

**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 17, 2023
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
HELD AT 4:45 P.M.
IN PERSON MEETING**

Call to Order

The January 17, 2023 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:46 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, 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 (arrived at 4:51pm)
Christopher Kelly, Member
Sami Shaban, Member (arrived at 4:57pm)
Commissioner Paul Drake
Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary

Absent

Erika Inocencio, Member
Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson
Ashok Rakhit, 1st Alternate

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
Erika Phillips, Principal Community Planner
Adam Bradford, Sr. Transportation Planner
Naghma Malik, GIS Services Coordinator
Sheli Daniels, Office Manager
Marina Stinely, Esq. covering for Joseph DeMarco, Esq., Deputy County Counsel

Pledge of Allegiance

Swearing in of New & Reappointed Members: Marina Stinely read the oath and the following people were sworn in:

Chris Kelly

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

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr, Chairman
Michael Giordano, Vice-Chair
Christopher Kelly, Member
Commissioner Paul Drake
Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary

Approval of the Meeting Minutes: Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the December 14, 2022 Planning Board Meeting Minutes. The motion was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Mike Giordano. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers: Bernie Navatto nominated Matthew Loper as the Chair Pro-Tem. The nomination was seconded by Mike Giordano. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Pro-tem, Matt Loper called for the selection of the Chair Person for the Somerset County Planning Board for 2023 and asked for nominations for Chair. Mike Giordano nominated Bernie Navatto, Commissioner Paul Drake seconded the nomination. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously, with Bernie Navatto abstaining.

Albert Ellis arrived to the meeting and was sworn in by Marina Stinely.

The Chair Pro-Tem, Matthew Loper turned the meeting back over to the Chair.

Chairman Navatto nominated Mike Giordano to Vice-Chair. The nomination was seconded by Matt Loper. There were no other nominations. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously, with Mike Giordano abstaining. Chairman Navatto nominated Matt Loper for Secretary. The nomination was seconded by Chris Kelly. There were no other nominations. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously, with Matt Loper abstaining.

Chairman Navatto mentioned some things to look forward to in the coming year. Closing out on our Flood Resiliency study and stated how important this is to our towns. He further stated that we are

looking forward to completing the Circulation Plan and the Cultural & Heritage Long Range Plan so that we can add those to our Master Plan. Chairman Navatto stated that he is once again looking forward to working with everyone again. He also stated that it's a pleasure to work with the best county planning board in the state. He is proud to be a part of this team.

Action Items/Informational Items:

Resolution Designating Somerset County Planning Board Meetings for 2023-2024

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane presented the resolution Designating Somerset County Planning Board Meetings for 2023-2024. Director Lane indicated meetings will be held the 3rd Tuesday of every month, in person, at 4:45pm, except for the December 2023 meeting due to a conflict with the Commissioner's Meeting. Meetings will be held in the third floor Commissioners Meeting Room in the County Administration Building, located at 20 Grove St, Somerville, NJ. The Chairman asked for the resolution to be moved. Matt Loper moved it, Mike Giordano seconded it. A roll call vote was taken the resolution passed unanimously.

Sami Shaban arrived to the meeting and was sworn in by Marina Stinely. Sami Shaban added his yes vote on the Meeting Date Resolution.

Resolution Designating a Non-voting Representative to the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board For 2023

Director Lane stated this is the annual appointment of a non-voting representative to the Agriculture Development Board, which usually is the Chair of the Environmental & Utilities Committee, or the Chair's designee. Chairman Navatto called for the motion to moved, Al Ellis moved and Sami Shaban seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing Certain Somerset County Planning Board and Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Members the Responsibility of Signing All Subdivision Plats to be Filed with the County Clerk For 2023

Director Lane explained stated the County Enabling Act directs the County Clerk not to accept a filing of a subdivision plat which does not bear the certification of approval or review from an authorized County Planning Board officer or staff member. The resolution authorizes the following Board Members and staff members to sign subdivision plats.

1. Chairperson, Somerset County Planning Board
2. Secretary, Somerset County Planning Board
3. Director, Somerset County Office of Planning Policy and Economic Development
4. Deputy Director, Somerset County Office of Planning Policy and Economic Development
5. Supervising Planner, Somerset County Office of Planning Policy and Economic Development

Chris Kelly made a motion to approve the resolution, Mike Giordano seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

Dates for 2023 Committee Meetings

Director Lane presented the schedule of dates for all sub-committee meetings. He stated that since the Board has resumed in-person meetings attendance has dropped. The schedule calls for the Transportation Committee and the E&U Committee to meet virtually on the Thursday prior to the Planning Board meeting at 3:30pm and 4:00pm respectively in the months of February, April, June, August, October & December. The MP/LU Committee is to meet virtually on the Wednesday prior to the Planning Board meeting at 4:00pm and the Housing/Demographic Committee to meet virtually on the Thursday prior to the Planning Board meeting at 4:00pm in the months of March, May, July, September & November. The Land Development Committee will meet in person, monthly on the Wednesday prior to the Planning Board meeting at 8:15am in the Engineering Conference Room on the 2nd floor, 20 Grove St, Somerville. The Board agreed with the schedule.

Preliminary 2023 Committee Assignments

Director Lane also presented the preliminary 2023 committee assignments. He stated that since there are no new board members this year, the assignments would remain the same as in 2022. The Board agreed with the assignments.

Planning Director's Report

Director Lane stated that the Office received the 2022 Healthier Somerset Driving Change Award for efforts to incorporate health issues into our various planning efforts. He further stated that he, Adam Bradford, Naghma Malik and Aarthy Sabesan were all involved in this effort.

Director Lane indicated that in the next month or two he will be making a presentation to State Planning Commission focusing on the Preservation Plan to set the stage for promoting more regional planning and to discuss potential planning priorities for 2023. Commissioner Drake asked if that will be a full commission meeting and what is the date. Director Lane answered it is usually on the first Wednesday of the month and would confirm the date and time with Commissioner Drake.

Economic Development Manager, Jessica Paolini, and Director Lane continue to assist Bedminster to advance the future development of the AT&T site.

At next month's Planning Board meeting there will be a presentation on the final report from the Delaware/Raritan transit quarter design that was recently completed. Looking at the reactivation of passenger service on the West Trenton Line. Deputy Director Angela Knowles attended the presentation.

The Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development has accomplished a lot over the past few years. Director Lane stated that he plans to make a detailed presentation at the March Planning Board

meeting that will highlight the various projects the Office has been working on over the last two years. He further stated there is a lot that we have accomplished, completed many projects, won numerous awards and administered numerous grants. Director Lane highlighted a number of accomplishments in Land Development, the Cultural & Heritage program, Economic Development, Transportation, Preservation and Stormwater Management. He also went over several goals for the coming year, which will be discussed in greater detail at the March meeting.

January 17, 2023 Land Development Committee Report and Approval of the December 2022 First Time Submissions

Rica Site Plan Waiver Request, Warren

Supervising Planner Thomas D'Amico gave a brief introduction for the Rica site plan locate on King George Road (County Route 651) in Warren Township. The developers wish to construct a 104,206 square foot, three-story, self-storage facility on a two-acre lot. The existing use is a real estate office and single-family dwelling. The applicants are asking for a waiver from the sight distance requirements. Although the proposed access point meets the AASHTO's stopping sight distance requirement, it does not meet the intersection sight distance requirement in the *Somerset County Public Works Handbook* which is 10 times the design speed of the road. At the July Land Development Committee meeting it was recommended that we defer the waiver request and discuss other alternatives with the applicant's engineer. County Land Development Engineer Jonathan Blank contacted the applicant's engineer and discussed various alternatives to alleviate the sight distance issue. He stated that they came to an agreement to restrict the movement out of the site to be right turn exit only. This would eliminate the sight distance issue. A concrete island would be installed to direct traffic to the right as well as additional signage. Therefore, the waiver has been withdrawn since it is no longer needed.

30 Peapack Road Driveway Waiver Request, Far Hills

Supervising Planner Thomas D'Amico stated that Erika Phillips reported that this project 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. The proposed subdivision line will place each primary structure on its own lot. The applicant has requested 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. At the December meeting the Committee received testimony from the applicant's Engineer and the applicant. The Committee took the information under advisement and agreed to make a decision at next month's Committee meeting.

Supervising Planner D'Amico further stated County Land Development Engineer, Johnathan Blank, reported that there is a lot coverage issue due to the proposed undersized lots. The applicant has agreed to remove some impervious coverage to be able to provide the required turn around. The waiver request has been withdrawn. We will review the revised plans when they are submitted.

December First Time Submissions

The Committee reviewed all first-time submissions for the month of December 2022. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 15 submissions. There were three lots proposed. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 7,827 square feet of non-residential building space proposed. There was \$1,521 in development review fees paid to the County Planning Board.

Chairman Navatto called for a motion to approve the January 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.

Commissioner Drake asked how many applications we are getting regarding warehouses. Supervising Planner D'Amico answered that we received applications for approximately 6 million sq feet of non-residential building space, the vast majority being warehouses. Conversation ensued among board members and staff about the impact of warehouses in several Somerset County towns and how they are handling the issue in their local ordinances. Director Lane stated this is an issue we are looking at, but a lot of this development is a function of local master plans and local zoning. He mentioned the State Warehouse document.

Keep Somerset Moving: Transportation Plan 2045 Update

Supervising Transportation Planner Ken Wedeen reported that over the last several months the consultant team for the Keep Somerset Moving Transportation Plan 2045 Subregional Study have collected public input from nine focus group discussions, eight pop up events, over 1,100 online survey and online mapping exercise responses. The consultant has completed an environmental justice analysis, base mapping, and crash analysis, and bike compatibility analysis, NJ TRANSIT ridership and county transit ridership analysis and have updated the Circulation Plan vision statement and goals.

The consultant has prepared several work products including the final report outline, and environmental justice tech memorandum. All the data collected and analyzed has been prepared into a PowerPoint presentation and vision and goals exercise to be hosted at the virtual 2nd TAC meeting scheduled for Thursday January 19th from 1-3 p.m.

The consultant is preparing a separate PowerPoint presentation and breakout room exercise for the February 1st virtual public meeting #1 to gather public feedback on county transportation issues and opportunities. The virtual meeting will be hosted from 6-8 p.m. and persons can register online to participate in the meeting.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Inland Flood Protection Rule

Deputy Director Angela Knowles reported that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection released a rule proposal which pertains to new rules in the New Jersey Administrative Code.

The Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development staff has reviewed the 113 page rule proposal and consulted with the County Engineering Dept on any additional comments. NJDEP held a public hearing on January 11, 2023 and written comments are being accepted through February 3, 2023, which we plan to submit a comment letter.

Deputy Director Knowles described the content of the rule and the County's anticipated response. She discussed the details of how the rule updates current data and recognizes Climate Change factors for planning for future storms. She discussed the several exemptions for public transportation entities and for technically complete applications. Discussion between Board members and staff about the details of the proposed rules continued with the Chairman stressing that our communities need to be kept abreast of any comments so they are assured that we are here to help them. Chairman Navatto then asked if DEP has addressed any funding sources to correct this? Deputy Director Knowles answered that they said there will be grant funding available, no other details as to when or how much.

Public Comments

No members of the public were present.

Committee Reports

Committee Reports were included with the meeting packet.

Adjournment

Next meeting Date: February 21, 2023 @ 4:45 Regular In Person Meeting

There being no further business before the board Chairman Navatto asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved by Al Ellis and seconded by Sami Shaban. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew D. Loper, Secretary