

Street, reduce size of pedestrian pathways coming from Centre Street, add more parking). RDG tried to redesign the Piazza concept so it would have two fronts – one on Park and one on the greenway, but it was not practical since the train station and medical office building parking lot is a one-way direction and needs to provide a means of egress. Putting the egress on to Park Avenue would result in a vehicular division between the Piazza and Centre Street land uses, which would be detrimental to the linkages we are trying to create between the Piazza and Centre Street. Since we will need more parking to accommodate the requested increase in building square footage, and given council member's concerns about parking, RDG removed the twin residences and townhouses that were along Chestnut and replaced them with parking. Originally, it was believed that the Borough would need to include residential to entice a developer to want to do the retail aspect of the project - - however, when RDG prepared a financial feasibility analysis, it appears there would be minimal profit, given the feedback on the residential real estate market in Merchantville. Originally, the committee discussed selling some residential lots off and putting that money into some of the civic oriented aspects of the redevelopment project (splash pad, pavers, lighting, street art, etc).

The group discussed that there is a tradeoff between parking and residential uses. If residential uses are going to give us some added benefit (like money to be able to do other things, or serve as enticement for a developer to do commercial aspects, then it is worth it). There was a discussion that we only have one shot at commercial in the Borough and that is in the downtown – the rest of the town is zoned for residential purposes. Residential on Chestnut, near Park Ave intersection, is more palatable because it is further removed from the heart of the downtown. It is not desired on the first floor of Centre or Park.

Janet and Pete met with First Montgomery Group and showed them the concepts. The developer suggests that it should have more residential density to make it enticing to them.

3. UPDATES (If any)

1. Verizon and/or Grace Episcopal Church Parking Lots – still working on this
2. Environmental Contamination – no response from ERI
3. Demolition/Acquisition - brewery going into EMS building, previously considered for demolition
4. Bike Path Extension into Pennsauken – Pennsauken still trying to work out with NJ Transit
5. Circulation – NJDOT is launching a pilot program for the design and construction of modern roundabouts. NJDOT is funding one roundabout per county. If a roundabout could get funded there, discussion about needing to make sure that it is still pedestrian friendly, given the greenway.

4. NEXT MEETING DATE

Mara will email potential dates for next meeting. She will start drafting language for the Redevelopment Plan Amendment. The committee will discuss permitted uses, design and architectural guidelines at next meeting. Residential uses on the first floor of Chestnut Avenue could be identified as conditional uses, similar to the multi-family district conditional uses in the zoning ordinance. Mara will prepare draft and solicit feedback at next meeting.

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It looks like the committee will be including multiple concepts in the Redevelopment Plan Amendment to illustrate development opportunities, while leaving language in the Plan for flexibility for other designs that a developer may bring forward.