

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

30 Schuyler Place
December 4, 2025

Morristown
New Jersey

Meeting Held Via WebEx

Chairman Rattner called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 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	Virginia Michelin, Assistant Director, Planning and Preservation
Isobel Olcott, Vice-Chair	Staci L. Santucci, Esq., County Counsel
Nita Galate, Secretary	Anthony Soriano, Supervising Planner
Everton Scott	Mike DiGiulio, Senior Planner
Gregory Johnsen	Kevin Sitlick, Senior Planner
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	Barbara Murray, Program Coordinator OSTF
Joseph Barilla, Director, Planning and Preservation	Brenda Haycock, Assistant Planner/Recording Secretary

STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

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

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Vice-Chairman Olcott moved the Planning Board Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2025. Mr. Johnsen seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

VOTE	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Tayfun Selen, Commissioner Director	-		
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner	-		
Thomas Mastrangelo, Commissioner Alt.	-		
Steve Rattner, Chairman	X		
Isobel Olcott, Vice Chair	X		
Nita Galate, Secretary	X		
Everton Scott	-		
Daniel Happer	-		
Gregory Johnsen	X		
Joseph Falco, Alt.1	-		
Michael Cortese, Alt.2	-		
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	X		
Roslyn Khurdan, (County Engineer Alt)	-		

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report for October 2025 was reviewed and accepted by the Board and will be placed on file.

REPORT OF FUNDS RECEIVED

Funds received for October 2025 were \$3,250.
Funds received for November 2025 were \$4,060.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental and Watershed

County Wastewater Management Plan – Mr. Barilla reported that staff are still conducting the buildout for Long Hill. He and Ms. Michelin had a meeting in November with members of the Department of Environmental Protection to voice their concerns about the wastewater management plan process and the role that the Highlands Council is supposed to be playing. Mr. Barilla noted it was a productive meeting, but also mentioned that he will have to wait until the new Governor's administration is put in place to note any staffing changes in that unit of the DEP.

Chairman Rattner asked Mr. Barilla for clarification on the section in his report regarding the Veolia Sewage Treatment Plant. Mr. Barilla explained that the plant needs to be expanded to accommodate the growth of Mt. Arlington. However, there are differing opinions between Veolia and the developers as to who is responsible for the expansion and how it will take place.

County Watershed Activities – Mr. Barilla reported that Ms. Michelin attended the Mayor’s Flooding Coalition meeting, which focuses on various bodies of water along the Passaic River. The goal of the meeting was to have towns consolidate their efforts through data sharing and to try and draw further attention from entities such as the State, the federal government, and the Army Corp of Engineers. He feels approaching these entities with a unified message will help them to obtain better responses from these entities. Mr. Barilla also reported that any action regarding the Whippany River watershed study is frozen.

Land Subdivision and Zoning

Developments Reviewed – Vice-Chairman Olcott highlighted the following item from the Land Development Review Committee meeting held on November 14, 2025.

Morristown, M Lofts, 2025-24-3-SP-0 (Spring Street)

This site plan is for the redevelopment of several residential and commercial lots into a 150-unit multi-family residential structure. All existing improvements will be removed. The first two floors will contain a 165-space parking garage with five residential stories above. Site access will be from a full-access driveway connection to Bishop Nazery Way (municipal) and a right-in/right-out driveway connection to Spring Street (municipal). Stormwater management entails the use of an on-site conveyance system, bioretention basin, and two green roof systems, which all flow towards the Whippany River. Mr. DiGiulio noted that the existing 66-inch pipe will need to be shifted over to facilitate construction. However, the plan calls for the pipe to be replaced with a significantly smaller one. Therefore, the developers will need to demonstrate that the reduction in size will be able to handle the site’s current and projected stormwater values. If they cannot, staff will require that the 66-inch pipe be replaced in-kind. Mr. DiGiulio also reported that staff advised the developers to create a plan for vehicles parked in the lower level of the parking garage as flooding may occur, making it impossible to remove cars.

Vice-Chairman Olcott asked Mr. Barilla if he had anything further to add regarding this site plan. He responded that this project abuts one of the County’s bridges spanning the Whippany River. Additionally, on Spring Street, the County has a large box culvert under the road. Therefore, staff need to ensure that the reduction in size of the piping will not cause any surcharging of floodwaters to the culvert and cause damage to the County’s structure.

Vice-Chairman Olcott noted that this project is conditionally approved. Mr. Johnsen asked what the specific conditions are. She replied that the main condition is that the developer must prove that their stormwater management plan is sufficient for this site given the concerns explained by Mr. Barilla.

Vice-Chairman Olcott made a motion to approve the Report of Actions Taken on Development Plans for October 2025. Ms. Galate seconded the motion, and it was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

VOTE	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Tayfun Selen, Commissioner Director	-		
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner	-		
Thomas Mastrangelo, Commissioner Alt.	-		
Steve Rattner, Chairman	X		
Isobel Olcott, Vice Chair	X		
Nita Galate, Secretary	X		
Everton Scott	X		
Daniel Happer	-		
Gregory Johnsen	X		
Joseph Falco, Alt.1	-		
Michael Cortese, Alt.2	-		
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	X		
Roslyn Khurdan, (County Engineer Alt)	-		

Vice-Chairman Olcott made a motion to approve the Report of Actions Taken on Development Plans for November 2025. Chairman Rattner seconded the motion, and it was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

VOTE	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Tayfun Selen, Commissioner Director	-		
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner	-		
Thomas Mastrangelo, Commissioner Alt.	-		
Steve Rattner, Chairman	X		
Isobel Olcott, Vice Chair	X		
Nita Galate, Secretary	X		
Everton Scott	X		
Daniel Happer	-		
Gregory Johnsen	X		
Joseph Falco, Alt.1	-		
Michael Cortese, Alt.2	-		
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	X		
Roslyn Khurdan, (County Engineer Alt)	-		

Legislative and Municipal

Recent Legislation - Mr. Soriano reported that there has been an increase in legislative activity ahead of the anticipated end of the legislative session on January 13, 2026. He reported that the most significant new bill was Senate Bill S4736, which would enhance the ability of religious and nonprofit organizations to convert certain property to inclusionary developments with affordable housing. This Bill would preempt local zoning and planning regulations and require a municipal planning board to permit the conversion or partial conversion of an eligible property, as defined in the Bill, into an inclusionary development. An eligible property is defined as any property, including non-residential buildings, owned by a religious organization or tax-exempt nonprofit organization. He further explained that the conversion of an eligible property, in all zones, would be allowed as a permitted use and would not require a use variance. At least 20% of the units would be required to be reserved as affordable housing. The Bill would require a municipal planning board to approve an application to repurpose or redevelop an eligible property into an inclusionary development with affordable housing, regardless of the eligible property's location in the municipality if the project complies with applicable zoning requirements for the zone. The exception to this requirement is that the development project shall allow a density of up to 40 units per acre and a height of one story above the maximum height otherwise applicable to the zoning district in which the property is located. If a greater density or height is allowed in an adjoining zone, that density or height may be employed by the inclusionary development.

Mr. Soriano then reported on other newly introduced bills. He stated that there were five new agricultural Bills introduced, including Assembly Bill A6031 which revises the contiguous acre requirement for farmland assessment eligibility. Under current law, to be eligible for farmland assessment, a minimum of five contiguous acres of land is required to be actively devoted to agricultural or horticultural use. Under this Bill, all five acres would not be required to be contiguous, so long as there are three acres of contiguous land and the noncontiguous acres are under the ownership of one person. He also reported that there were six new energy Bills introduced, many supporting and/or providing incentives for the use of small nuclear reactors. Mr. Soriano also noted that there were seven new environmental Bills, most of them dealing with the mapping or location of flood or stormwater facilities.

He also reported on two Bills that would amend the Municipal Land Use Law. Senate Bill S4787 would provide that certain energy storage projects, specifically solar, be considered inherently beneficial uses under the Municipal Land Use Law. Assembly Bill A5996 would require developers to submit a stormwater impact study as part of the municipal application for planned development site plan approval.

Master Plan & Land Use Ordinance Monthly Reports – Mr. Soriano reported that there is no Master Plan report.

Mr. Sitlick reported on the October Land Use Ordinance Monthly Report, stating that the Office of Planning and Preservation processed a total of thirty ordinances, including 16 proposed, 13 adopted, and one defeated. He highlighted Dover Ordinance 26-2025, which adopts the overall Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan. This plan is divided into seven subdistricts dealing with various densities of housing, nonresidential uses, and streetscape improvements.

Mr. Sitlick then reported on the November Land Use Ordinance Monthly Report, stating that the Office of Planning and Preservation processed a total of sixteen ordinances, including four proposed, 10 adopted, and two defeated or tabled. He highlighted Dover Ordinance 41-2025, which adopts the Redevelopment Plan for the NJ Transit Lot B/Lot C Redevelopment Area. This plan would permit multifamily housing, retail, office space, and an outdoor plaza and open space.

Long Range Planning

Official County Map Update – Mr. Barilla reported that the public hearing on the draft Official County Map was held on December 3rd. There was one comment read from the Township of East Hanover. He explained that the next step is to have the map approved via resolution at the Commissioner’s December 17th meeting.

State Plan Update – Mr. Soriano reported that the last meeting of the State Planning Commission (SPC) took place on November 5th. The Commission has completed changes identified during the Cross Acceptance process and from the post-Cross Acceptance public hearings. The SPC noted minor changes in format, increased readability, and the inclusion of graphics and photographs. Language was also added related to transportation, historic preservation, and critical environmental sites.

Mr. Soriano also reported that the issue of mapping was addressed. The Director of the SPC said he intends to work with the County Planners over the next couple of months to develop a process by which to address the development of the new State Plan map in 2026. He noted there were 1,500 requested changes before they incorporated planning area criteria changes based on Negotiation Entity meetings. Mr. Soriano added that the next SPC meeting will be held on December 10th, and the meeting to formally adopt the State Plan will be held virtually on December 17th at 10:30.

2024 New Construction Residential Sales – Mr. Sitlick gave a PowerPoint presentation concerning the 2024 New Construction Residential Sales Report. He explained that the report is based on the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs’ warranty records for sales of newly constructed housing in 2024. Specifically, the data reflects first time sales of newly constructed units and new home sales by actual price paid.

Major findings of the report:

- In 2024, there were 410 new residential units sold, an increase of 9.9% from 2023.
- Between 2023 and 2024 the sales of new single-family detached and single-family attached units increased by 5.7% and 34% respectively. Sales of multi-family units decreased by 76%.
- Of new single-family detached residential units sold, 27.7% were the result of tear downs and rebuilds. This is the lowest level since 2012.

- The median sales price for all housing types combined increased from \$820,000 in 2023 to \$848,163 in 2024, an increase of 3.4%. This was also a record high for the study period.
- The median sales price for single-family detached units increased by 2%, a record high for the study period. The median sales price for single-family attached and multi-family units decreased by 4.3% and 37.7% respectively.
- New rental approvals remained substantial with 927 units in 2024 and 1,028 units during the first ten months of 2025.

LIASION REPORTS

Lake Hopatcong Commission

Mr. Barilla had nothing further to report.

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

Chairman Rattner had nothing further to report.

Morris County Open Space Trust Fund

Mr. Scott reported that the Board of County Commissioners approved the 2025 grant recommendations from the Open Space Trust Fund committee. Three applications requesting a total of \$6,954,000 were approved to preserve 192.31 acres in three municipalities – Mendham Township, Denville, and Rockaway Township. The final Committee meeting of 2025 will take place on December 16th.

Trail Construction Trust Fund Committee

Ms. Galate reported that the Trail Construction Trust Fund Committee recommended roughly \$1.2 million in funding for eight grants. Six of the grants were for trail design and two were for trail construction. The municipalities receiving grants are: Dover, Florham Park, Hanover Township, Madison, Netcong, Rockaway Township, Jefferson, and Long Hill. Ms. Galate noted that since 2016 the Committee has recommended \$7.8 million in funding to establish more than 35 miles of trails.

Vice-Chairman Olcott added that the trail design project in Hanover Township plans to connect existing trails in Morris Plains to the west and Patriot’s Path to the east. She noted that the area in question is heavily developed so it will be an positive achievement to have a trail system in place. Mr. Barilla explained that the proposed design utilizes the defunct Route 24 right-of-way and will link up many multi-family developments in Morris Plains, while also providing a direct link to the train station.

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS RECEIVED

Morris County ADA Modification – Mr. Barilla reported that the modification will expand the eligible farmland for preservation on a property in Harding. He also noted that there are six new farms currently in the process of being preserved.

REPORT OF MEETINGS

Mr. Barilla had nothing further to report.

OTHER BUSINESS

2026 Planning Board Meeting Schedule – Mr. Barilla explained the hybrid meeting times would be moved up to 6:30 P.M.

Vice-Chairman Olcott made a motion to approve the 2026 Planning Board Meeting Schedule. Mr. Johnsen seconded the motion, and it was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

VOTE	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Tayfun Selen, Commissioner Director	-		
Stephen Shaw, Commissioner	-		
Thomas Mastrangelo, Commissioner Alt.	-		
Steve Rattner, Chairman	X		
Isobel Olcott, Vice Chair	X		
Nita Galate, Secretary	X		
Everton Scott	X		
Daniel Happer	X		
Gregory Johnsen	X		
Joseph Falco, Alt.1	-		
Michael Cortese, Alt.2	-		
Christopher Vitz, County Engineer	X		
Roslyn Khurdan, (County Engineer Alt)	-		

Planning Board Committee Appointments – In preparation for January’s re-organization meeting, Mr. Barilla encouraged Board members to review the various Planning Board Committees and decide whether they would like to volunteer for a specific one. Ms. Galate asked whether members could remain on their current committee if they choose. Mr. Barilla responded yes.

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on January 15, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:58 pm, Mr. Vitz moved to adjourn the meeting and Vice-Chairman Olcott seconded the motion. 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.

