

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 18, 2023  
MEETING OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
HELD AT 4:45 P.M.  
IN PERSON MEETING**

**Call to Order**

The April 18, 2023 meeting of the Somerset County Planning Board convened at 4:55 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 location 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:**

Michael Giordano, Vice-Chair  
Commissioner Paul Drake  
Matthew D. Loper, Board Secretary

**Absent**

Bernard V. Navatto, Jr, Chairman  
Albert Ellis, Member  
Christopher Kelly, Member  
Erika Inocencio, Member  
Sami Shaban, Member  
Ashok Rakhit, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate  
Commissioner Director Shanel Y. Robinson

**Also Present from Staff:**

Walter Lane, Director, Office of Planning, Policy & Economic Development  
Kaitlin Bundy, Manager, Cultural & Heritage  
Aarthy Sabesan, Manager, Office of GIS Services  
Thomas D'Amico, Supervising Planner  
Thomas Boccino, Supervising Preservation Planner  
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner, Farmland Preservation  
Erika Phillips, Principal Community Planner

Naghma Malik, GIS Services Coordinator  
Stephanie Ladas, GIS Specialist  
Sheli Daniels, Office Manager  
Marina Stinely, Esq., covering for Joseph DeMarco, Esq., County Counsel

### **Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

Since there was not a quorum present, no action was taken on the March, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Deputy County Counsel Marina Stinely advised the Board could continue with the meeting, without voting on any items.

### **DISCUSSION / PRESENTATION ITEMS**

#### **00 Hamilton Road LLC, Block 183.05, Lot 35, Hillsborough Township, Site Specific Wastewater Management Amendment**

Ryan Elkholy, PhD, PE, the applicant of a proposed Site-Specific Wastewater Management Amendment for 00 Hamilton Road LLC, Block 183.05, Lot 35, Hillsborough Township provided an overview of the proposed project. Mr. Elkholy made the following points during his presentation:

- The Township re-zoned the property from industrial to residential with the intention of allowing for homes to be built on 1 acre lots which is consistent with the current residences adjacent to the property. In order to subdivide to 1 acre lots, city sewer and water is required per the ordinance.
- The sewer is right at the property on East Hamilton and the adjacent properties are all connected to that sewer. Connecting to the sewer would not cause any disruption.
- It is more favorable to connect to sewer as opposed to septic from a water quality and public health perspective.
- Being added to the sewer service area would not be a cause for further development to the surrounding areas as the adjacent properties are already developed residential. The one property across from Hamilton Road has wetlands and a pipeline running through it, so there is not real opportunity for more development there.
- The property has absolutely no wetlands as verified by the DEP.

Hillsborough Township's Planning Director David Kois reiterated many of the points provided by Mr. Elkholy and expressed the Township's support for this Site-Specific Wastewater Management Amendment. Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane stated Hillsborough Township had submitted correspondence regarding this project and the memorandum was included in the Board's Meeting Packet. The Board indicated this information will be considered as it determines the County's initial position on this project.

#### **Planning Directors Report**

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane reported the Economic Development Office hosted an Environment Social Governance (ESG) workshop with numerous business leaders. The event was held at Duke Farms. Jessica Paolini and our newest hire Ben Nanna did

a great job putting the event together. The County has received a lot of great feedback from the participants about the event. The participants were impressed with the County's efforts and commended us for being in a leadership position. The Board will hear more about the event at next month's Board meeting. Director Lane will introduce Ben Nanna at the next meeting since he had a prior commitment and could not attend tonight. He thanked both Jessica Paolini and Ben Nanna for their great work at the ESG workshop.

He also reported the County held a very successful Farm to Frame event celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Cultural & Heritage Commission and the Farmland Preservation Program. The Board will hear more about this event later in the meeting. He thanked Kaitlin Bundy and Kate Katzer for leading this effort as well as the other team members who help make this a great event: Tom D'Amico, Tom Boccino, Katie Himics and Robert Meyer.

Director Lane spoke about a presentation he recently made to the NJ State Planning Commission (SPC) at their April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting where he provided an overview of the County's recent regional planning work as well as an overview of the planning assistance we provide to our municipalities. The State Planning Commission was very impressed with the County's planning work and numerous members of the Commission stated we are the model for the rest of the State to follow. He reported the SPC commended him on his efforts and said they should clone him so other counties can do similar work. He thanked the SPC members for the compliments and told them that he couldn't do this work without the great team he has here and the tremendous support he receives from this Board and the Board of Commissioners.

In addition, he stated he and Erika Phillips attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Somerset County Bar Association this past Saturday. Director Lane was a panelist at two different sessions: Hot Topics in Planning where he was asked to speak about the future of office space and another session focused on the Development Application Process. The Office received a lot of compliments on the planning work produced by the County.

Director Lane shared staff continues to provide planning and economic development assistance and support to numerous municipalities. He and Jessica Paolini spoke to Manville's Economic Development Committee and continue to support the repositioning of the AT&T site in collaboration with Bedminster Township. Staff has been working with Montgomery, Green Brook and Branchburg on planning and zoning matters to support shared economic development goals and objectives. Lastly, Director Lane reported award nominations for the Preservation Plan were submitted to the National Association of Counties and NJ Future's Smart Growth Awards. He also shared he and Tom Boccino will be on a panel at the NJ State Planning Conference hosted by APA-NJ and NJ Future. The session will highlight the Preservation Plan and how we are working with our planning partners NJ Conservation Foundation, the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum and the Sourland Conservancy to preserve the True Farmstead in Montgomery Township.

**ACTION ITEMS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

**Approval of the March Land Development 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 March 2023. In your packet is the First Time

Submission information. During the month, the County Planning Board reviewed a total of 30 submissions. There were six new lots proposed and 106 lots created. Of the site plans proposed during the month there was 97,411 square feet of non-residential building space proposed as well as 194 multi-family units. There was \$1,560.00 in development review fees and \$33,299.00 in improvement value paid to the County Planning Board. Since there was not a quorum present, no action was taken on the March First Time Submissions.

### **Farm to Frame Event**

Kate Katzer, Principal Planner and Somerset County Agriculture Development Board Administrator and Kaitlin Bundy, Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission and Strategic Initiatives Manager presented on the Farm to Frame program and recent gallery reception. An overview of the project was presented, including the initial development, timeline, and future of the project. Highlights included the success of the reception, with over one hundred individuals in attendance and the strong connections made by the artists and farmers throughout the project.

### **County Circulation Plan Update**

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane provided a brief update on the update of the Circulation Plan. He stated the consultant team is drafting sections of the updated plan and the next public meeting will be in the late Spring or early Summer. He also shared there will be an internal working group led by County Administrator Colleen Mahr to discuss how the County can improve and enhance the public transit services provided by the County. Recommendations from this working group will be incorporated into the updated Circulation Plan.

### **Wastewater Management Plan Update**

Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development Director Walter Lane summarized the status of the County's wastewater planning efforts. He shared he and Deputy Director Knowles recently met with staff from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to review several proposed site-specific amendments to the Wastewater Management Plan (WMP). NJDEP reported the Septic Management Plan Component should be published for adoption in the NJ Register in the next month or two. Their initial comments on the draft Wastewater Management Plan which was submitted to NJDEP in June 2021 and has been under review since that time and will be sent to the County sometime this May.

He also reported Staff had discussed several proposed site-specific amendments with the Environment and Utilities (E&U) Committee. Consistency letters will be drafted for review by the Master Plan Committee, E&U Committee, and the full Planning Board in the coming months.

### **Public Comments**

No members of the public were present.

### **Committee Reports**

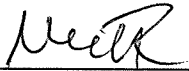
Committee Reports were included with the meeting packet.

**Next meeting Date:** May 16, 2023 @ 4:45. Regular in Person Meeting

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, Vice Chairman Giordano asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved by Paul Drake and seconded by Matt Loper. The meeting was adjourned at 5:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,



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Matthew D. Loper, Secretary