

**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2020  
REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
HELD AT 4:45 P.M.  
FREEHOLDERS MEETING ROOM  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the January 21, 2020 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:45 p.m. Freeholders Meeting Room. The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Pledge of Allegiance

Open Public Meetings Statement

**Swearing in of New and Reappointed Members**

Deputy Counsel for Planning Joseph DeMarco swore in the following members:

Jeffrey A. Wright, Sr., Member  
Christopher Kelly, Member  
Albert Ellis, Member  
William Ziegler, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate

**The Roll was called and the following were in Attendance:**

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr.,  
Al Ellis, Member  
John Schneider, Member  
Christopher Kelly, Member  
John Lindner, Member  
Jeffrey A. Wright, Sr. Member  
William Ziegler, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate  
Matthew Loper, County Engineer  
Sara Sooy, Freeholder Deputy Director, Liaison \*via Tele-Conference

Joseph DeMarco Esq., Deputy County Counsel

**Absent:**

Shanel Y. Robinson, Freeholder Director  
Erica J. Inocencio

**Also Present:**

Walter Lane, Director of Planning  
Anthony McCracken, Assistant Director  
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner  
Laurette Kratina, Chief of Strategic Planning  
Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner

Andras Holzmann, Senior Planner  
James Ruggieri, Principal Community Planner  
Nora Fekete, Planner  
James Ruggieri, Principal Community Planner  
Aarthy Sabesan, Senior Planner-GIS  
Cynthia Mellusi, Office Manager

### **Approval of December 17, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for a motion to approve the minutes of December 17, 2019 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Matthew Loper. The roll was called and the motion passed unanimously with the exception of Bernie Navatto who abstained.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Selection of Chair Pro-Tem**

Bernard Navatto made a motion to nominate Matthew Loper as Chair Pro-Tem. Chris Kelly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Election of Officers for 2020**

Chair Pro-Tem Matthew Loper asked for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Board. John Schneider nominated Bernard Navatto for Chairman. John Lindner seconded the nomination. Chair Pro-Tem Matt Loper closed the nominations and a roll call vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Navatto asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. John Schneider nominated Christopher Kelly for Vice-Chairman and John Lindner seconded. The Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Navatto asked for nominations for Secretary. Bernard Navatto nominated Matt Loper for Secretary and Al Ellis seconded. The Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Resolution Designating 2020-2021 Meetings**

Director of Planning Walter Lane reviewed the meeting dates for 2020 and the first meeting of 2021. Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to approve this resolution for the designated Planning Board meeting dates. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by John Schneider. A Voice Vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Resolution Designating Non-voting Member to Agriculture Development Board**

Director Lane provided an overview of the resolution. Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to approve this resolution, which appoints the Chair of the Environmental & Utilities Committee or the Chair's Designee as the representative to the Agriculture Development Board. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by John Lindner. A Voice Vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution Authorizing Certain Somerset County Planning Board and Planning Division Members the Responsibility of Signing All Subdivision Plats to be Filed with the County Clerk for 2020**

Director of Planning Walter Lane summarized the proposed resolution which designates who is authorized to sign subdivision plats. Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to approve this resolution. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by John Schneider. The Voice Vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Meeting Dates for 2020 Land Development Committee Meetings**

Director of Planning Walter Lane reviewed the proposed meeting dates for the Land Development Committee. Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to set the meeting dates for the Land Development Committee Meetings. The motion was made by John Lindner and seconded by Chris Kelly. The Voice Vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**Preliminary 2020 Committee Assignments**

Director of Planning Walter Lane summarized the proposed Committee Assignments as well as the proposed meetings dates of the Committees. Chairman Navatto referred to this list in the planning packets. Director Lane requested that if any member would like to discuss their Committee assignments, to contact Chairman Navatto or himself to discuss it.

The date of Special Meeting for The Land Development and Planning Awards which will be held sometime in April or May and will be advertised once the date has been confirmed.

**Resolution Conceptually Approving a Development Agreement Between Tunison Home Improvement, Inc. and the County of Somerset**

Nora Fekete, Planner, stated that Tunison Home Improvement Inc. has submitted an application for subdivision approval with reference to creating two residential lots on Clinton Street and Elizabeth Street (County Route 621) in South Bound Brook. The applicant has substantially completed the construction of the two new residential structures on the lots prior to the completion of the County application review process.

The applicant and the County agreed that it is more appropriate for the applicant to make a cash contribution in lieu of restoring Elizabeth Street which is under moratorium and was opened by the applicant, violating the moratorium. It was agreed that the amount of the cash contribution is \$9,352.00 as illustrated in the cost estimate dated December 12, 2019 and attached to the agreement.

To accommodate the interests of both parties, a development agreement has been drafted formalizing the terms which has been signed by the developer. The developer has paid the contribution. Deputy County Counsel for Planning has reviewed and approved the agreement.

Ms. Fekete requested the Board to conceptually approve the resolution approving a development agreement between Kinds Row Homes, LLC and the County of Somerset and send it to the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders for execution.

Chairman Navatto, Jr., asked for a motion to conceptually approve a development agreement between a development Tunison Home Development Inc. and the County of Somerset. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by John Lindner. Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution Conceptually Approving a Development Agreement Between Meridia Self Storage Urban Renewal Bound Brook, LLC, Inc. and the County of Somerset**

Tom D'Amico, Supervising Planner, presented the resolution and agreement concerning the proposed 100,000 square-foot Meridia self-storage facility. The project is located on the west side of South Main Street (County Route 527) in Bound Brook. During the land development review process a crosswalk across South Main Street was proposed adjacent to the subject property and within proximity to the Conrail train line crossing of South Main Street. The County determined that a more appropriate location for the crosswalk would be at the south leg of the Bound Brook Rotary.

The Applicant (Meridia Self Storage, Urban Renewal, Bound Brook, LLC) and the County agreed that it would be appropriate for the Applicant to make a cash contribution in lieu of installing a crosswalk at the subject location. The Applicant and the County agreed that the amount of the cash contribution would be \$36,459 as noted in the cost estimate prepared by County Engineering. A development agreement was prepared by staff which established the obligation of the developer relative to the aforesaid monetary contribution.

Mr. D'Amico requested the Board to conceptually approve the resolution approving a development agreement between Meridia Self Storage Urban Renewal Bound Brook, LLC, Inc. and the County of Somerset and send it to the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders for execution.

Chairman Navatto, Jr., asked for a motion to conceptually approve a development agreement between Meridia Self Storage Urban Renewal Bound Brook, LLC, Inc. and the County of Somerset. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Al Ellis. Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously. Freeholder Deputy Director Sooy recused herself for voting on this matter.

**Approval of January 2020 Land Development Report**

Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner, referred to the report in the Planning Board Packets. The Committee acted upon all first time submissions for the month of January 2018 as follows: The January 15, 2020 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 December.

**Meridia Bound Brook Self Storage Development Agreement, Bound Brook**

Tom D'Amico presented the resolution and agreement concerning the proposed 100,000 square-foot Meridia self-storage facility. The project is located on the west side of South Main Street (County Route 527) in Bound Brook. During the land development review process a crosswalk across South Main Street was proposed adjacent to the subject property and within

proximity to the Conrail train line crossing of South Main Street. The County determined that a more appropriate location for the crosswalk would be at the south leg of the Bound Brook Rotary.

The Applicant (Meridia Self Storage, Urban Renewal, Bound Brook, LLC) and the County agreed that it would be appropriate for the Applicant to make a cash contribution in lieu of installing a crosswalk at the subject location. The Applicant and the County agreed that the amount of the cash contribution would be \$36,459.00 as noted in the cost estimate prepared by County Engineering. A development agreement was prepared by staff which established the obligation of the developer relative to the aforesaid monetary contribution. The agreement was reviewed and approved by the Deputy County Counsel for Planning. The Developer has paid the cash contribution and signed the development agreement.

The Land Development Committee recommends that the agreement be conceptually approved by the full County Planning Board and transmitted to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for their approval.

**Tunison Home Improvement Development Agreement**, South Bound Brook

Nora Fekete stated that Tunison Home Improvement Inc. has submitted an application for subdivision approval with reference to creating two residential lots on Clinton Street and Elizabeth Street (County Route 621) in South Bound Brook. The applicant has substantially completed the construction of the two new residential structures on the lots prior to the completion of the County application review process.

The applicant and the County agreed that it is more appropriate for the applicant to make a cash contribution in lieu of restoring Elizabeth Street which is under moratorium and was opened by the applicant, violating the moratorium. It was agreed that the amount of the cash contribution is \$9,352.00 as illustrated in the cost estimate dated December 12, 2019 and attached to the agreement.

To accommodate the interests of both parties, a development agreement has been drafted formalizing the terms which has been signed by the developer. The developer has paid the contribution. Deputy County Counsel for Planning has reviewed and approved the agreement. The Land Development Committee recommends that the agreement be conceptually approved by the full County Planning Board and transmitted to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for their approval.

**Islamic Society of Basking Ridge Bond Reduction Request**, Bernards

The county received a request from the applicant of the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge project requesting reduction of the performance surety for work within the County right-of-way associated with the proposed 4,250 square foot house of worship located on Church Street (County Route 512). It was noted by engineering staff that the work has not been completed on the project and that the cost estimate of the work remaining, submitted by the applicant, was inaccurate since it does not include the cost of moving of a second utility pole.

After fully considering and deliberating the requested surety reduction the Committee determined that the request should not be granted since it would be contrary to long standing

County policy and practice which had heretofore been developed to protect the interests of the County. A letter is to be drafted for signature by the Committee Chairman reflecting the Committees decision and transmitted to the applicant.

### **Approval of the December First Time Submissions**

The Committee reviewed all first time submissions for the month of December 2019. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 42 submissions. There were 11 new lots proposed and 35 new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 781,377 square feet of non-residential building space. There was \$76,994.00 in improvement value paid and there was \$12,321.00 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Tom D'Amico noted that the land development section review 411 submissions in 2019 which was an 11 percent increase from 2018. In addition, there were 1,897 multi-family units proposed in 2019 which is an increase of over 20 percent from 2018. It was also noted that there has been over 6,500 units proposed in the County in the last five years.

Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to approve the 2020 December Land Development Report. The motion was made by Al Ellis and seconded by John Lindner. A Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

### **2020 Census Update**

Supervising Planner Ken Wedeen reported staff has been working with Somerset County Complete Count Committee, county departments and divisions to advance projects in the Somerset County Complete Count committee state grant work plan. Staff has been working with the NY Regional Census Partnership Specialist to promote census 2020 to Somerset County Senior Centers, ESL classes, Veterans, faith based organizations, RVCC, human and social service for group quarters. Staff continues to work with the Cultural and Heritage and Community Development divisions to promote census 2020 at many of their programmed events.

Director Lane reported Ken Wedeen did a great job at the Franklin Winterfest. He stated Director Robinson, Deputy Director Sooy and Freeholder Gallagher attended the event.

### **Wastewater Management Plan Update**

Director of Planning Walter Lane reported progress continues to be made to complete the Wastewater Mangement Plan (WMP). The Septic Management Plan has been submitted for formal review to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). He informed the Board NJDEP has still not formally approved the County's proposed build-out analysis methodology. Consistent with the Board's direction at a previous meeting, Maser Consulting has begun work on the build-out analysis.

Director Lane reported in his role as President of the NJ County Planners Association (NJCPA), he has been convening conference calls with other Counties who are working to complete their WMPs. He stated he is sending a letter of behalf of the NJCPA requesting a meeting with senior NJDEP leadership to discuss a series of concerns raised by the Association.

### State Plan Update

Director Lane summarized his ongoing discussions with the Executive Director of the Office for Planning Advocacy regarding the status of the State Plan and Plan Endorsement. He reported she will be making a presentation at the February NJ County Planners Association's (NJCPA) meeting. She will be outlining a potential Plan Endorsement process for Counties based upon Director Lane's suggestions and input. He will be meeting with her at the APA-NJ conference to discuss the potential Plan Endorsement process for Counties. Director Lane stated Somerset County may be the pilot for this process. He also reported Freeholder Director Robinson had been appointed and confirmed as a member of the State Planning Commission. Chairman Navatto congratulated Freeholder Director Robinson on her appointment.

### Chair's Comments

Chairman Navatto recognized Planning Director Walter Lane for his great work and the staff for their phenomenal work as well. Chairman Navatto also acknowledged the Freeholders for their excellent leadership and their continued full support making this all possible. On behalf of himself and the staff, Director Lane thanked the Board and the Board of Chosen Freeholders for their leadership and support.

### Public Comment

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

### Committee Reports

Included in the Packet.

Next Meeting Date: February 18, 2020@4:45pm

### **Adjournment:**

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to Adjourn. The motion was made by Al Ellis and seconded by Jeffrey A. Wright. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary