

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2019
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
HELD AT 4:45PM
FREEHOLDERS MEETING ROOM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the September 17, 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 Quinlan, 1st Alternate
Brian Gallagher, Freeholder Liaison
Adam Slutsky, Alternate to County Engineer
John Lore, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

Absent

Al Ellis, Member
William Zeigler, 2nd Alternate
Director Freeholder Levine
Matthew Loper, Secretary/County Engineer

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
Nora Fekete, Planner
James Ruggieri, Principal Community Planner
Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner
Kaitlin Bundy, C&H Manager
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner
Aarthy Sabesan, Senior Planner - GIS
Cynthia Mellusi, Office Manager

Dennis Quinlan, 1st Alternate will be voting in place of Al Ellis, Member, at tonight's meeting. Adam Slutsky, Alternate to County Engineer will vote in place of Matt Loper, County Engineer at tonight's meeting.

Approval of August 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for the motion to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2019 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Marion Fenwick. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Discussion/Presentation Items:

Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission Update

Kaitlin Bundy, Manager of the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission, presented on the Commission's history and current programs and services, specifically on how they relate to the Commission's mission to educate and enrich the lives of County Residents by providing programs and services that preserve, promote and protect the Culture and Heritage of Somerset County.

Director of Planning Walter Lane stated under Ms. Bundy's leadership collaboration with the Cultural & Heritage Commission has grown tremendously. He also noted the Preservation Master Plan will contain recommendations on how Somerset County can participate in the United States 250th Anniversary Celebration activities and it is hoped that this will give the County an advantage when applying for grants funding for projects related to this effort.

ACTION ITEMS/ITEMS INFORMATION ITEMS:

Resolution Conceptually Approving a Development Agreement Between Sharbell Building Comp[any, LLC and the County of Somerset (Montgomery Crossing)

Nora Fekete, Planner, reported that Sharbell Building Company, LLC has submitted an application for the construction of 107 townhouse units, a 40-unit multi-family condominium building and associated improvements and recreation facilities located on Research Road in Montgomery Township. (just north of the intersection of CR518 & Research Rd)

The project is located within the 518 Corridor Improvement Area which location then triggers a pro rata monetary contribution obligation for improvements in this project area. The developer's fair share obligation toward 518 Corridor traffic improvement project has been determined to be \$136,427.00 A development agreement has been drafted formalizing the assessment and has been signed by the applicant. The developer has paid the contribution.

Ms. Fekete, requested the Board to conceptually approve the resolution approving a development agreement between Sharbell Building Company, LLC and County of Somerset (Montgomery Crossing) and send it to the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders for execution.

Chairman Navatto, Jr., asked for a motion to approve the resolution conceptually approving an agreement between Sharbell Building Company, LLC and the County of Somerset (Montgomery Crossing). The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Freeholder Gallagher. The Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

15 Mountain View Road, Warren Township-Request for Relief from Land Development Review Fees

Tom D'Amico, Supervising Planner, reported to the Board that the Land Development Committee acted on the appeal request concerning the 15 Mountainview Road project in Warren Township. The site was the previous headquarters of Chubb Insurance. Mr. D'Amico stated that the applicant, Somerset Associates, is proposing the construction of 1,958 parking spaces on the site. This includes a five-story parking garage with 1,200 space and 758 surface parking spaces throughout the site. In the County Planning Board review report of June 13, 2019, for the subject project, it was noted that the aforesaid project impacts a County facility (Martinsville Road, County Route 525). Therefore, the required total land development review, for this project, as indicated in the Somerset County Land Development Review Fee Schedule, is \$19,980. Since the applicant had already paid \$150 to the County, in the initial application for the project, the Land Development Review Fee now owed to the County totals \$19,830.

The applicant, in its correspondence to the County Planning Board, dated August 21, 2013 (received August 21, 2019), indicates that it does not intent to build any parking facilities at this time until it has a tenant which signs a lease and whose parking requirements are definitively established. The applicant requested that the Land Development Review Fee be reduced or deferred. County Engineering staff stated that they are currently reviewing the Traffic Impact Study for the project and that the project impacts the traffic signal at the intersection of Martinsville Road (County Route 525) and Mountainview Road.

After some discussion, the Board recommended that the appeal request be denied at this time since the project does impact County facilities. In addition, they noted the difficulties in monitoring the project for phased land development review fee payments and the precedent it would set for reducing or deferring a land development review fee payment.

Bernie Navavatto, Jr. asked for the motion to deny the fee request for 15 Mountain View Road, Warren Township. The motion was made by John Schnieder and seconded by Freeholder Gallagher. The Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

September 2019 Land Development Report and Approval of the August 2019 First Time Submissions

Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner, referred to the report in the Planning Board Packets.

