



# CITY OF NEWARK

## CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION

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**City Administration Building**  
37101 Newark Boulevard  
City Council Chambers, 6<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
5:30 p.m.

### **Minutes** **Special Meeting**

**Thursday, December 12, 2019**

#### **A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor Nagy called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were Council Members Collazo, Bucci and Hannon, and Planning Commissioners Fitts, Otterstetter, Aguilar, Becker and Bridges. Council Member Freitas was absent as he owns property in the area to be discussed.

Vice Mayor Collazo stated she was recusing herself as she owns property in the area to be discussed. Vice Mayor Collazo exited the City Council Chambers.

#### **B. JOINT WORK SESSION ON THE OLD TOWN NEWARK SPECIFIC PLAN**

Deputy Community Development Director Interiano introduced the consultants Mark Rhoades, Principal for Rhoades Planning Group; Jean Eisberg, Project Manager for Lexington Planning; and Jane Lin, Principal for Urban Fields Studio.

Deputy Community Development Director Interiano stated that the City began this plan in 2018 with the goal of revitalizing Old Town by incorporating a vibrant mixed-use area to attract ground retail with residential above. The plan would include a new streetscape to enhance the look of the area and be pedestrian-friendly.

The City has adopted a vision for this area through the general plan, completed studies, and adopted mixed-use zoning. The consultant's purpose is to identify why this vision has not been implemented and identify what changes should be made to carry out implementation and better facilitate that vision.

Representatives from the Rhoades Planning Group gave their presentation (on file with the City Clerk). The goals that have emanated from previous studies over the past 18 months and the two community workshops are: 1) Give Old Town a sense of place, 2) Create a walkable, pedestrian environment with streetscape enhancements on Thornton Avenue, 3) Keep local community members in the neighborhood, 4) Align development standards with neighborhood and market expectations to revitalize the neighborhood, and 5) Strengthen retail in the commercial core to attract more customers.

Council Members and Planning Commissioners had concerns about rents rising, gentrification, and incentivizing property owners to invest money into upgrading their

properties. There were also concerns with traffic and parking issues, height limits, and funding possibilities.

Ms. Lin presented the streetscape as a way to incentivize retailers and property owners to invest in their properties. If the City were to invest in redesigning the infrastructure it could motivate property owners to develop their properties. The Old Town Newark Specific Plan 35% schematic design can be used to apply for grant money to complete the road improvements.

At the next meeting the City Council and Planning Commission would like to see:

1. Average area rents from neighboring cities for comparison;
2. Rental rates as compared to square footage construction costs that would need to be achieved in order to break even;
3. The traffic impact on Thornton Avenue on the morning and evening commutes
4. A list of cities in the Bay Area utilizing three-story structures;
5. Potential areas for parking (either surface or structure) and how many parking spaces could be allocated; and
6. When the traffic study is complete, make sure the City's streets policy is included in the plan.

Ms. Eisberg anticipated that the Old Town Specific Plan would be drafted by spring.

## **C. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Nagy adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.