

A Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge was called to order by Mayor Sarlo at 6:02 PM on April 18, 2011, in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 85 Humboldt Street, Wood-Ridge, New Jersey.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLLCALL: Mayor: Paul A. Sarlo
Council: Dominick Azzolini
Thomas Gonnella
Catherine Cassidy (absent)
Ezio Altamura
Edward Marino
Joseph DiMarco
Borough Attorney: Paul S. Barbire
Borough Clerk: Diane Thornley
Borough Admin: Chris Eilert

SUNSHINE NOTICE:

This meeting is being held in accordance with P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, and the notice requirements of the law have been met by appropriate notice being forwarded to The Record, The Herald News, and Star Ledger setting forth the date, time and place of said meeting and by posting a copy of same on the Municipal Bulletin Board.

DISCUSSION:

New Jersey Transit proposed train station at Wesmont Station

Borough Administrator Chris Eilert went over the time line.

In November & December 2010-New Jersey Transit engineers advised that they would have to do a platform and that the train cannot run on a curve.

A question was asked why the people were not notified. They were advised there wasn't a need to do a 200 ft. variance. NJ Transit sent out a letter in January or February to the resident's in the area.

Mrs. Geis, a resident, said she received the letter in March.

Mayor Sarlo advised there will not be any parking on any street and that there will be no public access to the train, they will do everything to keep the dead ends and there will be a noise barrier.

Mr. John Leone, Mr. Robert Edwards and Mr. Kevin O'Connor of NJ Transit, were present.

A question to NJ Transit was asked as to why this train was being moved from what was previously thought. They were advised that it was done for safety.

Mr. Robert Edwards, Project Manager, talked about the technical aspects of the project. They have now discovered that there is a sharp curve and a high level. This is a safety issue for the riding public. It needs to be built on a straight track and needs to conform to the law; built on a high level platform. There will be four cars and an engine, approximately 385 ft. long. The track speed will be approximately 50 mph. He advised there is a need to plan for the future.

Mr. Kevin O'Connor spoke on the gap of the platform. There can not be any gaps at the platform to the train.

Mayor Sarlo also spoke on the height of the platform. It will be about 4 ft 3 in. It will be concrete and will have a canopy for customers. It will be approximately 24 ft. wide. When the train horns need to blow, they will start as one long blow. The platform will be approximately 50 to 60 ft. long away from homes. A noise wall/panel concept will be erected, about 18 - 20 ft. on Jocelyn Ave. by the basketball court. Landscaping will be done and a significant buffer.

Mayor Sarlo said he will meet with Farmland Dairies, regarding the tracks in that area. He brought to NJ Transits attention that there is a bridge in that location.. This will be looked into. He also spoke on the construction. There will be air testing with the dust. There will be no drilling of dirt or the foundation.

A question was asked about the safety.

Chief Rutigliano advised in the past, people have crossed by foot over the tracks. A wall would be helpful; a pedestrian buffer. NJ Transit will police the area.

Mr. Rick DelGercio, Appraisal Systems - he gave a background as an appraiser. He feels a positive benefit to real estate values. Towns that have been built around train areas seem to benefit.

NJ Transit set up pictures and diagrams of the work they will be doing.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Mayor Sarlo declared the Hearing of Citizens to be open. Anyone wishing to speak please come to the microphone in front of the room and state your name and address. Please speak clearly into the microphone.

Mr. Michael Dobbs 144 Helm Ave - he asked if you can't do a curve could sliders be done. NJ Transit advised with 4 to 7 train cars of all different configurations, a bridge plate would be difficult.

Caroline Rosensteel 166 Palmer Terrace - she asked what streets will be dead end. She was advised Wood-Ridge Ave, Helm and Jocelyn. She also asked what the volume will be. She was advised that there will be 250 to 300 people on a daily basis with the new development.

Mayor Sarlo advised the new development is needed. Our tax base would have been on the verge of collapse. One third of our property tax is Curtis Wright. They were 12 to 15% of our tax base and they were ratables for the town.

Mr. Gerry Lanzerotti 167 Jocelyn - he asked where the tracks will start and also why it is not near Passaic Street.

Ms. Lisa DeVoursney 229 Highland - asked where people will be parking.

Mrs. Geis 128 Helm - she received a letter on March 18th. She advised people from other parts of town would not know about the train station. Why was it just a letter for the people on Helm, Jocelyn and Wood-Ridge Ave.

The Engineer from NJ Transit advised that there is nothing set in stone at his time and a panel will be put up on NJ Transit property.

Mr. Ross 128 Helm - wanted to know how high the platform will be. He also asked Mr. DelGercio about the study that was done on the value of homes. Mr. Ross said that 75 to 100 homes will be effected not just four or five. Mr. DelGercio advised that if a home is immediately adjacent to active railroad tracks it will have a negative effect. But if tracks already exist it will have to go case by case.

