

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 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 December 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:

Matthew Loper, Secretary/County Engineer
Marian Fenwick, Member
Al Ellis, Member
John Lindner, Member
Brian Gallagher, Freeholder Liaison
Dennis Quinlan, 1st Alternate
William Zeigler, 2nd Alternate
John Lore, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

Absent

Bernie Navatto, Jr, Chairman
Christopher Kelly, Vice Chairman
John Schneider, Member
Adam Slutsky, Alternate to County Engineer
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
Nora Fekete, Planner
Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner
James Ruggeri, Principal Community Planner
Aarthy Sabesan, Senior Planner – GIS
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner
Cynthia Mellusi, Office Manager

Matt Loper, County Engineer, will be conducting tonight's meeting in place of Bernie Navatto, Jr. Dennis Quinlan, 1st Alternate will be voting in place of Chris Kelly in tonight's meeting. William Ziegler, 2nd Alternate will be voting in place of John Schneider in tonight's meeting.

Approval of November 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Matt Loper asked for the motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by Freeholder Gallagher and seconded by Marian Fenwick. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS/ITEMS INFORMATION ITEMS:

Resolution Conceptually Approving a Development Agreement Between Kings Row Homes, LLC and the County of Somerset

Nora Fekete, Planner, stated that Kings Row Homes, LLC has submitted an application for site plan and major subdivision approval for a project to construct a 34 unit townhouse development consisting of 26, three bedroom townhouses and 8 two bedroom townhouses on Cedar Grove Lane (County Route 619) in Franklin Township.

The project is located within the Cedar Grove Lane Corridor Improvement Plan Area which location then triggers a pro rata monetary contribution obligation for improvements in this project area. The developer's fair share obligation toward Cedar Grove Lane Corridor Improvement Plan project has been determined to be \$11,289. Attached to the agreement is an assignment as the property will be sold to Fleet Franklin, LLC which will now have the responsibility of moving forward with the project which is the subject of this approved application.

A development agreement has been drafted formalizing the assessment and has been signed by the applicant. County Planning Board Counsel has reviewed the agreement. The developer has paid the contribution. Ms. Fekete requested the Board to conceptually approve the resolution approving a development agreement between Kings Row Homes, LLC and the County of Somerset and send it to the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders for execution.

Matt Loper asked for a motion to approve the resolution conceptually approving an agreement between Kings Row Homes, LLC and the County of Somerset. The motion was made by Freeholder Gallagher and seconded by Al Ellis. The Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

December 2019 Land Development Report and Approval of the November 2019 First Time Submissions

Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner, referred to the report in the Planning Board Packets. The December 11, 2019 meeting of the County Planning Board Land Development Committee was held in the Engineering Conference Room, County Administration Building in Somerville. The Committee reviewed a number of projects as well as the first time submissions for the month of November.

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The Committee recommended that the full County Planning Board conceptually approve the agreement and transmit it to the Freeholders for their approval.

First Time Submissions

The Committee reviewed all first time submissions for the month of November. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 25 submissions. There was one new lot proposed and one new lot created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 4,855 square feet of non-residential building space proposed. There was \$193,456 in improvement value and \$6,668 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Bernard Navatto did not participate in any discussion or take any action on the Morehouse Marcella, Ltd. site plan in Somerville.

Matt Loper asked for a motion to approve the 2019 December Land Development Report. The motion was made by Freeholder Gallagher and seconded by Marian Fenwick. A Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

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 Tom D'Amico 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 our last meeting. The Consultants have transmitted to us three additional chapters of the Farmland Preservation Plan, all seven revised chapters of the Historic Preservation Plan and six revised chapters of the Open Space Plan. He reported the County received the Existing and Pending Preserved Farmland Map and the Open Space Master Plan Map. Staff continues reviewing the various chapters of the plan. There has been some discussion concerning the total open space acreage. Staff has coordinated this project with the completed Walk, Bike, Hike

Somerset County Connecting Vibrant Communities Plan and the completed County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

2020 Census Update

Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner, stated Since the last Planning Board meeting staff was notified by the New Jersey State Complete Count Commission that Somerset County had been awarded a \$77,000 census grant to promote completing the 2020 census form to all county residents.

Planning staff completed the application process and submitted the final application to the New Jersey State Complete Count Commission this week. Staff has been working with the New York Regional Census Office partnership specialist to plan for upcoming events that will promote census 2020 to Somerset County residents and especially to residents in areas that are hard to count. Planning staff will be partnering with the Community Development Office, Cultural and Heritage Commission Public Information and other county divisions to communicate the importance of census 2020 beginning in January through June 30, 2020.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Laurette Kratina, The County Office of Emergency Management held a “Game of Extremes Workshop” that focused on Climate Adaptation – Heat and Flooding on December 9th. Approximately 15 local Emergency Management and Hazard Mitigation Officers attended. Bill Amann, Chair of the Somerset County Energy Council who received training through the Al Gore Climate Reality Initiative provided an overview of the causes and impacts of climate change. This presentation was followed by a table-top scenario-based exercise through which participants could learn about the impacts severe heat and flooding on municipal assets and operations, and the actions that can be taken to enable communities to maintain their core services and functions as conditions worsen due to climate change.

Some examples of potential actions that municipalities can undertake to minimize the future impacts of climate change that were discussed at the meeting included:

- updating building and zoning codes to prevent development in flood hazard areas, ensure new buildings are energy-efficient, and integrate green design solutions for managing stormwater;
- Implementing green street concepts;
- Restoring riparian stream corridors and implement tree planting programs to mitigate flood waters and as a strategy for reducing urban heat island effects in urban environments; and
- Assessing the feasibility of providing microgrids for crucial water, wastewater and health care facilities

Plans are underway for the next workshop in early 2020, which will focus on increasing Community Rating System participation, which is a voluntary incentive program available municipalities through the National Flood Insurance Program. Currently, 6 of the County’s municipalities are involved in the CRS Program.

Update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Master Plan Element

Director Lane reported on discussions between the County Planning Division and the Somerset County Business Partnership (SCBP) to develop a work program to update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Master Plan Element. As a member of the SCBP's Executive Committee, he worked to have the update of the CEDS be listed as one of the SCBP's priority projects for 2020. He reported the update of the CEDS is envisioned to be a surgical update rather than developing a completely new element since many of the strategies contained in the document remain valid. An example of a new focus area to be added is the recognition of federally designated "Opportunity Zones."

Director Lane reported the Highlands Council has indicated the Council would make funding available to update the current CEDS. A draft scope of work will be developed and shared with the Master Plan Committee for review prior to the submission of a grant application.

Highlands Council Plan Conformance Grant Application

Director of Planning Walter Lane stated the County had received Plan Conformance Status from the NJ Highlands Council many years ago. Since the County has been deemed in conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan, the County is eligible for grant funding to undertake projects that are consistent with the goals of the Regional Master Plan. Over the last year, Director Lane and Senior Planner Andras Holzmann have been working with representatives from Bedminster Township to develop a scope of work to advance the recommendations from the Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County Phase 3 Study for the AT&T Campus and Bedminster Village areas. A grant application for \$50,000.00 has been submitted to undertake the study and develop potential master plan and zoning amendments. Highlands Staff has indicated the award letter for the grant will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Wastewater Management Plan Update

Director Lane provided a brief update on the status of the wastewater management plan project. Progress continues to be made completing the data sets needed to conduct the required build out analysis. Discussions with the NJ Department of Environmental (NJDEP) on the proposed buildout methodology have been ongoing. Every effort is being made to obtain approval for the buildout methodology prior to authorizing our consultant to run the buildout analysis. The revised methodology will be submitted to NJDEP sometime in the next week or two.

He also reported the NJDEP published the adoption notice for the Montgomery/Rocky Hill Chapter of the Somerset County Wastewater Management Plan. The draft Septic Management Plan (SMP) was sent to all of the County's municipalities for review and comment. No comments were received. The draft SMP will be formally submitted to NJDEP for review in the coming weeks.

State Plan Update

Director Lane provided a brief update on the status of discussions with the NJ Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) to streamline the current Plan Endorsement Process. A Plan Endorsement pre-

petition meeting between OPA and Bernardsville Borough was held in late November. He reported the meeting was very productive. Additional meetings will be held with Bound Brook and South Bound Brook and Millstone.

Director Lane also reported he participated on a panel on the State Plan at the League of Municipalities Conference. The panel was well received and the Executive Director for OPA stated Somerset County is the poster child for good regional planning and providing planning support to our municipalities.

Public Comments

Matt Loper 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.

Director Lane wished the Board Happy Holidays on behalf of the entire staff of the Planning Division.

Next Meeting Date: January 21, 2020 @4:45pm

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Board, Matt Loper asked for a motion to Adjourn. The motion was made by Al Ellis and seconded by John Lindner. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew D. Loper, Secretary