

**PENNINGTON BOROUGH
REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
October 23, 2024, 7:00 PM**

Mayor Davy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. He stated that the meeting was being held via a Zoom webinar and access to the meeting had been noticed.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Gian Paolo Caminiti, Kit Chandler, Jim Davy, Amy Kassler-Taub, Jim Reilly, Nadine Stern

BOARD PROFESSIONALS PRESENT: Jim Kyle, Planner, KMA Associates, Brandon Fetzer, Engineer, Van Note Harvey & Associates, Kaitlyn Macellaro, Board Secretary

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Davy stated that this is an informal meeting of the Pennington Borough Redevelopment Committee on the redevelopment of the existing municipal landfill. He clarified that redevelopment on this site is not inimate and there is still an ongoing environmental investigation. He said that Pennington Borough has been approved by the DEP for the next phase. He expressed that we want to engage with the community to gather input and ideas for eventual uses for the site.

Mr. Kyle said that he has been assisting the Borough with the redevelopment process on this property. He described that this commenced last year when the Mayor and Council adopted a resolution authorizing the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation report. He explained how his office prepared a detailed report, visited the property, looked at the structures on the property and reviewed the environmental information. He explained that he presented his report to the Planning Board in October of 2023. He showed the three properties that were studied and owned by the Borough are block 206 lots 4, 5 and 6. He described that block 4 is about an acre lot, it is located behind Pennington Pizza Grille and it fronts on Broemel Place. He explained how it is undeveloped and mostly wooded. He stated that the only thing on the property is a driveway and a small concrete parking pad. He explained how the main lot, lot 5, is where the former landfill is located. He explained how the Pennington Fire Company is located on lot 6 and a portion of their parking lot is constructed on lot 5. He stated how we have the municipal public water supply well and an access from Broemel Place with a gravel road that runs through the center of it. He said that the Department of Public Works was utilizing a structure on this site for some of their operations. He described how the landfill is about a 65,000 cubic yard volume of waste that was there, according to the report from Excel. He stated that this landfill operated from 1954 to the early 1980's. He said that there is an old brick well house and an old steel water tank on lot 12. He shared some photos from his preliminary report of the structures on the property. He explained how the Planning Board recommended to the governing body that the property met the criteria in the redevelopment law and recommended that it be designated as an area of redevelopment. He stated that he sent the resolution to the

47 Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and that recommendation was approved. He
48 explained that we do have a redevelopment area established that includes lots 4, 5 and
49 12 and totals about eight and a half acres altogether. He shared the maps showing the
50 flood hazard areas, riparian zones and wetlands. Mayor Davy stated that it doesn't
51 leave us with a lot of developed property with the constraints that Mr. Kyle explained.
52 He clarified that DEP has not concluded with their environmental investigation. Mr. Kyle
53 stated that the two options for remediation are remove the waste that is in the ground
54 and take it somewhere else or cap the landfill. Mayor Davy asked if there was any
55 member of the public who had joined the meeting and had ideas regarding the landfill.

56
57 Sara Taksler, 119 Laning Avenue, thanked the Committee for having this meeting to
58 think of ways to develop the community. She suggested to have places for children to
59 hang out, in particular the property right next to the middle and high school. She stated
60 that there is a place called the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, New York that
61 is a non-profit organization where anyone in the community can come and take film
62 classes. She explained that an art and film center can be developed in Pennington
63 where there can be movies, concerts, camps and different classes offered to the
64 community. She stated that she is going to send a link for the Jacob Burns Film Center
65 to the Pennington Borough Administrator, Gian Paolo Caminiti.

66
67 Mary Ternoey, 32 Abey Drive, asked what the specific need is for changing the status of
68 the landfill area. She asked how we can satisfy that need if we do not change the status
69 of that area. Mr. Kyle said that they did not identify a specific need. He stated that it is in
70 a good location in the Borough, close to our commercial corridor and opens up other
71 sources of funding for the Borough. Ms. Ternoey asked if we are considering the impact
72 of changing this area given that the intersection has a vulnerability to flooding. Mayor
73 Davy said that they are taking all of that into consideration.

74
75 Dan Pace, 9 Railroad Place, thanked the Committee for having this meeting. He stated
76 that the concrete parking pad that Mr. Kyle referred to in lot 4 was an oil refill center for
77 trucks to fill up. He explained that the landfill is a great place for a business or some sort
78 of a commercial development. He said that the building on lot 12 is in terrible shape and
79 would like to see a redeveloper stabilize that building for Borough use. Mr. Kyle stated
80 that there is a wetlands area in the corner of lots 4 and 5. Mr. Pace said that there was
81 a pond in between lots 4 and 5 at one time where firefighters refilled their water tanks
82 from.

