

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

30 Schuyler Place
October 19, 2023

Morristown
New Jersey

Meeting Held Via WebEx

Chairman Rattner called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

Chairman Rattner 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:

Steve Rattner, Chairman	Joseph Barilla, Director, Planning and Preservation
Isobel Olcott, Vice-Chair	Virginia Michelin, Assistant Director, Planning and Preservation
Nita Galate, Secretary	Staci L. Santucci, Esq., County Counsel
Mohamed Seyam	Greg Perry, Supervising Planner
Everton Scott	Anthony Soriano, Supervising Planner
Dennis Bull, Alt. 1	Mike DiGiulio, Senior Planner
Gregory Johnsen, Alt. 2 (late 7:04)	Alyssa Ercan, Recording Secretary
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	

STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

Ms. Ercan read the statement regarding compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Vice-Chair Olcott moved the Planning Board Meeting Minutes of September 21, 2023. Mr. Scott seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

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

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Barilla added to his report by stating that there were 12 Development Review applications received, 11 reports issued, and 12 exempt reports issued. The Director’s Report for September 2023 was reviewed and accepted by the Board and will be placed on file.

REPORT OF FUNDS RECEIVED

Fund received for September 2023 were \$11,165.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Chairman Rattner noted that all future meetings were listed in the Director’s Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental and Watershed

County Wastewater Management Plan – Mr. Barilla reported that staff continues to meet with county planners and the Department of Environmental Protection, but the process is very slow moving. Mr. Scott inquired as to what is holding up the process. Mr. Barilla responded that it is multiple factors: municipal delays in providing information, developer requests doer amendments to the plan, and the biggest factor, changes in DEP staff and methodology. He added that the county planners have voiced their concerns to the head of the DEP section handling this process, but this seems to have done little to help the situation. Mr. Scott then asked if other counties are experiencing the same challenges and Mr. Barilla confirmed that they are also encountering the same difficulties.

County Watershed Activities – Mr. Barilla reported that staff attended a kick-off meeting regarding the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee’s Army Corp of Engineers project. The Army Corp is going to undertake a drainage study to identify problem areas and develop corrections for any problems that are identified. Mr. Barilla noted that this project will take years. He also reported that he was appointed to be a county liaison to the Action Committee. Since the committee’s meeting dates and times conflict with other meetings Mr. Barilla must attend, he explained that staff will take a team approach to ensure that someone from the county is always represented.

Land Subdivision and Zoning

Developments Reviewed – Ms. Olcott highlighted the following item from the Land Development Review Committee meeting held on October 18, 2023.

East Hanover, Eagle Rock Avenue Apartments, 2023-10-6-SP-0 (County Route 611)

This plan concerns the conversion of an existing office building to 85 apartment units, of which 14 will be designated as affordable units. There will be a 23,000 square foot four-story addition to the existing office building, as well as a separate clubhouse structure and in-ground pool. The existing parking lot will be removed, and a new 163-space parking lot will be constructed. This project requires a Stormwater Management Plan due to a flood-hazard area on the property.

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

ROLL CALL

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

Legislative and Municipal

Recent Legislation- Mr. Soriano reported that there is no report for this month since the legislature is still out for the summer recess and there was no action on any of the bills the Board has been tracking. He noted that the legislature is not likely to reconvene until after the November 4th elections.

Master Plan & Land Use Ordinance Monthly Reports – Mr. Soriano reported on receipt of two items. The first was a Comprehensive Update of the Long Hill Master Plan. The new plan includes updated goals, a land use, open space, circulation, historic preservation, conservation, and sustainability and utilities element. Land use goals/recommendations focus on the mitigation of natural hazards, the redevelopment of commercial areas, and the protection of residential character. The plan also includes specific recommendations for Long Hill’s five commercial centers.

He then reported the receipt of a Borough of Mountain Lakes Reexamination Report (Report), noting that the Borough’s last comprehensive master plan update was in 2013. The Report examines changes in problems, goals, and objectives since the last plan update, and developments that have occurred related to state and county plans, related laws and regulations. It includes a list of potential updates addressing such items as land use along Route 46 and in the Midvale area, the inclusion of a climate-related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment in the Land Use Plan, and other required amendments to the Borough’s Land Development Ordinance.