One solution - there is a building on Donna Drive for sale; maybe this could be made into a Park & Ride. Not harming the quality of life.

Mr. Ross was asked if he was an attorney. He said not a practicing attorney.

Mr. John Wollerman 63 Hill St. - he asked about parking. Will there be a parking lot on Highland Avenue. Borough Administrator Eilert answered at the dead end of Highland on current MOW property; will go off Passaic St & Main St.

Pat Zaccario 158 Palmer Terrace - she asked how often will the trains pass by, and how often will the horns blow, how frequent. Mayor Sarlo advised that it will start in the Carlstadt area. NJ Transit advised that it will be one long horn and it will be weekdays, three trains starting at 5:45 AM to 1 AM. There will be no blowing of horns in the dark.

Janice DeTore 158 Main Avenue - she asked about the noise, the accelerating or deceleration-screeching. NJ Transit advised that it does have an impact. It is already on an existing track, the horn blows in daylight hours. They could put up a wall, not a noise wall, a decorative wall. Mrs. DeTore advised that 10 years ago would have been an ideal time for development.

Mayor Sarlo advised that back in 2000 they talked about 800 homes being built now there will be approximately 600. It has been modified. Everything should be within walking distance.

Mr. John Branda 139 Helm Avenue - he advised he is against the project. He has been in Wood-Ridge 27 years. Spoke on the station and the people east supporting it.

Mr. DeVoursney 229 Highland Avenue - he asked about Westmont Station. Who will start the homes first? Mayor Sarlo responded that the developer is committed to this transit village. Why is the developer not here tonight? Mayor Sarlo responded he was invited and he did not attend.

Mr. Philip Torcivia 127 Helm Avenue - he advised he is below 14th Street. It is very desirable down there. Train is very close to fence. He had pictures. He needs some moral support. Questioned what they call a "Gap Mitagator".

Sharon Zaccone 136 Jocelyn Avenue - she asked what has changed. Why was it alright to have the train on the curve back then? NJ Transit advised they can't give a specific answer. Chris Eilert explained that it was a concept then, not engineered and tested.

Angela Lange 166 Helm Avenue - she feels something can be done with the gap. Maybe they can do something like they do with wheel chair lifts. NJ Transit advised that would tie up all the trains.

Jim Silvestri 185 Helm Avenue - it is going to change the existing life style; the peace and quiet.

Eugene Basich 135 Helm Avenue - he spoke about 80 West and beyond; a bridge outside the project limits. Can we go under the bridge? He also spoke about flooding.

Richard Vincent 193 Jocelyn Avenue - He asked what the parking area size is.

Christine Kean Helm Avenue - she asked how high the wall will be.

Lisa Carfi 130 Jocelyn Avenue - she asked how high the tower will be. She's on the southern end of the tennis courts.

Nancy Cook 213 14th Street - She asked what the hopper to 14th will be. If it's not a dead end. She was advised that they are not there yet.

Robert Zaccone 136 Jocelyn Avenue - spoke on the signal issue. What is the alternative?

Sharon Zaccone 136 Jocelyn Avenue - talked about some type of shuttle.

Amy Christiana 147 Helm Avenue - spoke on the value of the homes. Will the value depreciate?

Claire Tomes 131 Helm Avenue - spoke on the warehouse running behind the tracks. There were trees that were covering it, now they are cut down. She wanted to know where the wall will start. She was advised that it will start at the tennis court and go south.

Stephen Borsh 135 Wood-Ridge Avenue - spoke on the wall.

Kimberle Mennella 171 Arnot Place - she was concerned about noise pollution. It was advised that the Planning Board would send out a letter about property maintenance.

Mayor Sarlo called for a 5 minute recess at 8:55 PM

Mayor Sarlo called the meeting back to order at 9:10 PM.

Robert Riccadella 222 10th Street - he advised that he now hears the train from the MOW. He asked if the MOW is still going to be there or will it be moved.

Christine Kean Helm Avenue - questioned the parking lot. Will there be another site plan, when will they be getting the fence and will there be a time limit on parking.

Mrs. Pat Geis 128 Helm Avenue - she asked if there could be an open meeting with Farmland Dairies to see if something could be arranged with them. She wanted to know if this is a done deal.

Ms. Glotzbier 140 Jocelyn Avenue - what would it cost for sliders and could they could get an estimate.

Jim Silvestri 185 Helm Avenue - asked about getting federal money.

Seeing none and hearing none further, the Mayor declared the Hearing of Citizens closed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Since there was no further business to come before the Council, Councilman Azzolini seconded by Councilman Gonnella moved for adjournment. By unanimous vote of the members of the Council present, the Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge held on April 18, 2011 was duly adjourned at 9:22 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


DIANE THORNLEY, Borough Clerk