



MEETING #6.4: Runnemede – WORKSHOP #4

September 27, 2008
Meeting Notes

ATTENDANCE LIST		
NAME	AFFILIATION	SECTOR
Betteridge, Ginney	Mayor, Runnemede	Government
Hornibrook, Cathy	Democratic Club	Resident
Keener, Mark	Brown & Keener	Consultant
Kull, Bob	Brown & Keener	Consultant
Levecchia, Andrew	Camden County Imp. Auth.	Government
Moore, Bernard	Council, Runnemede	Government
Ragonese, Sam	Attorney	Business, Property owner
Scaramuzzo, Lisa,	Council, Runnemede	Government

This was the fourth of the four Black Horse Pike RCEDS Public Workshops. These “public invited!” sessions provide an opportunity to hear the thoughts and ideas generated by the consultant team and the steering committee and, more importantly, to share perspectives from businesses and residents along the Pike.

Welcome & Introductions

- The fourth Black Horse Pike (BHP) Workshop began with a review by Andrew Levecchia of project purpose and work-to-date.

What the Workshop worked on:

- Bob Kull and Mark Keener lead a video block-by-block “windshield tour” of the Runnemede section of the Pike between NJ Turnpike and Eveshem Rd. Several “BIG PICTURE” themes were discussed:
 1. Parcels in the northern section of the Pike near Exit 3 of the Turnpike could attract hotels and the sort of national retailers that often cluster in the vicinity of exit ramps to serve travelers. It was observed that the tree line limits visibility at this peculiar exit more than others, and even more significantly, land is not available to host the type of businesses and the parking generally required.
 2. Mayor Betteridge characterized BHP’s potential as being quite different for each of the “bookends”. The group agreed, observing that the North “bookend” could support mostly Turnpike /hospitality related businesses, though now there a number of civic functions cluster here: Recreation facilities, Senior Center, and the Library. Frontage of the southern end near

Evesham Rd. is presently occupied by strong businesses. Our Downtown is between “the bookends, concentrated between First and Forth.

3. A coordinated approach to improve competitiveness of BHP businesses would:
 - Allocate parking resources. Enable, encourage shared parking
 - “Theme” and market development and business opportunities according to location so as to manage competition between towns, and to limit repetition and redundancy (“do we need another bank?”)
 - Define synergistic businesses and recruit them to available properties.
 - Update zoning to both accommodate requirements of contemporary retailers and reflect the qualities of Runnemede’s “main street”.
- More detailed highlights from the video “windshield tour”:
 1. The new Wawa shows the tendency of retailers to place signage high to mark their location from a distance. Will this initiate a movement toward “skying the signs” ever higher?
 2. Sam Rogonese observed that the existing buildings and lot configuration in the blocks between 5th and 8th are not conducive to contemporary retail requirements. He described some properties as “the eyesores” recognizing that these are intrinsically difficult places to operate a business. He points out that zoning could be updated, redevelopment tools might help.
 3. An idea that has been discussed in the Borough would create an opportunity for Turnpike-related hospitality businesses involves a land-swap to move the nearby public playing fields to available (privately owned) land to the east.
 4. It was observed that the Library / Senior center facility might be better located at the town center, close to the Post Office.
 5. The borough will soon be starting phase 2 of streetscape improvements which will include landscape, lighting, benches and trash bins. Andrew will be getting a copy of the plans. No mention was made of wayfinding signs. Status?
 6. Flooding tends to occur on the west side. In general, the ground slopes east to west. “Irish Hill” is highest point.
 7. Bernie Moore recalled that a friend of his refers to “Pike towns” like “shore towns”, acknowledging that they share certain qualities and are sub-consciously grouped in peoples minds.
 8. The RR R.O.W. is a bike path.
 9. Sam R and Bernie M. recalled that there were once several choices of in-town restaurants to take a business client to lunch. Now there are none.
 10. The intersection of BHP and Clements Bridge Rd. changed dramatically with
 - the relocation of the borough’s municipal[al building to the NE corner,
 - a new Sports Bar about to open and striping and signalization project, completed in 2005(?).

- Further changes are anticipated as the borough's revitalization project progresses that will add plants and furnishings as well as improved crosswalks.
- Future improvements discussed included a Crossing intersection – texture “traffic Table”

11. Specific areas of opportunity that should be evaluated in a coordinated way:

- The area on the east side of BHP between First and Clements Bridge Rd.
- Parcels along Clements Bridge Rd. between BHP and Lindsey. Parking lot at the corner of central and First.
- Fire Hall at the intersection of Central and Second.

Next Steps

- Meeting will be circulated to participants and Steering Committee for their review and comments. Workshop presentation and an annotated map will be posted shortly at <http://blackhorsepike.blogspot.com>.
- **A the Steering Committee with convene to review input from each of the four workshops on....**