

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

30 Schuyler Place
February 19, 2026

Morristown
New Jersey

Meeting Held Via WebEx

Mr. Rattner called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

Mr. 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
Everton Scott	Staci L. Santucci, Esq., County Counsel
Nita Galate	Anthony Soriano, Supervising Planner
Joseph Falco, Alternate #1	Mike DiGiulio, Senior Planner
Michael Cortese, Alternate #2	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-Chairman Olcott moved the Planning Board Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2026. Mr. Vitz seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report for January 2026 was reviewed and accepted by the Board and will be placed on file.

Ms. Olcott asked Mr. Barilla about the Rutgers Environmental Stewardship Program. Mr. Barilla stated that two staff members are attending a training class in anticipation of incorporating stewardship activities into the Preservation Trust Programs consistent with the passage of the recent referendum addressing this issue. Ms. Olcott suggested that the class might also be important for the Trails Construction Committee.

REPORT OF FUNDS RECEIVED

Funds received for January 2026 were \$8,075.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental and Watershed

County Wastewater Management Plan – Mr. Barilla reported that he will be attending a meeting with the Department of Environmental Protection to discuss the Highlands Council's role in wastewater management planning for municipalities in the Highlands Region. He reported staff continues to work on amendments for Long Hill.

County Watershed Activities – Mr. Barilla reported that the Whippany River Watershed group will be having a clean-up in March with the staging area at the Bethel AME Church in Morristown. He will email additional information to the Board with the date and rain date.

Land Subdivision and Zoning

Developments Reviewed – Vice-Chairman Olcott highlighted the following items from the Land Development Review Committee meeting held on February 18, 2026.

Chatham Borough, AJDM Chatham, 2026-4-2-SP-0 (River Road)

Ms. Olcott reported that this application is for the redevelopment of several commercial properties into a mixed-use structure on 3 acres. The structure will contain 100 multi-family units and 2,370 sq. ft. of retail. There will be a 207-space internal garage and 31 surface parking spaces for the retail use. Site amenities include an outdoor turf area and pickleball courts. Access will be from a horseshoe driveway connection to River Road (municipal) with a pick-up/drop-off area and garage entrance and a separate, full-access driveway connection to River Road for the surface parking and another garage entrance. Stormwater management entails the use of a conveyance system that outfalls towards the back of the property and flows towards the Passaic River. Ms. Olcott noted concerns about possible river siltation. County Engineering will review stormwater management for compliance with County Land Development Standards.

Mr. Barilla reported that the site is currently used as a staging area for contractors. Mr. Cortese asked about traffic in the area and Mr. Vitz reported that they will be reviewing traffic impacts.

Roxbury, 129 Center Street, 2026-36-1-SP-0 (County Route 631)

Ms. Olcott reported that this application is for the construction of 105 townhomes on 12.7 acres. An existing structure and several storage containers will be removed. There will be 85 market rate homes and 22 homes designated as affordable housing. There are two community amenity areas proposed for the residents. Access will be from a boulevard-style driveway connection to Center Street (County Route 631). Stormwater management entails the use of one infiltration basin, four bioretention basins, and two pervious pavement systems. Overflow for the systems will flow towards wetlands at the rear of the property and towards the neighboring property to the west. Wetlands are located on the site but are pending NJDEP verification. She reported concerns with stormwater management that require the applicant to provide additional information as well as a maintenance easement for the culvert that will be maintained by the County. She also noted that a right-of-way dedication may be needed in association with driveway access. County Engineering will review the driveway connection and stormwater for compliance with County Development Standards.

Vice-Chairman Olcott made a motion to approve the Report of Actions Taken on Development Plans for January 2026. Ms. Galate seconded the motion, and it was approved by roll call vote.

ROLL CALL

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

Legislative and Municipal

Recent Legislation - Legislation Report – Mr. Soriano reported that the new legislative session began on 1/13/26 with the reintroduction of 7,400+ bills, with another 1,000 posted since then. He reported that a new database has been recreated to include just over 400 bills, of which only 2 are new bills that were not noted in the past session.

The first of these is Senate Bill S3422, the “Expediency and Accessibility in State Environmental Permitting Act,” that would require the DEP to develop an accessible online permit transparency portal that would enable permit applicants and the general public to remotely monitor the submission, progress, and disposition of permit applications. Permits covered would include but are not limited to those associated with the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, Coastal Area Facility Review Act, Highlands Act, Air Pollution Control Act, Water Supply Management and Water Pollution Control Acts, and the Flood Hazard Area Control Act. Three million dollars would be used to establish the portal and \$750,000 would be used to develop the needs assessment for implementing the plan. This would be in addition to a 3% technology surcharge on permit fees for those permits processed under the bill. The Act would be implemented over the course of 30 months.

The second new bill is Senate Bill S3410, named the "Entry-Level Home Production Incentive Act of 2026", which would provide project gap financing for low- to middle-income housing development. The bill would establish a program in the NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency to provide grants and loans to aid developers in the production of low and middle income housing. He noted conditions, for example the development must commit to occupancy requirements to ensure that the initial purchaser of the housing must occupy the housing for not less than five years or pay a penalty to the NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

Mr. Soriano then reported that he prepared a compilation of bills the Board tracked during the last two year legislative session that were signed into law and included this in the meeting materials. He noted that 77 bills were signed into law and of these, 21 concerned preservation efforts and

funding related to open space and farmland preservation, 16 concerned environmental infrastructure projects and 11 bills were related to housing/affordable housing. He noted the most significant bill signed abolished COAH and set new standards for the production of affordable housing for the 2025-2035 period. He noted many new local housing elements and related ordinances are being submitted in response to the changes included in this new law.

Ms. Olcott noted that there were several new Commissions proposed and Mr. Soriano noted that these were reintroductions of bills from the previous session. She also noted a bill that would revise the formula for state aid for counties and municipalities for public highways.

Mr. Falco asked about a bill that would create a new nuclear power commission. Mr. Soriano noted that several bills introduced in the last session and reintroduced concern small nuclear power facilities. Mr. Scott noted that there are only a few small modular reactors in the United States and there are issues associated with these facilities.

Master Plan & Land Use Ordinance Monthly Reports – Mr. Soriano reported that during this review period, two reexamination reports were received, one each from Florham Park and Denville and seven Housing Element and Fair Share Plan amendments were received from Randolph, Florham Park, Jefferson, Mt. Olive, Rockway Township, Mt. Arlington and Lincoln Park. The Housing Element amendments are the result of challenges brought by the Fair Share Housing Center and others to plans originally adopted in 2025 in accordance with the new rules for affordable housing. Towns were required to adopt plans last year based on the new affordable housing law and the Dispute Program permitted subsequent challenges to the plans which are just now being memorialized in amended housing elements. The amended plans address findings of the Dispute Resolution Program and are typically associated with the inclusion or exclusion of certain sites within the towns. Additional housing element amendments are expected as more towns address the outcomes of the Dispute Resolution Program.

The Reexamination Report for Florham Park discusses the Borough's involvement with the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program and changes made in zoning to address their most recent settlement agreement. The Reexamination Report for Denville is an update of a 2025 Reexamination that similarly addresses proposed zoning changes related to affordable housing.

Mr. Soriano then reported on the January Land Use Ordinance Monthly Report, stating that the Office of Planning and Preservation processed three proposed ordinances and one adopted ordinance. The proposed ordinances include the Denville regulations for sober living residences for individuals recovering from drug or alcohol addiction. Harding proposed an ordinance amending an affordable housing zone with requirements for stacked townhouses and maximum lot coverage. Jefferson proposed an ordinance concerning the location of shipping containers.

Mr. Soriano told the Board to expect there to be many new ordinances proposed next month to implement the changes contained in the many new Housing Element and Fair Share Plans.

Long Range Planning

Official County Map Update – Mr. Barilla reported that the Official County Map is completed and has been distributed to all Morris County municipalities and various county entities, as well as several members of the public who requested copies that were provided without cost.

State Plan Update – Mr. Soriano reported that the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) continues to review the over 1,500 map changes requested during cross acceptance and is developing a “master list” tracking sheet. OPA staff is in the process of gathering spatial data that would allow them to precisely map the areas of proposed changes. OPA is developing a review process to address the changes. The process will have to be approved by the State Planning Commission (SPC) and it may be another month or more before the draft is ready.

He reported that part of the difficulty with the review of changes is making sure that the criteria and process for change are applied consistently across the state. Once the SPC determines what changes it would support, a public hearing will be held in each county to present the changes and allow public input.

He then reported that OPA staff is also working on a memo outlining six Special Resource Areas that were proposed by commenters during the Cross Acceptance process. He reported that two may impact Morris County and are identified by OPA as the Skylands Special Resource Area and the Great Swamp Special Resource Area. He reported that the boundaries of these areas are not currently known, but there are two meetings scheduled in March where OPA will discuss these areas. He noted that past recognition of Special Resource Areas in the State Plan led to a new layer of regulatory authority over the Highlands Region.

LIASION REPORTS

Lake Hopatcong Commission

Mr. Barilla reported that he had nothing to add at this time but will provide the most current meeting minutes once received.

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

Chairman Rattner reported that usage of Lake Musconetcong is probably triple what it has been in recent years. He noted that the early freeze has supported two hockey areas and ice fishing.

Morris County Open Space Trust Fund

Mr. Scott reported that the first meeting of the Committee is scheduled for March 30, 2026 and that he will have more to report at the next Planning Board meeting.

Trail Construction Trust Fund Committee

Ms. Galate reported that the Committee will have its reorganization meeting on March 2, 2026 at which the 2026 grant program will be discussed. A workshop is also scheduled for March 24, 2026. She noted that Ms. Olcott will be missed from the Committee.

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 commended Engineering and Public Works on how they handled the recent snow events and stated that county roads were in very good shape after the snows.

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

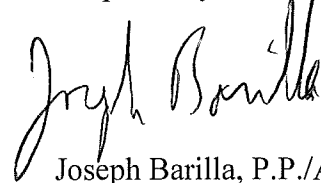
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on March 19, 2026 and it will be a Hybrid meeting at 6:30p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:54 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.