

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
MORRIS COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

30 Schuyler Place
February 16, 2023

Morristown
New Jersey

Meeting Held Via WebEx

Vice-Chair Olcott called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

Vice-Chair Olcott stated that the Secretary of the Board provided public notice of this meeting in a legal notice in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and invited members to join in for the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Those present were:

Commissioner Stephen Shaw	Joe Barilla, Director, Planning and Preservation
Isobel Olcott, Vice-Chair	Virginia Michelin, Assistant Director, Planning and Preservation
Nita Galate	Staci L. Santucci, Esq., County Counsel
Mohamed Seyam	Greg Perry, Supervising Planner
Dennis Bull, Alt. 1	Anthony Soriano, Supervising Planner
Gregory Johnsen, Alt. 2	Barbara Murray, OSTF Coordinator
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	Alyssa Ercan, Recording Secretary

STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

Ms. Ercan read the Statement Regarding Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

New Member Introduction

Mr. Barilla identified Mr. Greg Johnsen as a new member of the Planning Board and asked him to introduce himself. Mr. Johnsen thanked the Board of County Commissioners for the appointment and shared that he is from Randolph Township and has experience as a member of the Randolph Township Zoning Board. He explained his interest in working with the Morris County Planning Board and stated that he is looking forward to serving. Commissioner Shaw thanked Mr. Johnsen for his service on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Commissioner Shaw moved the Planning Board Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2023. Ms. Galate seconded the motion. Ms. Olcott called for questions or comments. Mr. Soriano indicated there was a minor correction in the minutes and Ms. Olcott noted the correction. The motion was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

VOTE	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Steve Rattner, Chairman	-		
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner	X		
John Krickus, Commissioner Director	-		
Thomas Mastrangelo, Commissioner Alt.	-		
Isobel Olcott, Vice Chair	X		
Nita Galate, Secretary	X		
Everton Scott	-		
Ted Eppel	-		
Mohamed Seyam	X		
Dennis Bull, Alt.1	X		
Gregory Johnsen, Alt.2			X
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	X		
Roslyn Khurdan, (County Engineer Alt)	-		

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

The Director’s Report for January 2023 was reviewed and accepted by the Board and will be placed on file.

REPORT OF FUNDS RECEIVED

Funds received for January 2023 were \$6,115.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Barilla reported that there were no additional meetings besides regularly scheduled Planning Board, County Planners, and staff meetings as included in the Directors Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental and Watershed

County Wastewater Management Plan – Mr. Barilla reported that staff continues to work on amendments and buildout activities. He also reported that there will be a public hearing scheduled for March 9, 2023, on the KRE residential project in Harding Township.

County Watershed Activities – Mr. Barilla reported that the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee will be holding a river cleanup in Morristown on Saturday, March 18, 2023. The municipalities that encompass the Whippany River watershed will be receiving a 1.5-million-dollar community project grant, sponsored by Congresswoman Sherrill, for de-snagging and obstruction removal. Commissioner Shaw reported that there is a second grant for \$300,000 from

the Army Corp of Engineers for additional studies, and a task force between Hanover Township, East Hanover Township, Florham Park, and Morristown has been assembled to work together on the de-snagging project. He reported that this project may have two more phases with additional grant money.

Land Subdivision and Zoning

Developments Reviewed – Ms. Olcott highlighted the following item from the Land Development Review Committee meeting held on February 15, 2023.

Randolph Career Training Center, 2023-32-3-SP-0 (County Route 513) -This application is for a two-story 46,490 square foot structure for use by the Morris County Vocational School on the County College of Morris Campus. The building will have a green roof design.

Commissioner Shaw explained that this project has an estimated cost of 25 million dollars, with 19 million dollars coming from the state of New Jersey’s Securing Our Children’s Future Bond Act, and the remaining balance coming from American Rescue Plan funds. He noted that the Morris County Vocational School is ranked top in the state and this project will increase enrollment by about 500 students. Ms. Olcott noted that it is important to attract a young population to Morris County and believes this vocational training program will help to do so. Mr. Johnsen shared his interest in this project and the emerging technology training it will bring to the vocational school.

Mr. Vitz made a motion to approve the Report of Actions Taken on Development Plans for January 2023. Ms. Galate seconded the motion, and it was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

VOTE	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Steve Rattner, Chairman	-		
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner	X		
John Krickus, Commissioner Director	-		
Thomas Mastrangelo, Commissioner Alt.	-		
Isobel Olcott, Vice Chair	X		
Nita Galate, Secretary	X		
Everton Scott	-		
Ted Eppel	-		
Mohamed Seyam	X		
Dennis Bull, Alt.1	X		
Gregory Johnsen, Alt.2			X
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	X		
Roslyn Khurdan, (County Engineer Alt)	-		

Legislative and Municipal

Recent Legislation- Mr. Soriano reported that Senate Bill S757 was passed into law, authorizing commercial farms located on preserved farmland with sales of \$10,000 or more to hold special occasion events under certain conditions. He then reported on newly introduced Assembly Bill A5123 which limits speculative development of large warehouses of 100,000 square feet or more unless an applicant commits to the approving authority and the SADC to preserve the same amount of land that will be lost due to the application. The reported that this requirement would remain in effect until New Jersey reaches 500,000 acres of preserved farmland and the state currently has about 250,000 acres of preserved farmland. On a related matter, he noted that the Highlands Council is developing warehouse guidelines that are Highlands-specific, adding to the warehouse siting guidelines published by the State Planning Commission.

Master Plan & Land Use Ordinance Monthly Reports – Mr. Soriano reported that Florham Park submitted an Open Space and Recreation Plan Element that details existing open space, general demographic information, and local open space needs. Recommendations include the consideration of open space set-aside requirements in new high density residential developments. He reported that a Reexamination Report was received from East Hanover that outlines the multiple changes in local conditions and state laws since 1994, along with a statement of new goals. Recommendations from this report include the development of new Circulation and Open Space and Recreation Plan Elements.

Mr. Soriano reported on the January Land Use Ordinance Monthly Report, stating that the Office of Planning and Preservation received three proposed and one adopted ordinance. He highlighted a proposed ordinance from Randolph Township concerning the establishment of a new multi-family inclusionary district on Route 10 that would have the potential to generate 91 units, including 18 affordable housing units.

Long Range Planning

Open Space Element Update – Mr. Soriano reported that an open space survey was sent to each municipal administrator in November 2022 with various questions concerning the importance of open space preservation in their community, the status of open space elements and environmental resource inventories, the purposes for which municipalities are preserving open space, whether they collect open space taxes, the presence of and functions of their local open space committees, their participation in the County Preservation Trust program and other questions. The intent of the survey is to gather input from the municipalities regarding open space activities and issues to help inform the development of a Morris County Open Space Plan update.

Mr. Soriano reported that 27 municipalities responded to the survey with varying levels of completion. About 85% of the respondents identified the preservation of open space in their community as very important or important. Varied major priorities were noted including the acquisition of open space, providing recreation (active, passive and trails), protection of environmental resources, and maintaining or improving the local quality of life. Respondents that had an open space trust fund identified the purposes of the fund, including acquisition, park/facility improvements and maintenance, and property stewardship. Mr. Soriano explained that respondents were asked how the County Preservation Trust Open Space program could better support their

needs beyond acquisition and trail development. Examples of responses included: maintenance of existing facilities, use of some of the trust to develop new facilities and capital improvements, and grants for open space stewardship.

Mr. Soriano also reported that staff has been working to update the County's inventory of all open space located in the County and that staff member Brenda Haycock conducted a review of each municipality's local master plan to help update the County's open space inventory. Subsequent to this update, an inventory of open space was created for each municipality with an associated map and these were sent to all town administrators by postal mail on January 13th and email on January 17th. Each municipality is being asked confirm the information, provide some additional detail and update where necessary. He noted that eight surveys have been completed so far and responses are requested by March 13, 2023.

Ms. Olcott asked Mr. Soriano if any of the answers were surprising. He responded that many responses confirmed the evolving nature of open space preservation in the County, noting that, while acquisition of open space remains important, the accumulation of property has led to additional priorities such as the maintenance and stewardship of already preserved open space. Commissioner Shaw noted that open space is vital to what makes Morris County such a great place to live, work and play, indicating that the recent funding modification regarding trails has been widely popular and that the funding for open space programs comes from taxpayers. Ms. Olcott noted the origins of the open space program and asked how the term "stewardship" might be defined. Mr. Soriano responded that New Jersey defines stewardship as part of their grant program in the Preserve New Jersey Act, as "an activity which is beyond routine operations and maintenance, undertaken by the State, a local government or qualifying tax-exempt nonprofit organization to repair or restore lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes for the purpose of enhancing or protecting those lands for recreation and conservation purposes." He noted that these funds can be used for natural resource and conservation projects but not active recreation facilities. Commissioner Shaw explained that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Board of County Commissioners was working with the Morris County Park Commission to determine if open space funds could be used for stewardship efforts on preserved land. A committee was created to make a recommendation as to whether it would be placed on the ballot, but they never met due to the shutdown. He anticipated that the issue will be revisited.

LIASION REPORTS

Lake Hopatcong Commission

Mr. Barilla reported that all meeting minutes have been placed into the Planning Board's OneDrive and that Morris County is facilitating grants provided by the Highlands Council for water quality projects for Lake Hopatcong, noting grants for an aeration system and for stormwater improvements.

Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board / Musconetcong River Management Council and Musconetcong Watershed Association

Ms. Olcott noted that a report will be given at the next Planning Board meeting.

Morris County Open Space Trust Fund

Mr. Barilla reported that the new members of the Open Space Trust Fund Committee had their orientation meeting on Wednesday, February 15th. Ms. Murray reported that there was a closing on the Alli Property in Boonton Township on February 7th, and that the Committee's reorganization meeting will occur on March 9th.

Trail Construction Trust Fund Committee

Ms. Olcott reported that there is a Subcommittee that is reviewing whether to revise any of the Committee's rules and regulations, but no conclusions have yet been reached.

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS RECEIVED

Mr. Barilla had nothing further to report.

REPORT OF MEETINGS

Mr. Barilla had nothing further to report.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Barilla presented the 2022 Annual Development Activity Report for Morris County. He gave a detailed presentation with data and statistics about the status of development throughout Morris County in 2022. Information included the number of submissions reviewed by the Board, the number of units included in applications, trends in the number of units being proposed and floor area proposed in non-residential site plans. He highlighted the role of redevelopment in recent activity and identified Dover as the leading municipality in the number of submissions and number of proposed multi-family housing units for 2022. He reported that 1,902 multi-family units were proposed in the County in 2022 and that the Board reviewed the highest amount of non-residential new floor area in over 10 years. About 4.8 million square feet were reviewed, with the largest new development being an approximately 2.5 million square foot warehouse development proposed in Roxbury. He anticipates continued non-residential growth as vacant office spaces are redeveloped. Other key findings from the report:

- Multi-family residential developments continue to increase as municipalities try to fulfill their affordable housing obligations. Single family lots created by subdivision continue to decline and instances where new lots are created are dominated by the development of townhomes placed on individual lots.
- Housing affordability continues to be an issue with the median home price for a single-family detached home in the County about \$743,000 while the median price for a newly constructed single family is just over \$928,000. The median rent for a two-bedroom apartment is over \$1,800 per month and most of the new rental units being proposed are anticipated to be "luxury" units with substantially greater median rents.

- There were over 3.9 million new square feet of warehouse with limited office space proposed in 2022. Additionally, there is a trend of former office building sites being proposed for redevelopment with a mixed-use combination of residential/retail/office use and or warehousing. With a lack of vacant and suitable land, developers are relying on the redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized land for future development.

Ms. Olcott noted that while the growth within Morris County may have an impact on the roads, schools, and social services, it will also hopefully benefit the county economically. She asked Mr. Vitz if he had any comments to share regarding the finding of the report in relation to road usage. Mr. Vitz reported that the Morris County Department of Public Works handles traffic issues on a case-by-case basis but that there are sometimes limits to what can be requested since some redevelopments are not generating traffic in excess of the amount of traffic that was generated by prior uses. Mr. Barilla noted that the report will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners at their work session on Wednesday, February 22nd.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public in attendance.

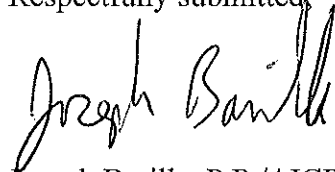
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on March 16, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:56 pm, Mr. Vitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Galate seconded the motion, and all approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph Barilla, P.P./AICP
Planning Director

Original was signed and is on file at the office of the Morris County Planning Board.

