

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2022  
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
HELD AT 4:46 P.M.  
ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Call to Order**

The April 19, 2022 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:46 p.m. This meeting was held as a virtual meeting.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Open Public Meetings Statement**

Chairman Navatto, Jr. reported the meeting had been duly advertised in accordance with Open Public Meetings Act as follows:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., and the Emergency Remote Meeting Protocol for Local Public Bodies N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 through 1.7, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided. The date, time and virtual meeting information for this meeting was published in The Star Ledger and the Courier News. The agenda and the virtual meeting information was also posted on the County Planning Board website.

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

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr., Chairman  
Michael Giordano, Vice-Chair  
Chris Kelly, Member  
Al Ellis, Member  
Sami Shaban, Member  
Commissioner Paul Drake  
Matt Loper, Recording Secretary  
Ashok Rakhit, 1st Alternate  
Marina Stinely, Esq. covering for Joseph DeMarco, Esq., County Counsel

**Absent**

Erika Inocencio  
Commissioner Director Robinson  
Maria Tapia-Burch

**Also Present from Staff:**

Walter Lane, Director, Office of Planning Policy & Economic Development  
Angela Knowles, Deputy Director, Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development  
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner & Historic Sites Coordinator

Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner  
Tom Boccino, Supervising Planner, Preservation  
Kaitlin Bundy, Manager, Cultural & Heritage and Strategic Initiatives  
Aarthy Sabesan, Manager, Office of GIS Services  
Nora Fekete, Planner  
Sheli Daniels, Office Manager

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes:** March 15, 2022 Regular Meeting  
March 30, 2022 Special Meeting

Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for a motion to approve the minutes of March 15, 2022 Planning Board Regular Meeting and the March 30, 2022 Planning Board Special Meeting. The motion was made by Chris Kelly. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Presentation Items:**

**Open Space Preservation Program Update**

Supervising Planner Tom Boccino presented a brief history and details on the County Open Space Preservation Program. The discussion included information on the formation of the County Park Commission and creation of the County Open Space Trust Fund for the purpose of creating and developing a county park system. Details were presented on the current program and how funding is allocated for the acquisition and preservation of County open space for recreation and conservation purposes and how the program provides funding to municipalities for acquisitions for open space, flood mitigation and recreational development.

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane thanked Mr. Boccino for his presentation and how successful the program has been due to his efforts. Mr. Lane also noted Christopher Kelly chairs the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) as the Planning Board's representative and further highlighted the high level of coordination between the Planning Board and the OSAC.

**Planning Directors Report**

Director Lane provided an overview of the work underway in the Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development. He briefed the Board on the following items:

- Director Lane reported he attended a Steering Committee Meeting for the Highlands Council's Economic Sustainability Plan to discuss how to implement the plan since it has been officially adopted by the Council. He stated he is working to ensure the soon to be adopted Preservation Plan strategies and projects can be advanced via the Highlands Council's Economic Sustainability Plan.

The Land Development Committee agreed that the stone wall can remain in its present location since it does not cause any safety issues to the travelling public. They concurred with the recommendation of the County Engineering and Planning profession staffs that language shall be added to the right-of-way deed of dedication along Millstone River Road that states that the wall shall be maintained by the property owner of lot 48.07 and that Somerset County will have no maintenance responsibility for the wall. Nora Fekete noted that the applicant's attorney has recently file a new Deed of Dedication along the frontage of the proposed subdivision which does not contain the aforesaid language. It was recommended that a new Deed of Dedication be filed superseding the recently filled Deed of Dedication.

### March First Time Submissions

The Committee reviewed all first-time submissions for the month of March 2022. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 26 submissions. There were five new lots proposed and nine new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 837,361 square feet of non-residential building space proposed as well as three multi-family units. There was \$14,790 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Bernard Navatto, Jr., did not participate in any discussion or take any action on the 85 West High Street and the Epic Somerville, LLC site plans as well as the 340 Union Avenue subdivision in Somerville.

Chairman Navatto, Jr. asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2022 County Planning Board Development Committee. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Al Ellis. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Somerset County Preservation Plan Update**

Supervising Planner Thomas D'Amico provided an update on the County Preservation Plan. As previously reported, the final draft of the Preservation Plan has been completed. A notice and a copy of the proposed Preservation Plan was sent to all municipal clerk's and planning board secretaries consistent with the County Planning Act notifying them of a virtual public hearing of the County Planning Board, which was held on March 30, 2022, at 4:45 p.m. to take public comment on the Draft Preservation Plan.

Public comments are being solicited and will remain open until Monday, May 2nd. The Cultural & Heritage Commission at their April 7th meeting unanimously endorsed the Historic Preservation Plan. The County Park Commission will act on a resolution endorsing the plan on Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. The County Agriculture Development Board will act on a resolution endorsing the plan at their April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. The entire Preservation Plan will

be on the County Planning Board agenda for adoption as part of the County Master Plan at the May 17th meeting.

### **Somerset County Circulation Plan Project Update**

Supervising Planner Kenneth Wedeen reported Somerset County advertised the Somerset County Circulation Element Update Request for Proposals (RFP) on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The 12-month study is being funded by a North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Subregional Studies grant. The study RFP responses are due back on May 4<sup>th</sup>. After which the proposals will be reviewed scored and ranked by a consultant selection committee that will meet and recommend one proposal to be awarded a professional services contract by the County Commissioners. The contract should be awarded in late May and early June. The study should begin in June 2022 and will be completed on June 30, 2023.

### **Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board Unemployment Tracker**

Aarthy Sabesan, Manager of Somerset County's Office of GIS Services, presented and interactive data analytics dashboard of Somerset County's Unemployment trends and metrics. The dashboard was developed in partnerships with the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board, in an effort to understand the economic impacts of the ongoing pandemic. The presentation highlighted impacts by municipality in terms of the total population impacted, along with the weekly, monthly and yearly trends. Additionally, an analysis of unemployment impacts across different demographics was also presented.

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane stated this effort is an example of how the new Office of GIS Services with the Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development provides support to other Departments and Divisions throughout the County. He thanked Ms. Sabesan for her excellent work.

### **Wastewater Update**

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane provided a brief update on the County's wastewater planning efforts. He reported the revised Septic Management Plan will be submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) very shortly. The Fox Hollow Site-Specific Amendment previously discussed in detail with the Board has not submitted any additional information for the Board to review and a formal application for the project has not been submitted to NJDEP. There has been no movement on the other site-specific amendments the Board has discussed over the last few months. He also reported NJDEP has not provided any comments on the other components of our Wastewater Management Plan that were submitted to the Department in June of 2021. He will be reaching out to NJDEP to discuss two potential sewer service area transfers proposed in Warren Township and in Montgomery Township.

**Public Comments**

No comments were presented.

**Committee Reports:**

Committee Reports were included in the Packet.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Navatto, Jr., motioned to adjourn. A Voice Vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:28pm.

**Next meeting Date:** May 17, 2022 @ 4:45 Regular Meeting (Virtual)

Respectfully submitted,



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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary