

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 15, 2022  
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
HELD AT 4:45 P.M.  
IN PERSON MEETING**

**Call to Order**

The November 15, 2022 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 5:00 p.m. This meeting was held in person.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Open Public Meetings Statement**

Vice-Chairman Michael Giordano 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:**

Michael Giordano, Vice-Chair  
Christopher Kelly, Member  
Erika Inocencio, Member, (arrived at 5:00pm)  
Sami Shaban, Member  
Adam Slutsky, alternate member, voting in place of Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary  
Charissa N. Wijaya Hammerman, Esq., attending in place of Joseph DeMarco, County Counsel

**Absent**

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr, Chairman  
Albert Ellis, member  
Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson  
Commissioner Paul Drake  
Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary  
Ashok Rakhit, 1<sup>st</sup> alternate

**Also Present from Staff:**

Adam Bradford, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Angela Knowles, Deputy Director, Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development  
Jessica Paolini, Economic Development Manager  
Kaitlin Bundy, Cultural & Heritage Manager  
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner, Farmland Preservation

Tom Boccino, Supervising Planner, Preservation  
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner, Land Development & Historic Preservation

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes: October 18, 2022**

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Giordano to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2022 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Sami Shaban. A voice vote was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Presentation Items:**

County Agriculture Development Board Update

Principal Planner Kate Katzer provided an overview of the County's farmland preservation efforts. The Farmland Preservation program currently has fourteen (14) projects in various stages of preservation, and if all projects close, it will add approximately 1,200 acres to the program. This past year the program closed on Deerfield Farm in Bedminster, which was a joint effort with the Land Conservancy of New Jersey – adding approximately 38 acres into preservation. The property is surrounded by previously preserved farms. In 2023, the County will be celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first preserved farm – the Baron Farm. The Farmland Preservation Program will be celebrated throughout the year with Ag Day and the Farm to Frame events in March, Influencing Agriculture in September, and smaller events throughout the year. Staff is working to link Somerset County farmers to organizations in the State that specialize in grant funding for farming and other various resources available to farmers.

November Planning Director's Report

Director Lane was unable to attend the meeting as he was participating on a panel at the NJ League of Municipalities Conference. Deputy Director Knowles gave his report.

American Planning Association – NJ Chapter (APANJ) Awards

The APANJ announced the 2022 Planning Excellence Awards winners. The Borough of Somerville is receiving the Outstanding Implementation Award for the Somerville Station Area and Landfill Redevelopment Plan. Director Lane will be receiving the Budd Chavooshian Award for Outstanding Professional Planner. The awards ceremony will be held December 15<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the South Orange Performing Arts Center.

Planning Partners Forum

The next Planning Partners Forum will be held virtually on December 8<sup>th</sup> at 8am. There will be a presentation by Donna Rendeiro, Executive Director of the NJ Office of Planning Advocacy, on the NJ State Planning Commission's Warehouse Siting Guidance Document. There will also be a dialogue with

the attendees on transportation needs as part of the outreach process for the Circulation Plan Update. A link to register for the meeting will be sent to the Planning Board members.

#### AT&T Site Reuse Plan

Director Lane and Jessica Paolini continue to work with and provide guidance to Bedminster Township. On November 3rd, the Bedminster Township Land Use Board adopted a Master Plan Amendment to adopt the recommendations from the County AT&T Land Use Study and Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County Phase 3 Study. The Township Committee will be acting on the zoning changes later this month.

#### Wastewater Planning Update

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has indicated the Septic Management Plan Component (SMP) of the Wastewater Management Plan has been deemed ready for adoption. The adoption notice for the SMP will be published in the NJ Register very soon. The County is still awaiting comments of the remaining draft components of the Wastewater Management Plan.

#### December Meeting Date

Our regularly scheduled December meeting now conflicts with a Board of County Commissioners Meeting. Deputy Director Knowles asked the Board to consider a date change to December 14<sup>th</sup> should a meeting be necessary. All agreed that the 14<sup>th</sup> would be a suitable date. The Board discussed whether it should be in person or virtual. Board members prefer in person. Staff will need to confirm that the meeting room is available for an in person meeting.

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

##### November 2022 Land Development Committee Report and Approval of October 2022 First Time Submissions

Supervising Planner Tom D'Amico reported the November 9, 2022 meeting of the County Planning Board Land Development Committee reviewed a total of 24 First-Time Submissions for the month of October 2022. There were four new lots proposed and two new lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 358,723 square feet of non-residential building space proposed and 96 multi-family units proposed. There was \$34,578 in improvement value and \$5,860 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Vice-Chairman Giordano called for a vote to approve the October 2022 First Time Submissions. The roll was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

##### Somerset County Historical Preservation Grant Program

Supervising Planner Tom D'Amico reported that The Somerset County Historic Preservation Grant Program is a part of the Somerset County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. Eligible applicants for funds from the program are Somerset County government, municipal governments within Somerset County, and non-profit organizations as defined under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code of 1986 *whose purpose includes historic preservation* (emphasis added).

Eligible property criteria include historic sites, which are listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places or contribute to a historic district listed on the New Jersey Register and those historic sites which are certified as eligible by the State Historic Preservation Office or contribute to an eligible historic district. Acceptable activities include acquisition of a historic site, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration and/or preservation of a historic site. Plans and reports related to the implementation of a historic preservation project, required project signs as well as interpretive signs or plaques are also eligible activities. The eligible activities allowed under this funding program must be in conformance with the *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties 1995* (also known as the Secretary of Interior Standards).

The applications are submitted to the office of the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission. These submissions are reviewed by the Commission staff for completeness and are then submitted to an advisory panel for review. The advisory panel consists of historic preservationists, an architect, an expert in the building industry and a member of the County Cultural and Heritage Commission. This panel reviews and rates each application. The quality of the submitted documents and plans are analyzed and the ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed project is considered in the ranking. The panel also factors in any proposed interpretive programs and the impact the project would have on heritage tourism. Lastly, the significance of the resource, including historical, architectural, cultural, or other significance based on the National Register of Historic Places criteria is evaluated.

The recommendations of the advisory panel are then forwarded to the Cultural and Heritage Commission who then reviews each of the applications and the panel's recommendations. The Commission's recommendations are then transmitted to the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners for their action. A total of 198 projects, involving 61 historic sites, have been awarded \$21,292,451.00 (1999-2022)

In 2022 the County awarded the following six historic sites a total of \$724,410:

The Center for Contemporary Art, **Pluckemin School House** (Bedminster) \$27,000  
Friends of Historic Bernardsville, **Dunster-Squibb Property** (Bernardsville) \$322,900  
Washington Camp Ground Association, **Washington Camp Ground** (Bridgewater) \$25,000  
Somerset County Historical Society, **Van Doren Howe Farmstead** (Franklin) \$288,310  
Hillsborough Township, **Van der Veer-Harris House** (Hillsborough) \$39,000  
Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum, **Reasoner-True House** (Montgomery) \$22,200

### Somerset County Circulation Element Update

Senior Transportation Planner Adam Bradford reported since the last Planning Board meeting county and consultant staff have been able to launch the web page for the Keep Somerset Moving Transportation Plan 2045 study. The web page provides background on the study and links to the online survey and online map. County staff has been working to promote the web page via a county press release and social media posts. County staff have also emailed partner organizations asking for them to share materials promoting the study on their web page, thru email blasts and social media posts.

Planning staff emailed invitations to eight focus group discussions during the month of November. To date, staff has hosted 6 of the 8 focus group meetings. In addition, planning staff is working with the consultant to host a focus group discussion for all of the County's municipalities in December 2022. Staff is also developing a series of questions to ask at the December 8th Planning Partners Forum. County staff also has reviewed draft summary materials from the equity analysis and is working to schedule Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting #2, and public meeting #1 in early 2023.

### NJTPA Federal Recertification

Deputy Director Knowles presented a letter of support for Federal Recertification of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. Planning Board counsel confirmed that a voice vote should be taken to approve acceptance of the letter of support. A voice vote was called for by Vice-Chairman Giordano and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Deputy Director Knowles reported that the Stormwater Roundtable work is progressing. The next workshop is scheduled for Friday December 16th from 9am to 12pm at the County's Emergency Services Training Academy. Participants are to RSVP by 12/2 and to respond with some information that will help shape the agenda. It was noted that at the September meeting towns were able to confer with one another on flooding issues and they also identified areas where they required more assistance, in particular Outreach to residents, crafting Policy geared toward resiliency, and obtaining Technical and Funding assistance to implement projects. The agenda for December will include a broad recap of the September meeting as well as presentations by representatives from the NJDEP and the NJOEM, and then based on the responses to the RSVP, participants are going to break out into groups to develop ideas in one of the identified topic areas. The goal is to help the towns dive into more details on the type of assistance they are requesting. In the meantime, with some technical assistance and expertise, the Office is planning to prepare templates and model master plan and ordinance language that will be easy for the towns to tailor to their needs. The Office is also contemplating an education and outreach effort to spotlight some of the more requested types of assistance. For instance, naturalizing detention basins and identifying funding resources for implementation efforts. More information on those efforts is forthcoming.

**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, Vice-Chairman Giordano asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Christopher Kelly and seconded by Erika Inocencio. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

**Next meeting Date:** December 14, 2022 @ 4:45 to be held virtually via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary