

**MINUTES OF THE JULY 16, 2019
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
HELD AT 4:45PM
FREEHOLDERS MEETING ROOM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the July 16, 2019 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:45pm in the Freeholders Meeting Room. The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Public Meetings Statement

The Roll was called and the following were in Attendance:

Bernie Navatto, Jr, Chairman
Christopher Kelly, Vice Chairman
Marian Fenwick, Member
John Schneider, Member
John Lindner, Member
Dennis Qunilan, 1st Alternate
Brian Gallagher, Freeholder Liaison
Matthew Loper, Secretary/County Engineer

John Lore, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

Absent

Al Ellis, Member
William Zeigler, 2nd Alternate
Director Freeholder Levine

Also Present:

Walter Lane, Director of Planning
Anthony McCracken, Assistant Director
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner
Laurette Kratina, Chief of Strategic Planning
Andras Holzmann, Senior Planner
Aarthy Sabesan, Senior Planner - GIS
Cynthia Mellusi, Office Manager

Approval of June 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for the motion to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2019 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Marian Fenwick. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously with the exception of Freeholder Gallagher who abstained.

Discussion/Presentation Items:

RideWise Update

Director of Planning Walter Lane introduced Donna Allison, Executive Director, RideWise, to the Board. Executive Director Donna Allison thanked the Board for the opportunity to address the Board and provide an update on the activities RideWise. The mission of RideWise is to connect people and businesses to safe and sustainable travel options that enhance quality of life and create a vibrant economy. RideWise is governed by an independent Board of Directors and is staffed by 5 full time employees. Its core principles are as follows:

- Education the community on safe and efficient ways to travel
- Advocating for transportation options and enhancements that improve mobility and help the environment
- Collaboration with the business community to help employee mobility and to connect people to jobs
- Engaging with local government and communities to increase opportunities for biking and walking

Ms. Allison explained the Travel Training services that are provided. The training consists of a comprehensive classroom session as well as hands-on instruction designed to teach individuals how to travel safely and independently on public transportation. She explained the Smart Pedestrian Safety Campaign, which is public education effort that aims to raise awareness of pedestrian and motorist laws and is part of a statewide public education, awareness, and behavioral change campaign developed by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. Street Smart promotes safe travel behavior through education and enforcement of pedestrian safety laws. Ms. Allison discussed RideWise's work on Safe Routes to School programs and well how her organization has partner with many different groups and municipalities to advance safe and sustainable travel options.

A brief Q&A was held after presentation with Board Members and Ms. Allison. Director of Planning Walter Lane noted that Ms. Allison and the entire RideWise Team has been excellent partners and have helped the Planning Division advance the County's planning projects. He thanked Ms. Allison for all of her assistance over the years.

Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County Study Final Report

Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner and Andras Holzmann, Senior Planner, provide the Board a summary of findings and recommendations from the final report for the Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County Study.

Supervising Transportation Planner Wedeen reported the Walk Bike Hike Somerset County Connecting Vibrant Communities sub-regional study was recently completed on June 30th. He summarized the purpose of the study, vision statement, the three part planning process and Design Book. The purpose of the study is to develop a network of bike lanes, trails and greenways to create a seamless network of facilities to improve mobility in Somerset County. The three part planning process included a summary of community engagement activities, a

summary of a technical assessment of existing conditions and the development of a framework strategy for building a potential network. Mr. Wedeen described the tremendous amount of public comments that were received for this project.

Senior Planner Andras Holzmann provided an overview of the findings of the existing conditions technical analysis. He summarized the findings of the framework strategy which included maps showing the existing and potential on and off road networks. He also described variety of facility types including trails, shared use path (side-path bicycle lanes) and shared lanes. The report also contains five (5) Focus Area Concept Plans, which provide detailed recommendations. .

Mr. Wedeen stressed that the findings of this study are the starting point for refining the recommendations and advancing the implementation of appropriate and feasible projects. He also provided an overview of the Design Guide which describes how proposed facilities should look, provides for consistent design across all locations and communities and which are rooted in established standards and build upon patterns in the existing landscape and communities. The final report and design guide will be posted on the Somerset County Planning Board web site during July/August.

A brief discussion about the Walk, Bike, Hike Study followed. Director Lane noted that the public outreach process as part of this study was recognized as Public Involvement Best Practice in the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's quarterly transportation planning magazine. He also reported the AARP of New Jersey had submitted the study and our public involvement process to the National Office of AARP to be featured in a national publication as a best practice. Director Lane thanked Mr Wedeen and Mr. Holzmann for all of their efforts and the recognition that this study has been receiving is a testament to their excellent work.

ACTION ITEMS/ITEMS INFORMATION ITEMS:

July 2019 Land Development Report and Approval of the June 2019 First Time Submissions

Tom D'Amico, Supervising Planner, stated there were no action items for the July County Planning Board Land Development Committee meeting therefore there was no meeting held.

The full County Planning Board must act on the first time submissions for the month of June which are in the Board Packet. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 34 submissions. There were no new lots proposed and one new lot created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 33,306 square feet of non-residential building space proposed and 233 multi-family units proposed. There was \$220,126 in improvement value paid and there was \$5,405 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board. Bernard V. Navatto, Jr did not participate in any discussion or take any action on the Namotur Towers and First Baptist Church site plans in Somerville.

Mr. D'Amico mentioned that after six months this year we are slightly ahead of the total reviews at this time for 2018. We are down in the number of proposed subdivision lots but moderately above last year's totals for lots filed with the County Clerk's office. This year we are over last year's total of multi-family units at this time last year by over 200 units with 1,219 units

proposed. During this year, the County is down in proposed square feet of non-residential space by over 670,000 square feet.

Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for a motion to approve the June 2019 first time submissions. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by John Lindner. The Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously with the exception of Bernie Navatto, Jr who recused himself from the Somerville submissions.

Preservation Plan Update

Tom D'Amico, Supervising Planner, stated that the County is undertaking an update of the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan and the development of a new Historic Preservation Plan. The County has contracted with Heritage Strategies to coordinate the report along with New Jersey Conservation Foundation to develop the Open Space plan, Land Stewardship Solutions to develop the Farmland Preservation Plan and Barton Ross and Partners to develop the Historic Preservation Plan. The GIS mapping is being handled by Washington College.

Mr. D'Amico stated that the consultants continue to make progress from the last meeting. The Consultant prepared a PowerPoint presentation for our public meeting on which was held on June 26th in the Freeholders Meeting Room. The presentation was reviewed by the Preservation Plan Steering Committee at their meeting on June 6th. After the PowerPoint presentation, which summarized the preliminary goals and strategies for all three sections of the plan as well as tourism, we received a number of questions or comments. For the most part the comments were positive and constructive. We have received three written comments right after the meeting and three additional email comments.

The Planning and Engineering Division Staff assigned to the project met with our new GIS planner which Walter will introduce to you at this time. Director Lane introduced the newest member of the Planning Division, Aarthy Sabesan, Senior Planner – GIS to the Board. Mr. D'Amico will be going over all of the maps and contacting our consultants and Washington College with our comments. Staff continues reviewing the various chapters of the plan. Staff has coordinated this project with the ongoing Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County Connecting Vibrant Communities Plan and the recently completed County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Wastewater Management Plan Update

Director of Planning Walter Lane reported on the work underway to complete the Wastewater Management Plan (WMP). Staff has been work with Maser Consulting to advance the GIS work needed to complete the WMP. He reported a meeting has been scheduled with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to review and approve the methodology that will be used to complete the build-out analysis. The notice for adoption of the Montgomery/Rocky Hill WMP Chapter will be published in the NJ Register for public comment on August 5, 2019. Director Lane stated that with the addition of Ms. Sabesan to the staff, the Planning Division is in positon to advance the completion of the WMP.

State Plan Update

Director of Planning Walter Lane reported the Planning Division continues to work with numerous municipalities on Center Designations and Plan Endorsement efforts. He summarized the results of a meeting with the Borough of Millstone, the Office for Planning Advocacy, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and staff to advance the re-designation of Millstone as a Village Center. NJDEP has raised some concerns about the previous work the Borough had completed. He reported that most of the concerns had been addressed so the Borough should be re-designated as a center in August. Issues related to the center designation and plan endorsement will be discussed in detail at the next Master Plan Committee meeting. Director Lane stated he will continue to highlight the County's success in advancing and implementing the State Plan not only at the County level but at the local level as well.

Public Comments

Chairman Navatto, Jr. opened the meeting to the public. There being no comments, the meeting was closed to the public.

Committee Reports


The Committee Reports were included in the meeting packet.

Next Meeting Date: August 20, 2019 @4:45pm

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for a motion to Adjourn. The motion was made by Freeholder Gallagher and seconded by Matt Loper. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew D. Loper, Secretary