

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 14, 2022  
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
HELD AT 4:45 P.M.  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Call to Order**

The December 14,2022 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:45 p.m. This meeting was held virtually, via Zoom.

**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, 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  
Albert Ellis, Member  
Christopher Kelly, Member  
Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary  
Ashok Rakhit, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate (arrived at 4:55pm)  
Joseph DeMarco, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

**Absent**

Erika Inocencio, Member  
Sami Shaban, Member  
Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson  
Commissioner Paul Drake

**Also Present from Staff:**

Walter Lane, Director, Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development  
Angela Knowles, Deputy Director, Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development  
Jessica Paolini, Economic Development Manager  
Kaitlin Bundy, Cultural & Heritage Manager  
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner

Ken Wedeen, Supervising Transportation Planner  
Tom Boccino, Supervising Planner, Preservation  
Katelyn Katzer, Principal Planner Farmland Preservation  
Erika Phillips, Principal Community Planner  
Adam Bradford, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Nora Fekete, Planner  
Sheli Daniels, Office Manager

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes: November 15, 2022**

Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022 Planning Board Meeting. The motion was made by Michael Giordano and seconded by Christopher Kelly. Chairman Navatto asked the Board to authorize approval of the November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Presentation Items:**

Resolution Reconfirming the Somerset County Land Development Committee's Determination that Bonnie Burn Road is not a County Road Under the Jurisdiction and Control of Somerset County as it Relates to the Proposed Development Submitted for Blocks 74.02/74.03, Lots 19.01/5, 10 Within the Borough of Watchung

County Counsel, Joseph DeMarco presented the above referenced resolution reconfirming the Somerset County Land Development Committee's determination that Bonnie Burn Road is not a County Road under the jurisdiction and control of Somerset County as it relates to the proposed development submitted for Blocks 74.02/74.03, Lots 19.01/5, 10 within the Borough of Watchung. After a brief discussion, Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was made by Christopher Kelly and seconded by Michael Giordano. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

**December Planning Director's Report**

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane presented the Planning Director's Report. He reported the following:

**AT&T Land Use Study**

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, Bedminster Township adopted a new zoning ordinance which implements the zoning recommendations from the AT&T Land Use Study we had completed in December of 2021. Jessica Paolini and I attended the Township Committee Meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup> to provide testimony and support for these changes. As noted in the recent letter sent by Mayor Jacobs, the Township is very appreciative for the assistance our Office has provided to Bedminster of the last few years. On Monday, Jessica Paolini helped facilitate a meeting with representatives for the New Jersey

Economic Development Authority, Office of Planning Advocacy, Rutgers University, and the Governor's Office to tour the AT&T site and ensure our state partners know of this development opportunity.

### Planning Partners Forum

The final Planning Partners Forum of 2022 was held on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Over thirty-five (35) people attended the Forum. The main agenda item was a very informative presentation by Donna Rendeiro, Executive Director, Office of Planning Advocacy on the State Planning Commission's Warehouse Guidance Document. There was a robust discussion about warehousing and the guidance document. A copy of the presentation will be shared with our planning partners shortly.

### Proposed Legislation

There have been numerous pieces of legislation introduced over the last several weeks dealing with warehouse development. These legislative proposals range from mandating NJDOT to conduct traffic assessments for all proposed warehouse projects; requiring municipalities to consider warehouse developments during their master plan examinations; requiring the State Planning Commission to adopt model ordinance for siting certain warehouses and permits conforming updates to municipal master plans and zoning ordinances; allowing county agriculture development boards to have the right of first refusal to purchase farmland that is zoned for warehouse development and to make the State Planning Commission's Warehouse Guidance document binding for the municipalities to follow and numerous farmland preservation related legislation. Staff has been reviewing all these pieces of legislation and will report back to the Board at the January Meeting.

### Stormwater Management Rules, Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, and Inland Flood Protection Rules

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) recently released a series of proposed changes to the Stormwater Management Rules, Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules and Inland Flood Protection, Deputy Director Knowles is reviewing these proposed changes and will present draft recommendations and comments for the Board to consider at the January Meeting. Comments are due to the NJDEP on February 3, 2023.

### Upcoming Meetings

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Focus Group Discussion with our municipalities as part of the public outreach effort the Circulation Plan Update. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, the second Regional Flooding/Regional Stormwater Meeting will convene. Attendance is expected to be good at both meetings based upon the RSVPs we have received to date.

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

### **December 14, 2022 Land Development Committee Report and Approval of the November 2022 First Time Submissions**

Supervising Planner, Tom D'Amico reported that the project regarding the 30 Peapack Road, Far Hills Driveway request involves a .24-acre property which consists of a two-family dwelling and a single-family dwelling with a commercial store front. The site is located on Peapack Road which is County Route 512. The two-family structure will remain as is and the single-family structure is to be enlarged from two bedrooms to three bedrooms for residential use only. A proposed subdivision line will place each primary structure on its own lot. The applicant is requesting a waiver, involving the single-family parcel, from the County requirement that driveways shall be designed to permit vehicles to turn around instead of having to back on to the County Road. The Land Development Committee (the Committee) received testimony from the applicant's Engineer and the applicant. The Committee took information under advisement and will make a decision at next month's meeting.

County Counsel Joseph DeMarco presented the proposed County Planning Board resolution reconfirming that Bonnie Burn Road, in relation to the development on Blocks 74.02/74.03 and Lots 19.01/5 and 10 in the Borough of Watchung, is not under the jurisdiction and responsibility of Somerset County. The Land Development Committee unanimously recommended the aforesaid resolution be adopted by the full County Planning Board.

The Committee reviewed all first-time submissions for the month of November. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 25 submissions. There were 10 new lots proposed. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 136,558 square feet of non-residential building space proposed. There was \$1,521.00 in improvement value and \$1,000.00 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the December Land Development Committee Report. A motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Michael Giordano. The roll was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Before opening the meeting to Public Comments, Chairman Navatto congratulated Walter Lane on his receipt of the Budd Chavooshian Award for Outstanding Professional Planner from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association. Director Lane stated that he has a really good team and wanted to thank them for making this possible. Chairman Navatto also made mention of a complimentary letter from Bedminster Township, thanking Walter and Jessica Paolini for all their help to reposition and redevelop the AT&T site in Bedminster Township. The Chairman welcomed all the new staff members, praising the Somerset County Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development Division as the best place to work.

**Public Comments**

No members of the public were present.

**Committee Reports**

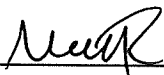
Committee Reports were included with the meeting packet.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Navatto wished everyone a happy and healthy new year. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.

**Next meeting Date:** January 17, 2023 @ 4:45 Regular Meeting (In person)

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary