

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 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. Vice-Chairman Kelly reported the meeting had been duly advertised in accordance with Open Public Meetings Act.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the November 17, 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:

Chris Kelly, Vice Chairman
Al Ellis, Member
John Schneider, Member
John Lindner, Member
Jeffrey Wright, Member
Freeholder Director Robinson
Freeholder Deputy Director Sooy
Ericka Inocencio, 2nd Alternate

The November Planning Board Meeting was conducted by Vice-Chairman Kelly in place of Chairman Navatto's absence. Adam Slutsky, voting in place of Matthew Loper, Secretary, County Engineer. Marina Stinely, Esq. covering for Joseph DeMarco, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

Absent

Bernie Navatto, Jr, Chairman
William Zeigler, 1st Alternate
Matthew Loper, Secretary/County Engineer

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
Nora Fekete, Planner
Christina Tricarico, Planner-GIS
Cynthia Mellusi, Office Manager

Approval of October 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chairman Kelly, asked for the motion to approve the Minutes of the October 20, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by John Lindner and seconded by Al Ellis. A Voice Vote was called, and the motion moved unanimously.

Discussion/Presentation Items:

NJ County Planners Association Long Term Recovery Policy Document

Director of Planning Walter Lane provided an overview of the NJ County Planners Association Long Term Recovery Policy Document. This document is the culmination of many months of work by the Long-Term Recovery Working Group, which had representatives from several counties as well as , RPA, NJ Future, the Office for Advocacy, NJ Economic Development Authority, APA-NJ and many others. The goal of this effort was to create a comprehensive package of recommendations for state, county and local governments to consider as they develop plans and strategies to address the long-lasting impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The document outlines a set of planning and community engagement recommendations as well as strategies to support a healthier, prosperous and more equitable future for all of New Jersey's residents.

Director Lane reviewed the documents guiding principles:

- Create well-informed and inclusive decision-making processes
- Prepare for future natural disaster-related disruptions
- Coordinate land use planning and economic development initiatives with public health and social equity objectives
- Provide Easy & Expedited Access to Information, Tools and Resources
- Create a More Equitable, Sustainable and Resilient Economy
- Advance a Green and Sustainable Economy
- Overcome the Digital Divide
- Invest in Communities
- Environmental Protection and Restoration

Director Lane stated his term as President of NJ County Planner Association concludes in December, but he will still be leading the organization's efforts to promote and implement this policy document. Currently several state agencies are using this document and it has been shared with the Governor's Office. The document will also be presented at future conferences and will be shared with our municipalities. Vice Chairman Kelly commended Director Lane and the NJ County Planners Association for these efforts.

Planning Director's Report

Director of Planning Walter Lane provided an overview of work underway in the Planning Division. He briefed the Board on the following items:

- Tom D’Amico received the Richard J. Hughes Award from the NJ Historical Commission. The Richard J. Hughes Award recognizes outstanding lifetime achievement in the field of New Jersey history. It is given annually to an individual in recognition of a series of contributions in the areas of scholarship, public history, teaching, conservation and preservation. Please join me in congratulating Tom on this well-deserved award and recognition. Tom D’Amico thanked the Planning Board and Board of Chosen Freeholders for of their support over the years. On behalf of the Planning Board, Vice Chairman Kelly thanked Tom D’Amico for his efforts.
- Director Lane and Energy Council made a presentation to Freeholders on the State Energy Master Plan. The Planning Division has been tasked with staffing a Green Jobs Task Force. Director Lane has already initiated discussions with the NJEDA on this topic.
- The County will be applying for a Hazard Mitigation Grant from FEMA to refine the Flood Resiliency Element.
- He reported the AT&T Land use Study continues to advance.
- Director Lane was a presenter for two webinars held by RideWise. He highlighted the Walk, Bike, Hike Study as well as how the County can assist with conducting walk and bike audits.
- The Planning Division is continuing to assist our municipalities pursue Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission and recently participated in Manville’s Plan Endorsement Pre-petition meeting.
- Director Lane reported he continues to participate in the Business Partnership’s Strategic Planning Sessions to ensure our efforts remain coordinated.
- He briefed the Board on the County’s recent NJTPA Sub-regional Studies Grant Application. The grant application to fund the update of the Circulation Element Update has been recommended for funding, Project would start on July1, 2021.
- Director Lane has continued to provide technical assistance to many of our municipalities
- He detailed several upcoming meetings the NJ County Planners Association have held and will be holding in the coming weeks.
 - November 12th WMP Working Group Meeting review of draft WMP template and rule change suggestions
 - November 16th State Plan Discussion
 - November 20th Special Land Development Round Table Discussion

ACTION ITEMS/ITEMS INFORMATION ITEMS:

November 2020 Land Development Report and Approval of the October 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 November 12, 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 October 2020.

Advance at Branchburg II, Branchburg

Thomas D'Amico briefed the Committee on the proposed Advance at Branchburg II project. The applicant, Advance at Branchburg II, LLC, is proposing a project consisting of a 225,000 square foot warehouse. The site is located on Easton Turnpike (County Route 614) and Station Road (County Route 679) in Branchburg. Tom mentioned that the site is located in the North Branch Historic District which is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places. Any county required road improvements associated with this project must be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to the New Jersey Registers of Historic Preservation Act. The Engineering Division is currently reviewing the plans.

Redwood Inn Residential Subdivision, Bridgewater

In 2018 the Township of Bridgewater as the applicant prepared and submitted a major residential subdivision to merge two existing parcels into one parcel and then subdivide that parcel into eight single-family lots.

As part of the project the vacant Redwood Inn banquet hall would be demolished. The 7.68-acre property is located on Mountaintop Road, a local road. Since the applicant was a municipality and not a private developer, pursuant to the Somerset County Land Development Resolution Review Fee Schedule, the County waived the \$300 application Review Fee and any applicable Revision Fees. County Planning Board professional staff reviewed the application and issued a report dated November 26, 2018 advising the Township of Bridgewater that the County Planning Board anticipated that it would approve their subdivision once the following conditions of approval were satisfied:

- Payment of a Recycling Fee of \$80
- Satisfaction of the Filed Map Requirements including payment of \$3,500.
- Submission of the subdivision in digital format consistent with the County's digital map submission standards
- Payment of \$105 GIS fee

In October, 2020, Mr. Thomas Genova, Director of Municipal Services for the Township of Bridgewater, sent correspondence to the Director of Planning, Walter Lane, on September 8, 2020 advising that the Township Planning Board approved a 7-lot subdivision and that, this being a municipally-owned property, Bridgewater is requesting that all fees outlined in the County's November 26, 2018 review letter be waived.

After a discussion the Committee members in attendance recommended that the request to waive the above noted fees be denied.

134 East Main LLC, Somerville

On September 1, 2020 the applicant, 134 East Main LLC, submitted an application to the County Planning Board proposing to utilize the first floor of a 3-story mixed-use building for a commercial use involving the production of refinished wood products to be displayed and sold on site. The project is located at 134 East Main Street (NJ Route 28) in Somerville. There being no County issues the County Planning Board issued its approval letter only to be informed by the Borough of Somerville that the Borough had rejected the application due to the proposed use not being allowed at that location.

Pursuant to this, staff prepared a resolution for adoption by the County Planning Board at the October 20 Planning Board meeting to rescind the County's approval of the application and administratively dismiss the application. The applicant was late in informing us of their intent to submit a modified application. On the morning of the October 20 County Planning Board meeting, the applicant submitted an amended application wherein they removed the wood refinishing aspect of the original application and instead will only be displaying and selling wood products with a small repair shop in the back. So at the October 20 Planning Board meeting staff advised the Planning Board that new information had been submitted earlier that day and that, in light of this, staff would need to review the new information and so the item was pulled from the Planning Board agenda. Staff has since reviewed the amended application and determined that the project will not impact any County facilities; in light of the foregoing, staff intends to issue a letter on behalf of the County Planning Board approving the amended application. No further Land Development Committee action is required regarding this application.

PEAPACK RESIDENTIAL, Peapack and Gladstone

James Ruggieri briefed the Committee on the proposed project to construct 68 market-rate duplex-type homes and two stand-alone buildings containing 14 affordable units for combined total of 82 dwelling units. Access to the property will be from US Route 206 South at Pfizer interchange. The applicant is P-G Residential Developers, LLC c/o SJP Properties of Parsippany, NJ. The County will require a \$820 recycling fee and a \$25 GIS fee.

First Time Submissions

The Committee reviewed all first time submissions for the month of October. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 30 submissions. There were three new lots proposed and two new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 97,915 square feet of non-residential building space and 143 multi-family units proposed. There was a total of \$83,425 in improvement value and \$4,770 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Bernard Navatto Jr. did not participate or take any action on the Somerville Train Station Building project in Somerville during the November 12, 2020 Land Development Committee Meeting. 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 take action on the Redwood Inn Residential Subdivision, approve the first time submissions for the month of

October, and acknowledge the receipt of the other information contained in the report since said report is only unofficial without a quorum.

As a follow-up the Redwood Inn Residential Subdivision Fee Waiver Request, the Board acted on the Waiver Request. The motion was made by Adam Slutsky and seconded by John Lindner. The roll was called and motion to deny the fee waiver passed unanimously except for Jeffrey Wright and Ericka Inocencio who abstained.

Vice-Chairman Kelly asked for the motion to approve the October 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.

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.

The County has received the draft of the Open Space Master Plan and the Historic Preservation Master Plan which have been transmitted to the Steering Committee. A Steering Committee meeting has been scheduled for November 23rd. We expect to transmit the Agricultural Preservation Plan in mid-December to the Steering Committee. After their review and any recommended changes are made to the Plans they will be posted on the County website and distributed for public review.

Mr. D'Amico noted that 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.

State Climate, energy and Resiliency Policy and Legislation Update

Laurette Kratina, Chief of Strategic Planning, stated that under the current Administration, a new State Climate Change, Energy and Resilience Policy and Regulatory Framework has emerged, beginning in 2018 that has a significant influence on Land Use and Infrastructure planning and investment decisions at all levels of Government in New Jersey.

These initiatives are numerous, interconnected and continue to unfold. Many are going on simultaneously, and are being coordinated across State Departments through Interagency partnerships. In order to keep tabs on everything, staff has compiled tracking sheets for State initiatives that have been enacted and are underway, and for those that are proposed. They are intended to serve as a resource for the Board and are updated frequently. Currently, 35

initiatives have been enacted or are underway, and 30 pieces of legislation have been proposed that involve Climate Change, Energy and Resiliency policy and regulations in NJ.

To highlight the interagency coordination going on at the state level, there is an "Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, established pursuant to Executive Order 89 to guide and coordinate the State's emerging climate change policies, programs and regulations. An Energy Master Plan Interagency Work Group led the development of the updated State Energy Master Plan, a Multi-Agency RGGI Work Group developed the RGGI Strategic Funding Plan, and an Offshore Wind Task Force was established to develop an Offshore Wind Strategic Plan. As an example of one line of interconnected actions that have taken place and that continues to unfold, she started with the Global Warming Response Act. Originally enacted in 2007, it established greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals for New Jersey, and required NJDEP to take specific actions, including the establishment of an emissions monitoring and reporting program and the identification of regulatory and legislative actions necessary to attain the goal of reducing emissions levels to 80% below 2006 levels by 2050. Since these were not accomplished by NJDEP an amendment to the Act was adopted in July 2019 which mandated the monitoring and reporting program be established by January 2020 and that a statewide comprehensive strategy for reducing specific types of emissions be developed by July 2020. As a result, New Jersey's Global Warming Response Act: 80 x 50 Report was released in October 2020 which is comprised of an assessment of the State's greenhouse gas emissions, and presents a series of recommendations for achieving the Act's emission reduction goals that were developed by NJDEP in collaboration with other State Agencies.

