

New Jersey

Year 2020

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Walter Lane
Somerset County



County Planners Association

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Ranae Fehr
Atlantic County

Secretary

Francesca Giarratana
Hudson County

President Emeritus

Michael Lysicatos
Passaic County

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NJCPA Regular Meeting
May 15, 2020 at 11:00 am
VIA Zoom

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions: President Walter Lane called the meeting to order at 11:06AM and welcomed everyone to the meeting, followed by attendee introductions.

2. Business

A. Executive Committee Report: President Lane gave the report:

- a. A letter was sent from the CPA as result of the NJDEP Wastewater Management Roundtable discussion in early May and he hasn't heard back from NJDEP yet so he'll follow up next week.
- b. June meeting will be virtual as well with no tour due to social distancing restrictions, but we will consider another tour date in the fall.
- c. S 2346 Bill passed yesterday in the Assembly and in the Senate – it gives extensions to municipalities, but not to the counties specifically.

B. Meeting Minutes - Draft minutes from the February and April meeting were distributed for review by Francesca Giarratana. The minutes were tabled for adoption until the June meeting.

C. Treasurer's Report: Ranae Fehr relayed that there were no changes to her report from last month.

Other updates: Invoices for membership dues are going out electronically this afternoon using the contact information that was in the 2020 Directory. As you may recall, Somerset County agreed to be the permanent address for the organization so there will be no change in the vendor information.

Agenda was adjusted

3. Panel Discussion: COVID-19 Recovery Planning:

NYC Recovery Efforts: Carolyn Grossman Meagher, Director of Regional Planning, NYC

Department of City Planning:

- Barriers to coordination and collaboration are breaking down during this crisis which will be key for moving forward. We can build on each other's creativity and not reinvent the wheel every time.
- NYC Regional Office was created in 2016 as a result of the City's long-term strategic plan when the City realized that the region's success is critical to their own local planning. The office has been working to build relationships and coming together more regularly. Regional data analysis of 31 County tri-state area in terms economic housing and transportation trends - highlighting their "Metro Region Explorer" web tool.
- Pre- COVID goal was figuring out to keep the region competitive in terms of jobs and employment talent while providing affordable housing.

- NYC P initial response has been emergency response for the health and security of the City which is not necessarily a planning role but there has been some GIS assistance and identification of the 12-18 month conditions in the interim and then how this will affect in the long-term policy.
- Employment Impact –
 - o there's not too many data points because there's a lag in federal data on a local scope;
 - o Started big spreadsheet – total jobs by sector type to understand different levels of vulnerability, trying to understand different trends since 1990 and bring in these new conditions; operations and supply-chain characteristics; how their level of capital has been affected
- More broad perspective of different planning goals and perspectives – translate our former goals in this new post-COVID world; short-term housing market; how does it change
- Some immediate responses: closing many miles of streets to allow for social distancing safe movement; rent regulation protections; public health in residences, streets, and transportation
- Governors are working together in northeast – planning on the local level
- Food systems= emergency response; regional producers and distribution centers; making sure truckers can make it in and out of the city safely

Policy Implications from COVID-19: Pete Kasabach, Executive Director, NJ Future

- NJ Future: The policy agenda has shifted to long-term recovery; Overall is positive about the impact on COVID on policy
 - o Long standing problems in this state – but bringing them to foreground
 - o Disruption in the status quo – opens up the opportunity for change
- Focus on equity: housing insecurity, job loss, access to food, lack technology or the access to technology, inability to get around (if relying on public transit), limited access to open space/nature, social isolation
 - o All these things existed for our lower-income communities but now it is more wide-spread and more people are starting to understand these issues.
- New experiences have resulted from this and how do we institutionalize the good changes:
 - o Less driving (accidents and deaths are down) – how can we keep this up (transportation)
 - Using less fossil fuels – reduce air pollution
 - o Working from home – shift in how companies with change; advantages to that
 - o Natural spaces – important for mental and physical health
 - o Access to food
- Focus on some high-level issues:
 - o Broadband – employment access and education
 - o Clean water infrastructure
 - o Driving less – biking and walking has increased
 - o Real estate side –how can we rebound, specially in terms of commercial space
 - o Nature/open space – continue to emphasize its importance; green infrastructure, access to open space/waterfront access
 - o Downtown recovery – small business community is hardest hit so how does this affect our downtown areas; ensure downtowns have what they need to recover – infrastructure, non-motorized transportation options, allow for mixed use spaces
 - o Equity issue – segregated state; the wealth gap will widen after the emergency
 - o Resiliency from flooding- address climate change and adaption (waterfront alliance partnership)
- Governor's restart and recovery committee – started meeting last week; he sits on the Main Street Advisory Council

Some Comments:

- Donna Rendeiro re-emphasized the broadband infrastructure issue.
- Nat Bottigheimer from the RPA is on the Governor's infrastructure sub-committee.
 - o RPA is working on similar issuer, namely parks and open space (how counties and municipalities should be collaborating to providing equitable access to park space through active non-motorized transportation connections)

CDBG Funds to Support Recovery: Michael Lysicatos, Director of Planning, Passaic County:

Passaic County:

- Focus on programs to meet the overwhelming immediate need
- Sent a survey out to nonprofits and businesses to rank their needs, including rent and payroll

- CDBG funds – low-mod focus of direct services through non-profit programs for seniors and food pantry supplies
- CARES Act funding: Direct funding of several million dollars for a small business loan program
- Long term recovery planning thoughts: Data will be super important and collaboration/sharing of data will be critical.
 - o a review of their commercial and office space that had already has been on decline
 - o Planning will have long-term interactions with the business community.
- Census response highlighted the digital divide with the hard to count areas doing worse than in previous years.
- Policy emphasis that has come out of the COVID pandemic: Infrastructure needs (addressing the combined sewer overflow issues); broad band access for education and teleworking; active recreation options

Atlantic County Recovery Efforts: Max Slusher, Director of Business Development, Atlantic County Economic Alliance:

Atlantic County has had several hits over the last few years:

- overly dependent on tourism/gaming for our economy
- last decade – great recession, hurricane Irene, hurricane sandy, closing of 5 casinos (lost 11, 000 jobs – 4,000 jobs in about a year; 1 in 6 private sector jobs)

The Alliance:

- From 2015-2016, the County contracted with an economic group and came up with a strategy to revitalize our economy with their organization leading the execution of this plan.
- Attraction of businesses and helping businesses expand
- Major goal to diversify our economy- including jobs related to the airport and around the aviation field some advanced manufacturing and pharmaceutical industry

COVID Impacts/Issues:

- Casinos closed until June;
- bars and restaurants – need additional seating; ABC issues to be worked out
- Hot summers will push people to the beach; regular renters will be drawn down
- Density on beaches in casinos and beaches will be a continued issue. Incentivize from bringing people down outside of the summer weekends – spread out the “peak” visitors
- Concentration of at-risk sectors are highly concentrated in Atlantic and Cape May counties; GDP to decline by 25% this year

Other Discussion:

- Gerry Scharfenberger spoke about the “Back to Work NJ” bill that he is putting forward.
- Nat Bottigheimer spoke about some policy priorities for the RPA: supporting bail out funding for transit systems in the region (see their report– “Essential Service”); compiling data sources for COVID impact; update incentive bill language to emphasis the employees.
 - o Also RPA is hosting series of online panels in late-May.
- Walter Lane announced that he’s recommending that a “Long Term Recovery Working Group” be formed with County, state, and organization representatives.

4. Agency / Partner Updates (NJTPA, OPA, NJDEP, NJAC, RPA etc.):

A. NJDEP Electric Vehicle Planning Efforts: Jennifer Feltis Cortese, NJDEP, Rob Schell, NJDEP and Aaron Kardon, NJDEP:

The Presentation by Jennifer Feltis Cortese – All slides were updated after the meeting and then shared.

- Review of February presentation (see February minutes)
- Volkswagen Settlement - \$72.2M for NJ with \$10.8M for EV charging
- First Round of Funding: \$3.2M for EV charging stations, \$8M for NJ Transit Buses in Camden, & \$16M heavy duty vehicles
- Next Round of grant solicitations went out in April 2020: charging stations, electric mobility programs, and heavy-duty vehicles
 - o June 22nd is the deadline

- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategic Mapping: has been developed and will guide the grant awards
- NJ BPU- Clean feet EV incentive program – Application is Due June 30th
- Local approval planning process – ordinance guidance
- Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative (RGGI) Strategic Spending Plan- \$80M per year split between DEP, BPU, and EDA (full plan available online)
 - o Four initiatives to be funded during the first 3-year funding period (2020-2022)
 - Catalyzing Clean, Equitable Transportation
 - Promoting Blue Carbon in Coastal Habitats
 - Enhancing Forests and Urban Forests
 - Creating a NJ Green Bank
- Resources:
 - o Drive green NJ: <https://www.drivegreen.nj.gov/>
 - o Drive change, drive electric: <https://driveelectricus.com/>

5. Discussion- Land Development Review Issues Due to COVID-19

Christine Marion gave an update on a bill (A3919) that recently passed in both houses: it extends approvals for applicants to the NJDEP permitting, but it does not extend counties' timeline for submission wastewater management plans or directly impact county development review timeline. Walter Lane mentioned that he distributed the Senate versions. He also mentioned that there's another bill under review to extend other land use permitting. Linda Brennan spoke about an Executive Order from the NJDEP Commissioner that extended the public comment period for various programs, including wastewater permits with resolutions from the Freeholder Boards being extended to 90 days.

Updates from Counties:

- Somerset: Making Appointments for Plat signings with check drop-offs (with it sent to the Clerk's office); Virtual Planning Board meetings in April and planned for May and June; No issues with virtual meetings
- Monmouth: Using WebEx for public meeting
- Hudson: Just passed new sidewalk café rules for County ROWs
- Camden: Request for an indemnification agreement for businesses within the County ROW; Holding Planning Board meetings via Zoom (April and May)- meeting run smoothly with planner running technology logistics + recording; One staffer (Andrew Levecchia) goes in once a week for mail review and checks; no major process changes
- Union: Business as usual in terms in procedure – Kamal Saleh goes in 2-3 times a week; April Planning meeting via Zoom- went well; going through regular review process; plat signing continues to be completed by appointment
- Monmouth: Not accepting new development applications, but processing/reviewing current applications; other boards/committees have been held virtually and planning board will meet in May

6. Committee Updates / News:

- Environmental (Laurette): Encouraged all the members to take the Resiliency survey by NJDEP.
- Coastal Resiliency Committee of NJ (Linda Brennan represents NJCPA): A series of working group have been working on recommendations for the office after being asked to support their efforts for the Strategic Plan. The recommendations are being compiled and finalized now. Highlighted recommendations: (1) Define “resiliency” in a way that can be used across the state and include this definition and topic among all NJ agencies' initiatives and policies. (2) Take current and future floodplains out of sewer service areas and discourage the use of public funding to pay for infrastructure in these areas that could encourage growth. (3) Emphasize how working waterfronts can still function with impending sea level rise. (4) Update the state planning/policy map to consider climate risks.
- Transportation (Kamal):
 - NJ Transit and Amtrak is enhancing cleaning at Newark Penn Station and NY Penn station
 - NJ Transit has expanded testing sites for their workers.
 - NJ Transit passed a plan for the Newark Penn Station.

7. Resolutions: No resolutions.

8. Updates/Necessary Business: None.

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Francesca Giarratana, AICP, PP on 7/8/20

Chat File:

00:24:18 Robert Brewer: Cumberland here
00:25:00 frances brown: frances brown here from Atlantic County as well.
00:26:27 Harriet Honigfeld: Harriet Honigfeld from Monmouth too (no mic on this machine)
00:26:52 Linda Brennen: Linda Brennen from Monmouth is here but for some reason my mike isn't working
00:28:17 Leslie Gimeno: Cape May is here
00:45:31 Jeffrey Otto: <https://metroexplorer.planning.nyc.gov/welcome/intro#6.94/40.857/-73.528>
01:12:26 andrew levecchia: <http://www.driveless.com/>
01:15:10 Doug Greenfeld: <https://villagegreennj.com/community/bridging-the-digital-divide-maplewoods-neighborhood-wifi-program-is-rolled-out/>
01:20:32 andrew levecchia: Thank you, Carolyn and Pete.
01:21:12 andrew levecchia: broadband as a public utility like electric and gas?
01:21:54 Byron Nicholas: <https://bklyner.com/more-open-streets-coming-to-brooklyn-this-week-one-block-at-a-time-in-areas-with-few-cases-of-covid19/>
01:28:10 Byron Nicholas: Hi Carolyn and Peter, great presentation! Re: Equity, how can we ensure equitable transportation policy and projects during this crisis and thereafter? The article above articulates an issue that we hardly talk about, where NYC's "Open Streets" program has opened more streets in more affluent and less impacted by COV-19 infection rates, whereas neighborhoods with higher infection rates in minority and lower-income neighborhoods seen less open streets. How can we resolve these problems?
01:43:52 Carolyn Grossman Meagher: Great question Bryan -- happy to talk more on this but i'll say equity absolutely on the mind of city in planning for the openings, and we are doing a lot of mapping work around
01:44:04 Carolyn Grossman Meagher: public open space and demographic indicators
01:44:44 Carolyn Grossman Meagher: Also, i'd note a work of caution on the zip code case data; it's not normalized for population size, and is greatly affected by number of tests available.
01:48:11 andrew levecchia: Thank you, Max!
01:48:14 Francesca Giarratana: Time to shake it up America!
01:48:41 Byron Nicholas: Thanks, Carolyn!
01:49:53 Carolyn Grossman Meagher: *Byron (typo!)
01:50:32 Byron Nicholas: haha, no problem.
02:08:01 Brian Thomas: bthomas@njleg.org
02:09:43 Carolyn Grossman Meagher: Thanks Walter and all -- feel free to reach out, CGrossman@planning.nyc.gov and www.nyc.gov/region
02:22:03 Regine Delcy - Mercer: How will we get access to slides for Jen's Presentation?
02:22:25 Jennifer Feltis Cortese: I'll send them next week to Walter to share.
02:22:26 Walter Lane: we will send out the slides early next week
02:22:31 Regine Delcy - Mercer: Thanks!
02:24:20 Francesca Giarratana: HI all - please mute when you're not speaking :) thank you!
02:38:55 Francesca Giarratana: I have an outline by county on land use processes during COVID in the April minutes - I'll work on updating this section more frequently if you want to shoot me any notes from your County. I'll distribute this information more regularly if that's helpful for everyone
02:49:14 theresa ziegler: Thank you! Stay Safe

May 2020 County Planners Meeting - Attendees

Attendee	Email	County
frances brown	fmgetty@gmail.com	Atlantic
John Peterson	peterson_john@aalink.org	Atlantic
Ranae Fehr	ranaefehr@yahoo.com	Atlantic
THOMAS STANUIKYNAS	tom.stanuikynas@gmail.com	Burlington
andrew levecchia	andrewl@camdencounty.com	Camden
Leslie Gimeno	leslie.gimeno@co.cape-may.nj.us	Cape May
Robert Brewer	bobbr@co.cumberland.nj.us	Cumberland
Nick Cressman	ncressman@co.gloucester.nj.us	Gloucester
theresa ziegler	tziegler@co.gloucester.nj.us	Gloucester
Sam Schroeder	sschroeder@hcnj.us	Hudson
Byron Nicholas	bnicholas@hcnj.us	Hudson
Stephanie Lee	slee@hcnj.us	Hudson
Kevin Force	kforce@hcnj.us	Hudson
Francesca Giarratana	fgiarratana@hcnj.us	Hudson
Randi Moore	rmoore@hcnj.us	Hudson (Community Development)
Tom Malavasi	tmalavasi@hcnj.us	Hudson (Engineering)
adam bradford	abradford@co.hunterdon.nj.us	Hunterdon
Ken Bogen	Kbogen@co.hunterdon.nj.us	Hunterdon
Richard Smith	rsmith@mercercounty.org	Mercer
Matthew Zochowski	mzochowski@mercercounty.org	Mercer
Emily Blackman	eblackman@mercercounty.org	Mercer
Regine Delcy	Rsaintilien@gmail.com	Mercer
Stan Olszewski	stanley.olszewski@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
Nicholas Tufaro	nick.tufaro@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
Doug Greenfeld	doug.greenfeld@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
Denise Nickel	denise.nickel@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
Mirah Becker	mirah.becker@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
Anthony Gambilonghi	anthony.gambilonghi@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
Vijayant Rajvanshi	vijayant.rajvanshi@co.middlesex.nj.us	Middlesex
marissa.cortese@co.monmouth.nj.us	Marissa.cortese@co.monmouth.nj.us	Monmouth
David Schmetterer	David.schmetterer@co.monmouth.nj.us	Monmouth
Laura Kirby	laura.kirby@co.monmouth.nj.us	Monmouth
Linda Brennen	linda.brennen@co.monmouth.nj.us	Monmouth
Joe Barris	joe.barris@co.monmouth.nj.us	Monmouth
Harriet Honigfeld	harriet.honigfeld@co.monmouth.nj.us	Monmouth
Joe Barilla	jbarilla@co.morris.nj.us	Morris
Christine Marion	cmarion@co.morris.nj.us	Morris
Max Slusher	mslusher@aceanj.com	Ocean
Michael Lysicatos	mlysicatos@passaiccountynj.org	Passaic
Thomas D'Amico	damico@co.somerset.nj.us	Somerset
anthony mccracken sr.	mccrackt@co.somerset.nj.us	Somerset
Laurette Kratina	kratina@co.somerset.nj.us	Somerset
Katelyn Katzer	Katzer@co.somerset.nj.us	Somerset
Andras Holzmann	holzmann@co.somerset.nj.us	Somerset
Walter Lane	lane@co.somerset.nj.us	Somerset
Chris Edwards	cedwards@scbp.org	Somerset County Business Partnership

Autumn Sylvester
Kamal Saleh
Valarie Discafani

asylvester@sussex.nj.us
KSaleh@ucnj.org
vdiscafani@co.warren.nj.us

Sussex
Union
Warren

Special Guests

Email Address

Organization

Aaron Kardon
peg hanna
Jennifer Feltis Cortese
Peter Kasabach
Brian Thomas
Gerry Scharfenberger
Donna Rendeiro
Carolyn Grossman Meagher
Jeffrey Otto
Nat Bottigheimer

aaron.kardon@dep.nj.gov
peg.hanna@dep.nj.gov
jennifer.feltis@dep.nj.gov
pkasabach@njfuture.org
bthomas@njleg.org
Asmscharfenberger@njleg.org
donna.rendeiro@sos.nj.gov
CGrossman@planning.nyc.gov
jotto@planning.nyc.gov
nat@rpa.org

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