At the September 11, 2019 meeting of the County Planning Board Land Development Committee the Committee reviewed a number of projects as well as the first time submissions for the month of August 2019. It was noted that there was no quorum for the meeting. Therefore, there were no official actions taken.

15 Mountainview Road Appeal Request, Warren

The Committee discussed the appeal request concerning the 15 Mountainview Road project in Warren Township. The site was the previous headquarters of Chubb Insurance. Thomas D'Amico stated that the applicant, Somerset Associates, is proposing the construction of 1,958 parking spaces on the site. This includes a five-story parking garage with 1,200 space and 758 surface parking spaces throughout the site. In the County Planning Board review report of June 13, 2019, for the subject project, it was noted that the aforesaid project impacts a County facility (Martinsville Road, County Route 525). Therefore, the required total land development review, for this project, as indicated in the Somerset County Land Development Review Fee Schedule, is \$19,980. Since the applicant had already paid \$150 to the County, in the initial application for the project, the Land Development Review Fee now owed to the County totals \$19,830.

The applicant, in its correspondence to the County Planning Board, dated August 21, 2013 (received August 21, 2019), indicates that it does not intent to build any parking facilities at this time until it has a tenant which signs a lease and whose parking requirements are definitively established. The applicant requested that the Land Development Review Fee be reduced or deferred. County Engineering staff stated that they are currently reviewing the Traffic Impact Study for the project and that the project impacts the traffic signal at the intersection of Martinsville Road (County Route 525) and Mountainview Road.

The Committee members in attendance recommended that the appeal request be denied at this time since the project does impact County facilities. In addition, they noted the difficulties in monitoring the project for phased land development review fee payments and the precedent it would set for reducing or deferring a land development review fee payment. It was noted that there was no quorum for the meeting. Therefore, there were no official action was taken.

Montgomery Crossing (Sharbell) Development Agreement, Montgomery

Nora Fekete stated that the Sharbell Building Company, LLC has submitted an application for the construction of 107 townhouse units, a 40-unit multi-family condominium building and associated improvements and recreation facilities located on Research Road (just north of the intersection of County Route 518 and Research Road) in Montgomery Township. The project is located within the 518 Corridor Improvement Area which location then triggers a pro rata monetary contribution obligation for improvements in this project area.

The developer's fair share obligation toward 518 Corridor Traffic Improvement Project has been determined to be \$136,427. A development agreement has been drafted formalizing the assessment. Planning Board Counsel has reviewed the agreement and said agreement has been signed by the applicant. The applicant has paid the aforesaid required contribution.

The Committee members in attendance recommended that the agreement be conceptually approved by the full Planning Board and then transmitted to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for its action. It was noted that there was no quorum for the meeting. Therefore, there were no official action was taken.

First Time Submissions

The Committee reviewed all first time submissions for the month of August 2019. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 41 submissions. There were no new lots proposed and no new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 14,932 square feet of non-residential building space and 40 multi-family units proposed. There was a total of \$196,527 in improvement value and \$11,010 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr. did not take any action on or participate in any discussion concerning the DGM at 80 West, LLC and Post Office Plaza Site Plan, projects in Somerville. As indicated earlier herein, since a quorum was not present at the scheduled meeting of the Land Development Committee, the full County Planning Board must approve the first time submissions for the month of August and take action on the 15 Mountainview Road Appeal Request and the Montgomery Crossing Development Agreement since said report is only unofficial without a quorum.

Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to approve the 2019 September Land Development Report. The motion was made by John Lindner and seconded by Chris Kelly. A Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

2020 Census Update

Director Lane provided a brief overview of the Planning Division's 2020 Census activities. He reported Ken Wedeen has been doing excellent work to promote the 2020 Census. The County's Complete Count Committee is scheduled to meet on September 19th. There has been excellent participation from our municipalities, County agencies and various non-profits who were invited to participate on the committee. At the kickoff meeting, there will be presentations from representatives from the US Census Bureau, the NJ Secretary of State's office and County staff. Maps of low census questionnaire response areas have been created for each municipality. There will also be a brainstorming session at the meeting to develop outreach strategies to ensure an accurate count of all residents in Somerset County. Director Lane reported that Mr. Wedeen made a presentation to the County Superintendent of Schools which was well received.

Creating Vibrant Neighborhoods Workshop

Laurette Kratina, Chief of Strategic Planning, stated approximately 40 people attended our "Creating Vibrant Neighborhoods Workshop" last Friday, Sept. 13th. We selected Matthew Kaplan as our keynote speaker. Mr. Kaplan is on the Board of the USGBC-NJ and Co-founder of ReVireo, Inc. ReVireo helps developers comply with energy code and energy efficiency green building programs. He was chosen for his success implementing high-performing residential development and redevelopment that meet LEED, Energy Star and other program standards.

At least 83 major residential development projects totaling nearly 9,000 homes which sets-aside some units for low- and moderate-income qualified households have been planned countywide pursuant to recent Mount Laurel IV Settlement Agreements. In addition, growth in general is on the rise countywide in recent years as our Land Development Review data shows.

Municipal development review checklists, codes and ordinances adopted many years ago tend to remain static, and as the need for more sustainable, resilient, healthier development and redevelopment grows, the time is right to look at ways these can be modernized and enhanced. Matthew Kaplan talked about ways municipal planners can achieve enhanced connectivity and mobility options in new residential development and redevelopment; strategies that can be used to incorporate sustainability and energy efficiency; ways new development and redevelopment can provide healthy safe living environments; and how development should be located and designed with resiliency in mind.

Mr. Kaplan talked about NJ's updated Energy Construction Code that took effect last week, various existing green building and energy efficiency programs including LEED (Homes, NC and ND), ENERGY STAR and Enterprise Green Communities. He then provided an overview of some case studies of development and redevelopment projects in Morristown, Hoboken and Sleepy Hollow, NY, and Somerville that achieve high-performance building and design standards. There was an implementation panel moderated by Jeanne Perantoni with the Energy Council and SSP Architects. Others serving on this panel included Cathleen Lewis, NJBPU – NJCEP, who provided information about the new Multi-Family Housing Program, Community solar and community energy planning program among other energy efficiency and conservation initiatives underway at the state-level. Nancy Quirk from Sustainable Jersey provided an overview of the actions municipalities can implement that support the creation of sustainable, resilient residential development and redevelopment projects, including their energy efficiency actions, green infrastructure strategic planning and implementation and green building checklist.

This panel was followed by an overview of County Planning Board initiatives that support sustainable, resilient infill and redevelopment given by Director of Planning Walter Lane. Mr. Lane talked about the following:

- Housing Element
- Walk-Bike-Hike Study
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County Phases I, II, & III
- Preservation Plan
- Regional Center Strategic Master Plan

Based on positive feedback received from event participants, staff will be looking into the potential to provide additional similar workshops in the future; such as one focused on water and green infrastructure and another focused on mobility and transportation electrification. Staff will also work with the public information officer on a press release aimed at sharing some of the workshop information with the public.

Director Lane thanked Ms. Kratina for all of her work to organize the workshop. He also thanked Freeholder Gallagher for suggesting the Planning Board and Energy Council hold this workshop. He thanked Freeholder Sooy for her support of this workshop.

Wastewater Management Plan Update

Director Lane reported that progress continues to be made to complete the Wastewater Management Plan (WMP). There was a detailed discussion at the last Environment and Utilities Committee meeting as well as the recent Master Plan Committee on this project. The methodology to complete the WMP Buildout was sent to NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in late July and NJDEP provided some suggested changes which were incorporated into the revised methodology. Additional changes were suggested by NJDEP and said changes were discussed in detail with the Master Plan Committee. Based upon the direction of the Master Plan Committee, a revised methodology will be sent to NJDEP for approval. Director Lane stated he wanted a firm answer from NJDEP before work begins on the WMP Buildout Analysis. Two potential WMP Amendments were also discussed. He reported that he was informed just prior to tonight's meeting that action may need to be taken on one of the proposed amendments prior to next Board Meeting. Per the County's procedures, a special Environment and Utilities Committee meeting may be held in order to review and take action on the proposed amendment. The Board was polled and was comfortable with the Environment and Utilities Committee taking action on the proposed amendment prior to the next Board Meeting if necessary.

State Plan Update

Director of Planning Walter Lane reported there was a lengthy discussion regarding the State Plan at the recent Master Plan Committee meeting. He reported that he has had ongoing conversations with the new Executive Director of the Office of Planning Advocacy as well as NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) regarding Plan Endorsement. He gave an overview of his discussion with NJDEP's State Planning Commission representative about Plan Endorsement and it seems that the NJDEP will still push for changes to the Center Boundaries throughout the County. Director Lane stated he feels this will be an ongoing issues but he feels that we will be able to resolve these issues. Freeholder Robinson was nominated to be on the State Planning Commission which is a testament to her leadership and to the good planning work Somerset County has done over the years. Director Lane also reported he will be on a panel about the State Plan at the upcoming League of Municipalities Conference. He also reported he has had ongoing discussions with the new Executive Director of the Office of Planning Advocacy about how to streamline the Plan Endorsement Process.

Public Comments

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

Committee Reports

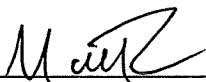
The Committee Reports were included in the meeting packet.

Next Meeting Date: October 15, 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 Chris Kelly and seconded by Freeholder Gallagher. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew D. Loper, Secretary

