by Mayor McPherson and included Councilmen Joseph Sommer and John Genovesi; Timothy Stafford, Borough Administrator; Chief Steven Nienstedt of the Rutherford Police Department; Jane Fisher, Library Director; Mary Kriston, Borough Clerk; Frank Bucino, Tax Assessor; Lori Rosenbower, Recreation Superintendent; Brian O'Keefe, Health Officer; John Uhl, Construction Official; Robin Reenstra-Bryant, Downtown Partnership Manager and Denise Ross, Board President of the Rutherford Downtown Partnership and member of the Board of Adjustment. David Maski, of Schoor DePalma, Borough Planner and Ralph Tango, Borough Engineer, also of Schoor DePalma, were also in attendance as well as the Recording Secretary.

Chairman Elliot asked David Maski, Borough Planner, to recap the February meeting. This is the third meeting of the Advisory Committee. The first meeting explored the proposed goals and objectives of the Master Plan and the first section of the Community Profile. The second meeting explored the Population, Housing and Economic Development statistics of the Borough.

**Minutes:**

Minutes distributed tonight list all Advisory Board members in attendance at the February meeting. Mayor McPherson made a motion to accept the minutes which was seconded by Councilman Frazier. Chairman Elliot abstained from the vote due to his absence in February. The Recording Secretary took roll call and all were in favor.

**Draft v.3.8.07: Community Profile: Chapters V, VII, and VIII**

Mr. Maski explained that while we have been discussing the Master Plan in general terms, we will move forward and solicit suggestions for specific initiatives to be considered under the various elements of the Master Plan. See Addendum A; Working Draft 3.8.07: 2007 Community Profile.

A map of the Community Facilities listed below was distributed to the members. See Addendum B.

#### Section V. Community Facilities

- Borough Hall
- Public Works
- Police
- Fire
- First Aid
- Library
- Senior Services
- Open Space and Recreation
  - a. Outdoor
  - b. Indoor
  - c. Conservation

Mr. Maski stated that his research has not shown any major issues with the current facilities, other than an ever present need for renovations and expansion. The Library has recently undergone a comprehensive study of its needs in terms of upgrade. The new DPW garage was recently completed and was a major issue of each previous Master Plan.

There will be a park and open space element to the Plan and this was analyzed at length. There are currently 56 acres of park land in town. A need for an indoor multi-purpose recreation center was made known by the Superintendent of Recreation to provide facilities year round.

A needs assessment of the acreage was completed using two methodologies, population-based and land use based, as well universal standards from the Green Acres program. In the population-based method, there is a deficit of recreation land of 89 acres. By the land use method, there is a surplus of 18 acres. The needs must be determined based on the current use and over-use of the lands, are there leagues that can't get time on the facilities now, could there be other teams using the lands if there were more available. Chairman Elliot stated there is not a lot of open land left to dedicate to parks and recreation. Mr. Maski agreed that Rutherford is a very built up community and may need to discuss an indoor facility to meet its needs. Open space doesn't have to be active, it can come through clean up of any open space that becomes available.

#### Section VII. Circulation

- Roads
- Mass Transit
- Pedestrian

Mr. Maski called the Board's attention to the two maps that show the mapping of the major roads as well as mass transit facilities available in town and as discussed on page 18 of the Working Draft Community Profile, v.3.8.07.

Rutherford is doing a good job of getting its residents to use mass transit. See Addendums C and D.

#### Section VIII. Utilities

- Sewer
- Water
- Storm Water

Mr. Maski states that the town has just adopted a storm water management plan which will be incorporated into the Master Plan.

Mayor McPherson wished to add that there are minor changes to be made to the First Aid paragraph under Community Facilities. Mr. Maski acknowledges there are some errors that will be cleaned up in the final copy. He also welcomes any other additions or changes from the Departments. This is only a background document.

#### **Master Plan Primary Elements:**

Mr. Maski then led the discussion to what the Plan says about a few certain initiatives in some areas of town and solicited comments on each from the Board members.

##### 1. Community Facilities

- **Borough Hall:** Mr. Neumann stated that the current building's exterior is in good shape and is a very important, historic, building for the town. Had a major renovation early in its history and still retains its integrity. Has been a parking lot resurfacing recently and is undergoing volunteer efforts regarding landscaping. Co-funding is possible from the Bergen County Historic Preservation Advisory for the municipal hall.

Mayor McPherson stated that there is an initiative between the DPW Superintendent and area landscapers to improve the building's grounds.

