

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2022  
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
HELD AT 4:45 P.M.  
COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

**Call to Order**

The September 20, 2022 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:52 p.m. This meeting was held in person.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Open Public Meetings Statement**

Chairman Bernard V. 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 and time for this meeting was published in The Star Ledger and the Courier News. The agenda and the 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  
Christopher Kelly, Member  
Adam Slutsky, Alternate County Engineer  
Ashok Rakhit, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate  
Joseph DeMarco, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

**Absent**

Albert Ellis, Member  
Erika Inocencio, Member  
Sami Shaban, Member  
Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson  
Commissioner Paul Drake  
Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary

**Also Present from Staff:**

Angela Knowles, Deputy Director, Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development  
Kaitlin Bundy, Cultural & Heritage Manager  
Katelyn Katzer, Principal Planner Farmland Preservation  
Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner

Sheli Daniels, Office Manager  
Tom Boccino, Supervising Planner, Preservation  
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes:** August 16, 2022

Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2022 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by Christopher Kelly and seconded by Michael Giordano. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Presentation Items:**

Cultural and Heritage Commission Long-Range Plan Update

SCC&HC and Strategic Initiatives Manager Kaitlin Bundy provided an update on the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission's on-going long-range plan. The Commission has engaged consultant Mercer Planning Associates, a boutique land-use planning firm based in Jersey City, to oversee the project. The project team reviewed existing county plans, such as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), Walk, Bike, Hike and the Preservation Plan to help find potential areas for cross-sector collaboration. A number of public outreach opportunities (both virtual and in person) were held, including nine focus groups, a symposium, a virtual open house, seven different pop-up booths, and a survey and mapping tool. A set of guiding principles and three transformational goals were established. Each goal is accompanied by a number of strategies that outline the direction in which Somerset County will move toward achieving each of the goals. Each strategy includes a series of actions that are designed to be specific, easily put to use, relevant, and measurable over time. The Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission expects to adopt the plan in the fall of 2022. Shortly after, the Commission intends to bring the plan before the Somerset County Planning Board for consideration of adoption as part of the County's Master Plan.

Planning Director's Report

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Deputy Director Angela Knowles presented the Planning Director's Report on behalf of Walter Lane. She reported the following:

- Planning Partners Forum- will be held on September 28<sup>th</sup> at 8am via Zoom. Staff will be providing updates on various planning efforts underway in the County and focus on the Regional Flooding/Stormwater Round Table initiative.
- Preservation Plan Event- Over 30 people attended the Preservation Plan Event yesterday to celebrate the completion of the Plan as well announce we will be partnering with non-profits to preserve open space. The first project is with the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum and Sourland Conservancy.
- Economic Development Efforts - Jessica Paolini, our new Manager of Economic Development, is attending the International Economic Development Council annual conference this week. As a Board Member of this group, she part of a working group to develop and advance strategies

economic development professionals can implement to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This information will be used to shape our new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which we hope to begin updating next year.

### **Action Items/Informational Items:**

#### **September 2022 Land Development Committee Report**

Supervising Planner Thomas D'Amico reported there was no September meeting of the Land Development Committee.

#### **August First Time Submissions**

The Land Development Committee did not meet this month. Therefore, the full County Planning Board must approve the first Time Submissions for the month of August 2022. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 27 submissions. There were two new lots proposed and four new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 1,354,674 square feet of non-residential building space proposed as well as 129 multi-family units. There was \$24,018 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board and \$19,131 improvement value posted to the County Planning Board.

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr., did not participate in any discussion or take any action on the Clinton Bagels site plan project in Somerville.

Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the August 2022 First Time Submissions. A motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Michael Giordano. The roll was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Supervising Transportation Planner Kenneth Wedeen reported since the last Planning Board meeting county and consultant staff have advanced work on the Keep Somerset Moving: Transportation Plan 2045. Items that have advanced include:

- The development of the study web page content and format, logo, email address and study phone number.
- The development of the 1<sup>st</sup> online survey and engagement portal to host the survey and online interactive map.
- The development of a list of Pop-Up events. This Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> County and consultant staff will be working the following events: North Plainfield Borough, Franklin Township, Bound Brook Borough, and Manville Borough.
- The draft Vision Statement and Goals and Objectives
- Study summary
- Equity assessment procedure and crash data analysis

- On September 15<sup>th</sup> staff hosted the first of three Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and received feedback from the TAC committee members on the vision statement, goals, and objectives, focus group and interview participants what are the most important transportation issues and opportunities that should be addressed in the Circulation Plan Update.
- Staff is working with the consultant to launch the web page and beginning to attend numerous Fall 2022 Pop-Up events.

### Somerset County Regional Flooding / Stormwater Management Roundtable Update

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Deputy Director Angela Knowles reported that the Regional Stormwater Roundtable is set for September 21<sup>st</sup> from 1-4pm at the County Emergency Services Training Academy. Staff estimates about 20 attendees from nine different towns have signed up to attend. Confirmed speakers for the roundtable are County Commissioner Paul Drake, NJDEP Assistant Commissioner Vince Mazzei, The Watershed Institute Policy Director Michael Pisauro, and NJ Water Resources Research Institute Director, Dr. Christopher Obropta. The Roundtable will be a kickoff meeting to a wider effort by the Somerset County Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development, to work with towns impacted by flooding. The kick-off meeting will highlight the region's issues with flooding, and we will hear from watershed experts about addressing the issues with regional solutions. Participants will also engage in breakout sessions where they will be guided in identifying projects for resiliency and identifying funding and technical resources to implement those projects. The inspiration for this kick-off meeting stems from FEMA's Resiliency Accelerator program where a handful of Somerset County towns participated. We are modeling this workshop after that approach and including all Somerset County towns in the process. FEMA will also help facilitate the workshop.

A Letter of Intent to submit an application for funding to the NJDEP's ResilientNJ program is due on Friday Sept 23, and the Office of Planning Policy and Economic Development intends to submit a letter of interest. The funding, if awarded, will support the County's efforts to work with towns on these efforts.

On a related note, Ms. Knowles attended the State's public hearing for the Ida Action Plan: For the State of New Jersey, on September 8<sup>th</sup> in Manville. The comment period on the Action Plan is open until September 30<sup>th</sup> and the Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development intends to submit a letter promoting regional planning as a part of the solution to flooding. Following the State's public hearings, they will submit the final plan to the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) so that they may obtain the funding earmarked in the Plan for different programs.

### Wastewater Plan Update

Office of Planning Policy and Economic Development Deputy Director Angela Knowles reported that staff will be meeting with NJDEP next week to discuss the Warren Township Sewer Service Area Transfer Request (moving some wastewater flow from one existing sewer service area to another existing sewer service area) which was discussed with the Board a few months ago. Still waiting for NJDEP to publish the adoption of the Septic Management Plan in the NJ Register. Also waiting for comments on the remaining components of the wastewater management plan. One new Site-Specific

Amendment has been submitted for review but has not been submitted to NJDEP. This amendment is requesting a property in an existing sewer service area be shown as its own sewer service area for an on-site system since it is too costly to connect to the existing sanitary system. Staff is reviewing the submission.

State Plan update

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Deputy Director Angela Knowles reported that Director Lane has been working with the Township of Bedminster to advance their Plan Endorsement petition. He has participated in several meetings with Township officials to develop strategies to ensure the AT&T site and several other sites are included in either the Bedminster Village Center or the Pluckemin Village Center. He has had discussions with the Office of Planning Advocacy to support Bedminster’s efforts. He is also working with several towns to advance their plan endorsement petitions.

Public Comments

No members of the public were present.

Committee Reports


Committee Reports were included with the meeting packet.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Michael Giordano and seconded by Christopher Kelly. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:14pm.

**Next meeting Date:** October 18, 2022 @ 4:45 Regular Meeting (In person)

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary