

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 20, 2020
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
HELD AT 4:45PM
ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

This meeting was held as a virtual meeting. Information on how to join the meeting was posted on the County website and published in the newspapers. Chairman Navatto, Jr. reported the meeting had been duly advertised in accordance with Open Public Meetings Act.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the October 20, 2020 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:45pm. 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
Chris Kelly, Vice Chairman
Al Ellis, Member
John Schneider, Member
John Lindner, Member
Jeffrey Wright, Member
Freeholder Director Robinson
William Zeigler, 1st Alternate
Ericka Inocencio, 2nd Alternate
William Ziegler, 1st Alternate will be voting in place of Jeffrey Wright

Adam Slutsky, voting in place of Matthew Loper, Secretary, County Engineer
Marina Stinely, Esq. covering for Joseph DeMarco, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

Absent

Matthew Loper, Secretary/County Engineer
Freeholder Deputy Director Sooy, Liaison

Also Present:

Walter Lane, Director of Planning
Anthony McCracken, Assistant Director
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner
Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner
Laurette Kratina, Chief of Strategic Planning
James Ruggieri, Principal Community Planner
Andras Holzmann, Senior Planner
Aarthy Sabesan, Senior Planner-GIS
Nora Fekete, Planner
Christina Tricario, Planner-GIS

Kate Katzer, Principal Planner
Cynthia Mellusi, Office Manager

Approval of September 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Navatto, asked for the motion to approve the Minutes of the September 15, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by John Lindner and seconded by Jeffrey Wright. A Voice Vote was called, and the motion moved unanimously except for Chris Kelly who abstained.

Discussion/Presentation Items:

Paul Grzella, Director of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board provided the Board an overview of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board's mission and current activities. The roles of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB) include:

- Enhancing the global competitiveness of New Jersey's businesses by developing a world-class workforce
- Overseeing the One-Stop Career Centers in Somerville and Flemington
- Defining a local mission and vision with strategic priorities to integrate publicly funded workforce services and job training programs into a system that's flexible, seamless, and responsive to the needs of workers and businesses

Mr. Grzella reviewed a wide range of employment and labor data for Somerset County. A copy of his presentation is attached to the minutes. Chairman Navatto thanked Mr. Grzella for the very informative presentation.

Planning Director's Report

Director of Planning Walter Lane provided an overview of work underway in the Planning Division. He reported the Division fully returned to the office with 100% staffing levels on every workday as of October 5th. Several modifications have been made to office to promote social distancing. He briefed the Board on the following items:

- The AT&T Land use Study has started and meetings with municipal representatives and stakeholders have been held.
- Director Lane reported he presented at the virtual Transaction Conference as part of a panel talking about innovative public engagement strategies and culture of collaboration that enabled the successful Walk, Bike, Hike Study. The County is viewed as a model for other planning efforts to emulate.
- Efforts continue to advance the implementation of the State Plan. Plan Endorsement Meetings with Millstone and Manville have been scheduled.
- A Planning Partners Forum was held on September 24th. The main agenda item was a presentation by NJ Future on stormwater utilities. There were thirty-three (33) attendees. The next Forum will be on December 10th.

- Director Lane reported he has been participating in the Somerset County Business Partnerships Strategic Planning effort. This will ensure that their efforts and the County's planning priorities continued to be highly coordinated.
- Planning staff continue to participate in Franklin Township's Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Study for Naaman Williams Park. This effort buildings on the County's Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County initiative.
- Staff have participated in the Highlands Council's Environmental Resource Inventory Listening Session as well as serving on the Steering Committee for the Highlands Council's Economic Development Plan
- Director Lane has continued to provide technical assistance to many of our municipalities. He recently spoke to Middlesex County and Burlington County planning representatives about the County Investment Framework and our coordinated and collaborative planning efforts with our municipalities since we are viewed as model for excellent planning.
- Recent NJ County Planners Association meetings have had presentations on Accessory Dwelling Units and the Jersey WaterWorks effort. At the October meeting there were discussions on trail planning and the administration of Open Space Trust Funds.
- NJDEP has released their Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Plan which outlines how New Jersey will reduce our GHG emissions by 80% by 2050. The Department also released an Integrated Water Quality Report. Both documents will be discussed at future sub-committee meetings.
- Director Lane state he was sad to report Andras Holzmann will be leaving Somerset County for a Supervising Planner position at Passaic County. He stated this new position is a testament to Mr. Holzmann's skills as a planner. Director Lane thanked Mr. Holzmann for all his hard work over the years and his efforts led to many of the successes that County has achieved. Chairman Navatto thanked Mr. Holzmann on behalf of the Board for all his efforts.

ACTION ITEMS/ITEMS INFORMATION ITEMS:

October 2020 Land Development Report and Approval of the September 2020 First time Submissions

Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner, referred to the report in the Planning Board Packets. It was noted that there was no quorum for the meeting. Therefore, there were no official actions taken. At the October 2020 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 September 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Hills at Warren, Information Update, Warren

Thomas D'Amico briefed the Committee on the proposed Hills at Warren project. The applicant, K. Hovnanian North Jersey Acquisitions, is proposing a project consisting of 192 for sale units in 15 buildings. Forty-eight units are affordable. The site is located on Hillcrest Avenue (County Route 531) and I-78 is the site of the previously proposed Berkeley Aquatic Center. The Engineering Division is currently reviewing the plans.

134 East Main Street, Somerville

On September 1, 2020 applicant 134 East Main, LLC submitted a site plan to utilize the first floor of an existing 3-story mixed-use building for the production and display of finished wood products. The 0.66-acre parcel is located on East Main Street (New Jersey Route 28) and Meadow Street (a local road) in Somerville. There being no County issues regarding the development application, the County Planning Board issued a letter dated September 17, 2020 to the Somerville Zoning Board of Adjustment approving the development application.

Thereafter, Somerville advised the County on Sept 17, 2020 that the Borough had returned the development application to the applicant because the site is located within Somerville's redevelopment area and the proposed use is not allowed. The Borough furnished a copy of a letter dated September 3, 2020 from the Somerville Department of Community Development to the applicant affirming the rejection of the application. The County Planning Board issued a letter to the Somerville Board of Adjustment, dated September 30, 2020, reciting the facts as noted and that it was the intention of the County to take appropriate action to rescind the County's approval of this application as set forth in its September 17, 2020 letter, and then administratively dismiss the County application since there is no pending municipal application.

The County did not receive any objections from the applicant or other interested parties concerning the proposed action to be taken by the County Planning Board. Pursuant to this, a County Planning Board resolution has been prepared for Planning Board action to rescind the previous approval and administratively dismiss the application that was filed with the County for this project. The resolution was reviewed and accepted by Planning Board Counsel.

The Committee members in attendance recommended that the full Planning Board approve the resolution rescinding the approval and administratively dismissing the aforesaid project.

First Time Submissions

The Committee reviewed all first-time submissions for the month of August 2020. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 22 submissions. There were 122 new lots proposed and six new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 55,176 square feet of non-residential building space proposed. There was \$16,023 in improvement value and \$2,400 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Bernard Navatto, Jr, took no action and did not participate in any discussion concerning the 43 Williams Street site plan in Somerville.

Chairman Navatto asked for the motion to approve the September 2020 First Time Submissions. The motion was made by Al Ellis and seconded by John Lindner. The Roll was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Rescinding a Previous Land Development Approval Granted to 134 East Main Street, LLC Somerville, NJ

James Ruggieri, Principal Community Planner, stated the agenda item 134 East Main, LLC which is a land development application that was rejected by the Borough of Somerville, this morning staff received a new application for the same site and we need to compare the new application with the previous application so in light of this staff suggests pulling this item from the agenda for now, and then we will determine the best course of action to take.

The Board agreed to act on this matter at a future meeting if necessary.

Preservation Plan Update

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.

We have received the final draft of the Open Space and Historic Preservation elements and the Goals and Strategies for the Open Space and Historic Preservation elements from the consultant Preservation Strategies. All these documents are being reviewed by County professional staff. We held a conference call with the consultant on September 10th in which we discussed the completion of outstanding materials. Staff is working with the County Graphics Department on the covers of the various elements.

The plan has been coordinated with the County Investment Framework, the Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County Connecting Vibrant Communities Plan and the County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Affordable Housing Projects Update

Laurette Kratina, Chief of Strategic Planning, reported staff is continuing to monitor and collect information about municipal efforts to address their Fair Housing Act and Mount Laurel 4 Requirements.

July 1st was the deadline for municipalities to release Midpoint Review Reports to the public as specified in the Settlement Agreements with the Fair Share Housing Center. Of the 16 municipalities that are participating in the 2015 Declaratory Judgement Process, one (Rocky Hill) has dropped-out. Midpoint Review Reports can be found on the websites for 9 of the 15 remaining municipalities. These reports indicate progress is being made implementing their Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans and include information about ordinances that have been adopted, development agreements that have been executed and the construction status of projects. Bernardsville and Montgomery reported that modifications to their Housing Elements and fair Share Plans will be needed to respond to changing conditions. North Plainfield and Peapack and Gladstone recently modified their Housing Elements and fair Share Plans. Branchburg did not have adopted amended Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in place until July 2020, and the Plan for Hillsborough has not been finalized, therefore did they did not produce Midpoint Review Reports. Although a Midpoint Review Report could not be found

online for Franklin, the Plan has been fully implemented according to Township Planner Mark Healey. Using the information from the Midpoint Review Reports together with settlement agreements, plans, ordinances and information obtained through the wastewater planning process, we recently completed an update of the attribute information associated with our GIS Affordable Housing Project Inventory. To-date, 198 total projects have been proposed, are under construction or have been completed that address municipal Affordable Housing requirements, yielding a total of 34,321 dwelling units/beds. (Please note these figures exclude the many additional affordable housing units provided through scattered site rehabilitation, accessory units, market-rate buy-downs and the extension of affordability controls and group homes for the elderly and disabled). Thirty-six (36) projects countywide involve Redevelopment, and 100 percent of the units are affordable in 37 projects countywide.

- There are 15 Assisted Living Facilities (with 10% set-aside for Low-income individuals counted toward municipal fair-share)
 - 11 have been completed, creating 1,381 total beds
 - 4 are proposed and will yield an additional 377 total beds
- 94 affordable housing projects totaling 12,195 units (excluding assisted living) both proposed and/or under construction
 - 14 projects under construction totaling 2,719 units
 - 80 projects proposed totaling 9,476 units

Bernardsville, Watchung and Peapack & Gladstone have included Accessory Dwelling Unit Programs as strategies for meeting their affordable housing requirements in their Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans. If they are successful, a total of 30 affordable accessory dwelling units could be created in the County. This leads me to the last thing I would like to mention. At our last Housing and Demographic Committee Meeting, we talked about possibly hosting a webinar on the benefits of accessory dwelling units and how municipalities can create successful programs. Staff is partnering with the Energy Council and the Regional Plan Association to provide this event that we hope will take place this winter.

2020 Census Update

Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner, reported to the Board that the Census 2020 officially was completed on Friday October 16th at 6 a.m. 99:9% of all households in NJ were enumerated thru either self-response or by census staff going door to door. The Somerset County Complete Count Committee (SCCCC) met last week and have been kept up to date with the recent court rulings that impacted the conclusion of the census and ongoing court rulings addressing the exclusion of non-documented persons from the population count.

Somerset County Complete Count Committee plans to meet quarterly going forward to update the planning partners on each agencies activity and to continue working relationships among the complete count committee members.

Somerset County Road Corridor Safety Analysis Sub-regional Study

Andras Holzmann, Senior Planner, reported the County has selected the five (5) county road corridors that will receive additional study. A road safety audit, which is studying the crash

statistics for the corridor and then an in field observation of the corridor by a multidisciplinary team, will be conducted for each selected corridor. The road safety audits originally scheduled for October will be conducted in the spring and will either be done in person, partially in person, or all virtually. Because of this schedule change staff has requested from NJTPA, which is funding the study, an extension to finish the study by December 2021 instead of July 2021. The first public meeting for the study will take place on Thursday November 12th from 7-8:30pm virtually via Zoom. Staff has begun to promote this meeting.

Wastewater Management Plan Update

Director Lane provided a brief update to the Board on the Wastewater Management Plan. Staff is making good progress working with the municipalities to finalize the Build-out Component of the Plan. The Septic Management Plan has been formally submitted to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for their review and comment. Progress is being made on completing the necessary maps for the Plan. Staff is awaiting feedback from NJDEP regarding Wastewater Capacity Constraints Analysis and the strategies need to address any known constraints. He reported the goal is to submit the full draft of the Wastewater Management Plan to NJDEP before the end of this year.

Public Comments

Bernie Navatto 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: November 17, 2020 @4:45pm (virtual)

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to Adjourn. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Erika Inocencio. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew D. Loper, Secretary