Mr. Neumann stated that since it is an asset to Lincoln Park, perhaps we could make the area a "Civic District" which would also encompass the Library, WWI monument, the Post Office and other historic elements of downtown. Chairman Elliot added that the building has good size rooms with a good floor plan.

- **Public Works:** Mayor McPherson stated that any additional square footage requirements could be obtained from the DPW Superintendent; she also stated that discussions are taking place with East Rutherford regarding shared services but that none would require expansion of the current facilities.

Councilman Sommer inquired if the future DPW trucks could be fitted to use a better fuel or even if we could use hybrid trucks in the future. Mayor McPherson stated that all of our buildings are to be evaluated

by the Meadowlands Commission for the potential of solar energy panels.

- Police Station: Mayor McPherson states that this building may be required to meet new state mandates for safety in the future.
- Fire: Mr. Neumann stated that the oldest fire house in town, on Union Avenue has historical value. The Ames Fire House is new and the Mortimer Fire House was converted from an older building as stated by Chairman Elliot.

Mr. Kuruc asked if there has been discussion regarding adding a fire house in the Encap area, to which the Mayor replied that, after discussing this issue with the Fire Safety and the Fire Service, they would rather have their volunteers on this side of town. The Mayor stated that Lyndhurst had originally included this issue in their negotiations. She further stated that any request for additional equipment has been included in the negotiation of PILOT payments; the anticipation from the Fire Service was that it would require, over time, the replacement of fire equipment, but because the buildings will be sprinklered, they did not have an interest in having a fire station out there.

- First Aid: No comments.
- Library: Mr. Maski recalled the report prepared for the Library recently. Additionally, Mr. Sommer asked if the audio/visual capacities of the library will be able to meet the new technologies. Mr. Neumann addressed the valuable library garden areas and the need to maintain it.
- Senior Services: Mr. Maski stated there is no present room to expand. Mayor McPherson wanted to ensure that the Tamblin Field Civic Center is also maintained both for the seniors and for the recreation needs it fulfills.

## 2. Open Space and Recreation

- Outdoor: There is no place for major expansion as previously stated but Mr. Maski wants to ascertain the perceived use of the current fields by asking if there are some leagues that may not get the time they need. Discussion on the present state of the fields and locker rooms at Memorial Field and the need for multi-purpose fields or areas to accommodate basketball, locker and shower facilities. Mayor McPherson stated that some residents want a pool. Councilman Frazier stated it is a problem as to where to put a pool facility as Memorial Field is strapped now. Discussion turned to an indoor pool facility. Discussion then focused on Wall Field and its current and possible uses as a roller hockey rink/skate park. Mayor McPherson stated that the prior discussions regarding a skate park at Wall Field brought in a bid close to \$1 million, which was more than anticipated and that it could go out to bid again, and try to be more cost efficient.

Discussion then turned to the use of the High School fields by other groups when not in use by the student teams.

Mr. Neumann then stated that Councilman Fecanin has done much work on the Rails to Trails program and this area is a sizeable piece of land that should be considered. Mayor McPherson stated it has a grade and may not be suitable for a full facility but it is a joint application with East Rutherford. It may be too close to the active rail line to put a pathway.

### 3. Economic Development

- West End: Currently zoned for B1- 3 story office from Beech St. to Raymond Ave. and B3-office/retail from Springfield Ave. to Carmita Ave. Mr. Maski asked if the present use is sufficient. Mr. Neumann credits the Downtown Partnership and the Manager with her efforts. The Mayor states this could be established for the West End by ordinance and has been discussed informally at RDP meetings and could be taken up again with the Borough Attorney. Discussion then turned to the current use of this area, can it use more or less growth, is it dying, does it have the right kinds of uses, is it a physical issue or market driven? Chairman Elliot states there are big backyards on Washington Avenue which shielded them from the former Shop-Rite. Mr. Maski asked if the Shop-Rite needs to be replaced, to which Chairman Elliot responded that Rutherford needs a food market but the area is presently too small for the current trend in markets, but maybe a “boutique” type of food market, such as Whole Foods, would work, according to Mr. Maski. This B3 zoning may need to be expanded all the way down Union Avenue as renting to an office is difficult and B3 would give more flexibility to add retail to the zone. Parking is an issue too. Chairman Elliot stated to rezone to B3 would tie it in with the retail/office area on corner of Union Ave and Jackson Ave, and he states that while he works in that area, he has no ownership interest. Mayor McPherson directed discussion back to ascertain the committee’s interest in a Business Improvement District in the West End area as well as discussing the vacant store at corner of Union Avenue and Jackson Avenue. Mr. Uhl stated there is a present proposal for a 7-11 on that property. Mr. Neumann wished to address the corner of West Erie Avenue and Jackson Avenue, which had been a gas station. Discussion regarding this property and its neighbors on Jackson Avenue as being underutilized. The Board of Adjustment has rejected a 7-11 type store for that area. Mayor McPherson stated that the old Froemer property in East Rutherford will be bought by that town for open space and won’t be development as she understands. Chairman Elliot stated that those properties are grandfathered but nothing is currently being used as zoned and there may be abandonment issues.
- Downtown: no comments

- Redevelopment: Mr. Maski asked if the town is evolving through private means or is the market pushing it? Are there any areas in town that the land is more valuable than the market says, any hotspots of redevelopment? Mayor McPherson asked to discuss the accessory use issue. Mr. Maski said this applies mostly to Downtown as the ordinance allows mixed use, meaning apartments above the stores as an accessory use, but it really no longer meets the definition. When first enacted, the owner of a store would live upstairs; this is not the case today, the apartments are rental mostly and they need use variances. Must make sure the parking is adequate to accommodate both retail and apartment. Mixed use is good because with people living there, it creates a built in market for the stores and a 24 hour area. Chairman Elliot stated that accessory use came to be because the owners could not rent the tops of the stores as offices, so the ordinances were drafted to help the store owners and now the zoning is there, but this was not anticipated when first drafted. Mr. Maski stated that mixed use is commercial and residential and you don't want to tip the balance too far one way to push the retail out. Chairman Elliot further stated that to build a building just to put retail downstairs so you can have an apartment building in a retail area makes no sense. Discussion regarding the parking issues in Rutherford's Downtown. Mayor McPherson asked for clarification on accessory use, and discussion ensued regarding different programs such as NJ Transit Village and Upstairs/Downtown to provide towns with built in customers. Mr. Uhl answered the Mayor's questions regarding parking requirements on Park Avenue in that residential requires 1 or 2 spaces/dwelling units depending on the size of the bedrooms and commercial requires one space/300 sq. foot of retail use and retail use usually supercedes the residential. Mr. Maski added that many towns have this problem, there will never be enough privately provided parking and spaces need to be made where they are found. A resident asked if Park Avenue could be made one way with diagonal parking and he was asked to hold comments until the end of the presentation and told that NJ probably doesn't allow for diagonal parking anymore.
- Redevelopment: Councilman Sommer would like to address the areas where we might look to the future, namely Meadow Road another gateway with a mixed use which is zoned for HC – Highway/Commerical and B4 – Business/light industrial. Mr. Maski states this area could use a re-examination. Mr. Neumann stated that the Kip Farmhouse at 12 Meadow Road is historically important but non-descript now and is likely where Rutherford and Bergen County began. Discussion regarding the mix of uses in area now and its current zoning.

The Mayor asked that the discussion be opened to the public and that the remaining elements be addressed at the next Planning Board meeting.

The Chairman then opened the discussion to the public.

Rob Girardi, 155 Montross Avenue

Likes the idea of a multi-plex complex at Memorial Field, the collaboration with East Rutherford, the beautiful area that it can be and possibly to close the road within the park. We should draw upon the talent within the town to improve the recreation opportunities in town which are great.

Mayor McPherson comments that she, and other members of the governing body, would love to see such a recreational facility but must weigh the cost to the taxpayers. A facility committee was in place in 2000 and said renovations to Memorial Field could be \$2.5 – 3.5 million dollars at that time and would be more today to meet the town's needs, including an outdoor pool. Looking into being a approved town for use of Secaucus' pool. Also, they Mayor stated she was presented with an aerial survey at a mayors' conference which showed the large number of inground pools in Rutherford already.

Chairman Elliot addressed the previous comment by a resident regarding diagonal parking on Park Avenue. Mr. Bucino added that Hoboken had diagonal parking. Chairman Elliot stated that when he was mayor, he looked into this and was told it was a grandfather issue for the towns that already had it. Some Park Avenue projects have purchased parking spots in the parking deck.

The hearing of citizens was closed.

Master Plan review is on agenda for the next Planning Board meeting on March 15, 2007.

The Chairman then concluded the hearing at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ellen Sartori  
Recording Secretary

