

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 23, 2018**

**Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation**  
**30 Schuyler Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**Morristown, New Jersey**

**In Attendance:**

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Melverne E. Cooke, Chairperson	Kean Burenga, C&D	Christopher Vitz
Kathryn A. DeFillippo, Freeholder	Meghan Hunscher, MCEDC	Gerald Rohsler
Ilene Dorf Manahan	Brian Kincaid, FRAC	John Hayes
Frank T. Reilly	Ben Schumer, Lackawanna Coalition	Joseph Russo
Leonard Resto (Alternate #1)		
Manuela Schuster		
Jigar Shah (Alternate #2)		
Joe Wells		

**I. Call to Order:** Chairperson Melverne E. Cooke called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

**II. Open Public Meeting Statement:** Chairperson Cooke read the Open Public Meetings Act compliance statement.

**III. Roll Call:** Mr. Gerald Rohsler read the roll call. Eight voting members were present during roll call.

**IV. Welcome and Introductions:** Chairperson Cooke welcomed all attendees, including members of Morris County’s Freight Railroad Advisory Committee, and introduced new Board of Transportation member, Jigar Shah. All attendees introduced themselves.

**V. Approval of Minutes from October 24, 2017 Meeting:** Approval of the October 24, 2017 meeting minutes was moved by Leonard Resto and seconded by Frank Reilly. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**VI. Report from Election Committee Chairperson & Election of Officers:** Election Committee Chairperson Ilene Dorf Manahan presented the following nominees for Officers of the Board of Transportation:

- Chairperson: Joe Wells

- Vice Chairperson: Frank T. Reilly
- Secretary: Manuela Schuster

Election of the three Officers was moved by Mr. Resto, seconded by Ms. Manahan, and the Officers were unanimously elected.

## **VII. Staff Reports:**

### **A. Freight Activities:**

Joseph Russo reported on several railroad crossing improvement projects along the Morris County-owned railroads. The County's consultant, JMT, is currently working with NJDOT to complete the design of the US 46 / High Bridge branch rail crossing. The design plans are anticipated to be completed in February. JMT was also hired to complete a survey of County railroad property between Mercer Street and North Salem Street in Dover. The rehabilitation of the Dover & Rockaway Railroad began; the project will replace 3,000 ties and install 4,000 tons of stone. Additionally, the County will resubmit a grant application for \$2.1 million from the FY 2018 Rail Freight Assistance Program to fund High Bridge Branch improvements.

Mr. Russo also reported that the NJTPA's Pilot Freight Concept Development Program continues to advance. The three-year project started about a year ago and consists of three parts: Dover & Rockaway Rail Realignment Project Concept Development Study, Philipsburg South Main Street Bridge Rail Clearance Project, and creation of NJTPA Freight Concept Development Program. Data collection for both concept development studies is nearly complete.

Freeholder Kathryn A. DeFillippo added that there are various options being considered to address the clearance challenge at the South Main Street Bridge (hole in the wall) and that it would benefit Morris County if it can be addressed. Mr. Rohsler noted the importance of the Freight Concept Development Program phase. NJTPA never handled concept development for freight projects, so this is essential to manage these types of projects going forward.

### **B. NYS&W Update:**

Mr. Rohsler reported that the NYS&W Bicycle and Pedestrian Path project is moving along well. The path will be a 4.8 mile shared-use facility starting at River Drive in Pequannock and ending at the Mountain View Train Station in Wayne. An asphalt path will be constructed on top of the existing abandoned railroad bed of the New York, Susquehanna, and Western (NYS&W) Railway. The County anticipates receiving all NJDEP permits by the end of this week. The County and the consultant have been coordinating to address the DEP requirements for wetlands and riparian mitigation. Final plans should be completed in fall of 2018 and construction should start in the spring of 2019.

Mr. Reilly said that the contract agreement with the railroad to purchase the right-of-way (ROW) was a major step forward. Ms. Cooke asked about the status of

the funding to purchase the ROW. Mr. Rohsler responded that it is in the TIP, but the County has not yet acquired the right-of-way.

Christopher Vitz explained the County has been working to secure easements for the path, which are required in addition to the ROW acquisition. Easements are required from the North Jersey District Water Supply property, Wayne Township property, and property owned by the Hoffman Grove homeowners association. The easement from the Water Supply has been acquired.

## **VIII. Circulation Element of the Morris County Master Plan**

John Hayes stated the transportation planning staff has been working with the Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation and the Long Range Committee of the Planning Board to advance the Circulation Element. A draft of the text was emailed to the Board of Transportation and the Freight Railroad Advisory Committee for any comments to be addressed before it is sent to the Planning Board for approval. Staff will work on layout and graphics once the Planning Board approves the text. The Element should be adopted in early summer. He invited to Board to share any comments today or by the end of the week.

Ms. Cooke asked about what changes have occurred since the 1992 Element was adopted. Mr. Hayes listed some including the completion of I-287, the introduction of Midtown Direct Rail Service, and significant commercial and residential development.

Mr. Resto identified some challenges for Morris County and the region including: the lack of federal support for Gateway Program funding; the lack of transit oriented for north-south travel; population decline among the younger age groups in the County; and lack of bus transit connections with affordable housing.

Mr. Resto identified the strategy that discusses truck-height clearance issues. Mr. Wells said there are GPS devices specifically for truck drivers to help them navigate and avoid low bridges and other impediments. Kean Burenga suggested that most truck bridge hits involve drivers using rental-moving trucks, so they may be unfamiliar with clearance issues.

Ms. Schuster requested that the Element identify the lack of transit access to the One Stop Career Center in Randolph. She explained the human service facility's location and pedestrian safety challenges.

Chairperson Wells expressed that the Element details numerous activities and topics of interest; he identified autonomous vehicles and the transit needs of seniors. Mr. Resto described the Go-Go-Grandparent program that contracted with Uber to coordinate rides for seniors in Chatham Borough and neighboring municipalities.

Chairperson Wells asked about the County's experience with traffic calming efforts. Mr. Vitz responded that Morris County wants vehicles on County Routes and not divert them to municipal streets. The County has reduced the numbers of lanes (road diet), such as from four to two lanes, when traffic volumes permit. Main St (US 202) in Lincoln Park is an example.

## **IX. New Business:**

Mr. Resto announced that Chatham Borough will be meeting with NJ Transit the following week to discuss the possibility of constructing a second train station in the municipality, in the River Road area. He described the municipality's rezoning efforts and communication with developers expressing interest in the area.

Mr. Vitz reported that the County's capital budget will be finalized soon and summarized the anticipated budget.

Mr. Reilly announced that the 2018 TransAction Conference will be on April 17-19. The website is updated with latest information. The conference committee recently met to finalize the 70 topics. He asked that staff forward the Board the TransAction conference registration information and website.

Meghan Hunscher reported that the Morris County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) was creating a marketing profile for each municipality in the County. She anticipates the profiles will be completed by the end of the year. She also reported that she was speaking to the County's railroad operator about marketing ideas for rail freight. Chairperson Wells invited Ms. Hunscher to share the marketing plan with the Board at a future meeting.

Freeholder DeFillippo announced that NJTPA was looking for candidate municipalities to participate in their next Street Smart Safety Campaign, and asked the Board to suggest any municipalities that could benefit from the program.

## **X. Old Business:**

Mr. Vitz said at the last Board meeting he mentioned the new state Local Freight Impact Program. He reported that the County submitted an application in December to fund the North Main Street Extension project in Wharton.

Freeholder DeFillippo reported on the County's Strategic Plan. She said the County is very fortunate to have such great stakeholders to help in the effort. There will be two rounds of meetings with stakeholders to help set long term and short term goals for addressing a wide ranges of challenges. The report will be on the County website when finalized.

Mr. Resto said he is serving on a committee to advise the state on transportation issues. The committee identified many challenges facing NJ Transit, including maintenance needs, diversion of capital funds to the operating budget, and system delays.

Ms. Manahan explained that many older people do not have smart phones to find out about system delays, NJ Transit needs non-smart phone-based communication with passengers. She also noted news reports on NJ Transit being fined more than any other passenger rail agency in the Country.

Ms. Schuster said that the governor has ordered an audit of NJ Transit.

Freeholder DeFillippo said that staff retirements and the loss of their experience was an issue facing NJ Transit. She said that NJ Transit has worked a great deal on hurricane recovery efforts.

Mr. Reilly said the Jim Flynn, former Morris County employee, is retiring from NJ Transit. He reported that the governor created a cabinet level seat for NJ Transit separate from NJDOT to give the agency its own voice. He asked if the committee had anyone speaking on freight issues. Mr. Resto confirmed there were such discussions.

**XI. Next Regular Meeting:** April 24, 2018 at 2:00 pm in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of the Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation at 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown, NJ.

**XII. Adjournment:** Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Mr. Resto and seconded by Ms. Manahan, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by John Hayes, Division of Engineering & Transportation*