

Main Street Becoming Two Way

By Michael Cohen, February 10, 2014

Hackensack is moving forward with plans to revitalize Main Street, specifically turning a row of old stores and businesses at 150-170 Main into a major business and residential complex in the heart of the city.

At the Hackensack City Council meeting on Jan. 28, Francis Reiner of DMR Architects, the man tasked with investigating areas in need of redevelopment throughout the city, recommended 150-170 Main as an ideal site. Reiner reported that the current buildings are rife with structural cracks, broken windows and fire damage, as well as a lack on-site parking, and should be razed.

The proposed redevelopment includes 330 units within a 14-story building. Retail shops will be located on the first level with sitting and dining areas outside. The parking plan includes one space per unit.

In order to make this possible, the council approved tax breaks for up to five years to entice developers.

“This will get shovels in the ground faster,” said Mayor John Labrosse. “We want the buildings to look like the old buildings in town and meet the criteria for the new rehabilitation.”

Perhaps the most exciting news to come out of the meeting was a plan to return both Main Street and State Street to two-way thoroughfares.

“It’s a \$7 million job and it has to meet ADA standards, of course, and then there is the construction of the new lanes,” said Labrosse

Lastly, the council adopted a plan for Parking Lot C, an underutilized municipal lot located outside of the Ice House. It will soon become a residential area.

In other business, the council heard a special presentation from Karen Blumenfeld of GASP (Global Advisors Smokefree Policy). She proposed a new enforcement policy to prevent people from smoking inside city parks.

Labrosse said the proposal would be further discussed before moving forward.

“I was a cigarette smoker for years. Back in the day, it was commonplace for a coach to smoke cigarettes on the field. It was old school. We’ve learned so much through the years, and this is a no-brainer to do this. Our children don’t need to be subjected to second-hand smoke,” Labrosse said.

Finally, members of the community addressed the council about Earl Warden, a recreation leader who was suspended without pay on Jan. 10 by city officials for undisclosed reasons.

Warden worked in the recreation department and handled tasks such as organizing sports

schedules.

"It has been a disaster without him," said Rodney Moses, who spoke in front of the council, pleading for Warden's return. "I coach the girls' basketball team, and my daughter participates in the program and there have been no games."

The council refused to comment as a hearing is pending, but John Labrosse said he was very sympathetic to the residents' concerns and pledged to resolve the matter quickly.

"This is the first I've heard that games and practices are being canceled," Labrosse said. "Since it's only a suspension, we can't just hire a replacement. I agree with all of you that practices should resume."

Councilman David Sims also promised to get the youth sports back on track.

"I got a call about the basketball games last night. To answer your question about why practices weren't scheduled, I do not know. But after last night, games are being set up."

<http://www.cntyseat.com/main-street-becoming-two-way/>