83
84 Peter McDonough, 111 North Main Street, thanked the Commission for having this
85 meeting and everything they do for the Borough. He asked what the environmental
86 quality is on the stream around the landfill that is underground and if it has been tested.
87 Mr. Kyle stated that the contamination on the property is in the soil and the groundwater
88 on the property. He explained that the stream is a regulated water body and cannot be
89 removed, so it will have to be incorporated into the redevelopment plan.

90
91 Eric Holtermann, 45 North Main Street, stated that he was going to look more into the
92 brick building that Mr. Pace referred to. He asked what you are able to build and where,
93 particularly in the large buffer and riparian zones. He asked if we are able to build
94 elevated structures that would be above flood level. Mr. Fetzer explained that you can
95 have elevated buildings, but the problem is getting to them.

96 Andrew Jackson, 4 Walking Purchase Drive, stated that he has been interested in the
97 landfill since he joined the Planning Board. He stated that you wouldn't be able to build
98 elevated roads and parking lots in that area. He explained that it would be about \$1.2
99 million to cap the landfill and that money could be used elsewhere. He said that the
100 landfill will become impervious once you cap it and will exacerbate the flooding problem.
101 He suggested that we remove the landfill, return it to green fields and possibly combine
102 the development with what is on Route 31 already. He wondered if NJ Transit would be
103 interested in reinstituting trains between West Trenton and Boundbrook and using the
104 landfill site as a train center.

105
106 Susan Bristol, The Watershed Institute, agreed with Mr. Jackson on the concerns about
107 capping the landfill and creating the unbelievable amount of impervious surface. She
108 stated that returning to green fields would open an opportunity for some restorative
109 work. She asked if Mr. Kyle knows that there are groundwater and soil issues or if he is
110 anticipating that. Mr. Kyle confirmed that the LRSP identified soil and groundwater
111 contamination and it will be included in their report. Mr. Kyle stated that he doesn't know
112 exactly what kind of pollutants, but he knows they are not good ones. Ms. Bristol asked
113 if the well that Mr. Kyle was referring to is a drinking water system well that is no longer
114 in use. Mr. Kyle said that there are two public water supply wells and one is closed and
115 the other one that is currently operating has treatment systems on it. Ms. Bristol asked if
116 they are treating for PFAS. Mayor Davy stated that we are not investigating PFAS yet.
117 Ms. Bristol concluded that this property needs to be looked at in a restorative way and it
118 might be a good idea to add on to an existing commercial site.

119
120 Mr. Holtermann asked if there would be enough water the stream were to be opened
121 and then connected to the same stream running through the Blackwell property. He
122 stated that it can have a walkway alongside of the stream that can connect a couple
123 parts of town. Mr. Kyle said that it is a possibility.

124
125 Mr. Jackson asked the Mayor what his expectations are on the ability to convert the
126 landfill site to one that generates revenue for the Borough. Mayor Davy stated that he
127 heard some great ideas tonight and he would hope to see some financial benefit to the
128 Borough as long as we do it environmentally safe.

129
130 Mr. Jackson asked if we have talked to Pennington School and Ms. Chandler confirmed
131 that the Pennington School does not pay property taxes.

132
133 Mr. Jackson asked what we can do to improve the crossing of West Delaware and
134 Route 31. He explained that some of the land from the landfill could be used for the
135 turning circles that would be needed if we wanted to put an overpass across Route 31.

136
137 Mr. Kyle stated that we might have more meetings in the future to solicit the public's
138 input with more data available. Mayor Davy encouraged everyone to email or write him
139 a letter with some ideas for the landfill site.

140
141 Ms. Stern asked what the next steps are and in what kind of timeline. Mr. Kyle said the
142 next step would be to move forward with a redevelopment plan. He said we could send
143 out a request for proposals to potential redevelopers to provide us with their ideas. He
144 also said that we can get ideas internally and then share with the public at a later date.

To summarize, below is a list of community ideas for Pennington Borough Landfill Redevelopment:

Recreation & Cultural Uses

- Youth-focused community center (similar to Jacobs Burns Film Theater model)
- Arts and cultural center
- Parks and recreational spaces
- Walking paths along Lewis Brook
- Open space preservation

Environmental Considerations

- Stormwater management integration for Rt. 31 and Delaware Avenue
- Stream water quality improvement for downstream benefits
- Restorative environmental features
- Minimize new impervious surfaces
- Consider landfill waste removal to increase usable space
- Preserve historic brick well house

Infrastructure & Development

- Integration with potential Rt. 31/Delaware Avenue overpass
- Future railroad stop consideration
- Partnership opportunities with Pennington School
- Commercial development options

Ms. Chandler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stern to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor to adjourn via voice vote at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Macellaro
Planning Board Secretary