Mr. Soriano reported on the October Land Use Ordinance Monthly Report, stating that the Office of Planning and Preservation received 18 ordinances including nine proposed, eight adopted, and one withdrawn. He noted Morris Plains’ proposed amendments to the C-1 Zone and B business districts that would include permitting warehouse use, ciderys and meaderys, and pop-up retail along the highway, and apartments above the first floor in the B-4 district. Mr. Soriano also noted an ordinance from Netcong which would permit cannabis retailers as a conditional use in the commercial business district.

Long Range Planning

2022 New Construction Residential Sales Report - Mr. Soriano gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the New Construction Residential Sales Report of newly built homes in 2022. Major findings of the report:

- In 2022, there were 408 new residential units sold, an increase of 24.8% over 2021. These were comprised of 124 single family detached units, 170 single-family attached units and 114 multi-family units.
- Between 2021 and 2022 the sales of new single-family detached decreased by 37.7%, while single-family attached homes increased by 23.2%.
- Of new single-family detached residential units sold, 31.6% were the result of tear downs and rebuilds.

- 124 new multi-family homes were sold in 2022, as compared to six units in 2021.
- The median sales price for all housing types combined decreased from \$791,190 in 2021 to \$729,990 in 2022, a decrease of 7.7%.

Mr. Rattner asked whether it is safe to assume that in the over 3,000 rental units approved in 2002, 300-600 units would be reserved for moderate to low-income housing. Mr. Soriano responded that he did not have a specific breakdown but added most of the rental projects usually include a 10 to 20% of affordable set-aside.

New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – Mr. Soriano reported that the NJDEP released its latest “Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan” (Plan) for years 2023-2027. This plan is developed every five years and identifies statewide policies for guiding investments in state outdoor open space and recreation resources. The new plan focuses on the assessment of available open space, expansion of open space opportunities and improved statewide access to open space and recreation. The Plan identifies attitudes concerning open space recreation, and incorporates policies consistent with the State’s environmental mission, including policies on climate resilience and sustainability. According to DEP data, Morris County has 84,731 acres of preserved open space, but Mr. Soriano noted that recent review of state open space data revealed various errors.

Over half the 308-page document is devoted to a survey of participation and attitudes toward outdoor recreation. Mr. Soriano explained that the plan does not include specific recommendations for counties or municipal governments regarding acres of open space needed but rather includes an analysis intended to illustrate overall population and its relative access to open space at a statewide level. He noted that the report does not include detailed data for individual counties or municipalities and that he has submitted comments to the DEP requesting that the plan include or provide links to such data.

LIASION REPORTS

Lake Hopatcong Commission

Mr. Barilla reported that on November 2nd, 2023, there will be a public meeting to discuss the HAB project and share what portions of the study have been conducted thus far and some of the initial results. In the Spring the Commission will hold another public meeting about the design of the aeration system and the placement of the equipment. Mr. Rattner added that the Commission is also organizing a lake cleanup with 20 different teams.

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

Mr. Rattner reported that the Musconetcong River Management Council also made comments on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan during the public comment period. He also discussed the Haberman Hampton site in Hunterdon County and its relation to delays on the part of the DEP.

Morris County Open Space Trust Fund

Mr. Scott reported that all members of the Open Space Trust Fund toured Drew Forest and listened to presentations from the Borough of Madison as well as comments from the public. The Committee held its deliberations and will be making a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners in November.

Trail Construction Trust Fund Committee

Ms. Olcott reported that the Committee will be meeting on October 25th for deliberations. She added that a subcommittee was created to screen applications and look for those that were incomplete or inadequate. As a result of the screening process, the Committee will be considering two applications.

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS RECEIVED

Mr. Barilla had nothing further to report.

REPORT OF MEETINGS

Mr. Barilla had nothing further to report.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rattner reported that he met with Mr. Barilla and Ms. Michelin to further discuss hybrid meeting options. It was decided that the Board will meet in person once or twice a year but otherwise continue to hold virtual meetings. He noted that there are still many details to be worked out before this schedule takes effect.

Mr. Barilla reported that Planning Board meetings in 2024 will continue to be held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM, except for August and November when meetings are not held.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

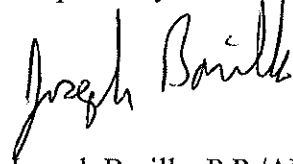
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on December 7, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:52 pm, Mr. Vitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Olcott seconded the motion, and all approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Barilla". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Joseph Barilla, P.P./AICP
Planning Director

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