Directly tied to this, Executive Order 100 was enacted in January 2020 that directs NJDEP to establish a bi-annual greenhouse gas monitoring and reporting program, and undertake the "Protecting Against Climate Threats" PACT initiative through which it is tasked with identifying and updating its regulations and permitting programs to incorporate climate change considerations. At the same time, Administrative Order 2020-01 was enacted by The NJDEP Commissioner reinforcing the requirements in EO 100. It calls for the development of regulations establishing criteria that shall govern the actions to be taken to meet the Global Warming Response Act goals with an adoption target date of July-2021. The order specifically names the Coastal Zone Management Rules, Freshwater Wetlands Rules, Flood Hazard Control Act Rules, and Stormwater Management Rules as those to be updated to incorporate climate change considerations with an adoption target date of January 2021. This set of rules directly influence land use and infrastructure planning, management and investment decisions at the state, county and municipal levels, and NJDEP has been directed to identify other rules as well to which these changes will apply.

Linked to this is the requirement in Executive Order 89 that the newly formed Bureau of Climate Resilience Planning led by Dave Rosenblatt, the recently appointed Chief Resilience Officer and Assistant Commissioner prepare a Scientific Report on Climate Change with guidance from the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience. This report was released in June 2020. The Bureau and council are also charged with developing a NJ Climate Change Resilience Strategy, which is due to be submitted to the Governor by the end of the year. This Strategy is expected to have a direct bearing on the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, which was adopted in 2001 and may be an influential factor in deciding whether or not an update of the State Plan will be pursued in the near future. According to EO 89, the Climate Change Resiliency Strategy is supposed to recommend specific climate change adaptation and resilience strategies, include an

investment decision model and identify financing strategies. EO 89 also requires the inclusion of climate change considerations in the Plan Endorsement Process by the State Planning Commission, which together with the Climate Resilience Strategy, represents another intersection with land use and infrastructure planning at the state, county and local levels.

Somerset county Road Corridor Safety Analysis Sub-Regional Study

Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner, stated that The Somerset County Roadway Corridor Safety study hosted its first of two virtual Public meetings on Thursday November 12th. Somerset County promoted the first public meeting via public flyer, social media and printed flyers along the five corridors.

Forty-three (43) people participated in seven (7) separate meeting rooms after a PowerPoint presentation. Attendees had the opportunity to provide input based on a set of questions whose goal was to get attendees to talk about their experience traveling along each of the five corridors, identify any safety issues and potential solutions as well as what they would like to see the corridor look like in ten years.

The zoom meeting recording for the presentation will be posted on the study web site shortly while the consultant team reviews the zoom video and audio files for the 7 separate meeting rooms. The consultant is working to complete the existing conditions report for review by county staff soon.

Site-specific WQMP Amendment Letter: Errico Acres, Far Hills Borough

Director Lane reviewed the details of this previously discussed project. The Errico Acres project would add 27.23 of those acres into a new sewer service area that would be associated with an on-site discharge to groundwater facility. The proposal involves 134 attached residential units and is part of a court approved settlement agreement to meet the affordable housing requirements. A draft letter was prepared and discussed with both the Master Plan Committee as well as the Environment and Utilities Committee. The letter recommends that the service area be limited to only the site to avoid further sprawl into areas that are intended for preservation. This would be consistent with other past actions of the Board. Director Lane asked for permission to distribute the letter as presented.

Vice-Chairman Kelly asked the Board Members for a motion to send out the letter. Motion made by Jeffrey Wright and seconded by John Lindner. The motion passed unanimously.

Wastewater Management Plan Update

Director Lane provided a brief update to the Board on the Wastewater Management Plan. He reported staff is continuing to make good progress on the Wastewater Management Plan. A series of maps have been completed and we continue to work with the municipalities to finalize the Build-out Component of the Plan. A series of meeting will be held with the wastewater treatment facilities operators to develop a series of strategies to address any capacity constraints identified in the buildout analysis. He reported the goal is to submit the full draft of the Wastewater Management Plan to NJDEP before the end of this year or early next year.

Public Comments

Vice-Chairman Chris Kelly 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: December 15, 2020@ 4:45pm

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Board, Vice-Chairman Kelly asked for a motion to Adjourn. The motion was made by Jeffrey Wright and seconded by Ericka Inocencio. A Voice Vote was called and the motion moved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew D. Loper, Secretary