



State of New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
P.O. Box 820  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0820

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

THOMAS K. WRIGHT  
*Chairman*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*LT. GOVERNOR*

DONNA A. RENDEIRO  
*Executive Director/Secretary*

**New Jersey State Planning Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on June 17, 2020  
Zoom Video Conference**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wright called the June 17, 2020 video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 9:33 a.m.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

It was announced that notice of the date, time and place of the meeting had been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present**

Danielle Esser, Deputy Chief of Staff, NJ Economic Development Authority  
Joseph Fiordaliso, President, Board of Public Utilities  
Doug Fisher, Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member  
Catherine McCabe, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection  
Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member (unable to connect to audio)  
Shanel Robinson, Freeholder Director, County Member  
Andrew Swords, Designee for Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Commissioner, Department of Transportation  
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member  
Sean Thompson, Designee for Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, Department of Community Affairs  
Melanie Willoughby, Designee for Tahesha Way, Secretary of State, Department of State  
Thomas Wright, Chairman

**Others Present**

See Attachment A

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Wright asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 3, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Fiordaliso made the motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Harris. With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote: Ayes: (11) Danielle Esser, Joe Fiordaliso, Doug Fisher, Andrew Swords, Sean Thompson, Catherine McCabe, Melanie Willoughby, Shanel Robinson, Elizabeth Terenik, Bruce Harris, Thomas Wright. Nays: (0). Abstains: (0). The June 3, 2020 minutes were approved.

## **CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Wright welcomed and thanked everyone for participating in the State Planning Commission Meeting and referred to Executive Director Rendeiro for a report.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Rendeiro updated the Commission on the status of the Plan Endorsement and biennial review activities.

Director Rendeiro commented about the Mitigating Hazards Land Use Solutions. Four of the eight technical assistance calls have been held. These calls are going to be held prior to the first half of the technical workshop. Any Commissioner is invited to attend. The first half is going to be on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> for Cape May and Ocean, respectively, and the second half of the workshop will be in mid July.

The first planning call for the CHARM Workshop is scheduled for June 29<sup>th</sup>; the first planning call for the Rutgers Studio class is scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Director Rendeiro commented that proposed guideline changes have been submitted to the Interagency Workgroup for comment. The Office extended the comment period to one week upon request by one of our State Agency partners.

The Executive Director commented that the office is also working on re-endorsement Guidelines, which will recognize the difference between a municipality coming in for the first time and those communities that have gone through the Plan Endorsement process. This change recognizes a community's history of good planning.

Director Rendeiro commented that OPA and the Highlands staff will meet on a conference call on June 24<sup>th</sup> to begin to develop a work plan to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was approved by the Commission in our last meeting.

Director Rendeiro commented that she participated in the County Planners Association Long Term Recovery Efforts.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Wright welcomed Commissioner Catherine McCabe to gave the floor to the Commissioner.

Commissioner McCabe spoke. I'm glad to see you all virtually and hope that you are doing well and staying safe. COVID 19 has interrupted many of our State's regular meetings and some functions but I'm happy to report that DEP, like many of our sister agencies, has been able to turn on the dime to a remote working environment and keep the vast majority of our functions running smoothly and on time. I'm also happy to report that we have been

making good progress in one of our top priorities, climate change, both from the perspective of what we call mitigation and reducing GHG emissions. Building resilience is our very important focus today.

On the reducing emission side, we have been through RGGI (Regional Green House Gas Initiative). If you remember, New Jersey started participating again in the auctions this year. With my partner, Joe Fiordaliso, we have now cleared over \$40,000,000 in the first quarterly auctions and we'll be investing that along with BPU and EDA in electrification of the transportation sector with special focus, as is appropriate, in our most vulnerable communities.

We are almost finished the Global Warming Response Act Report, in which we will be giving an overview on our progress in meeting the GHG reduction goals that the legislation set for us up back in 2007 and also building on the 2019 Energy Master Plan that BPU issued in December. We will be making recommendations consistent with the Energy Master Plan for further progress in reducing our Green House Gas emissions.

Regarding adaptation and resiliency to sea-level rise, I'm happy to report on a comprehensive Scientific Report on Climate Change in New Jersey which has been circulating in final draft form to our fellow agencies and we hope to publish the final report very soon.

We're also working very hard on the climate change resilience strategy which, under Executive Order 89, is due in September. We're pushing hard to make this date. With that, I'm very grateful to Dave Rosenblatt who, in addition to being the Assistant Commissioner for Climate and Resilience at DEP, is, as you all know, our State's Chief Resilience Officer. Dave is with us today to tell you more about those exciting developments.

Executive Director Rendeiro commented that, for the record, and to let the Commission know, Commissioner McKenna has been present on the call, but is unable to connect to the audio.

David Rosenblatt, presented a slide show detailing the activities of developing a climate change strategy. He commented that one of the requirements of the Executive Order 89 is to call together an Interagency Council, which was done in December with the intent to have a meeting every several months. Because of COVID, we had to put those meetings on hold. There will be another meeting shortly where we will be showing some of their products or draft products. The first completed product was a Scientific Report on Climate Change informing the statewide Climate Change Resilience Strategy.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt commented that the Scientific Report is about 200 pages long, including 15 pages of Executive Summary which is geared toward the science in New Jersey, particularly about sea level rise, temperature and rainfall information. In preparation, there were meetings with academic institutions to include information that is generally not available in publications.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt continued with the slide show by showing an example of how the Scientific Report will be presented. He continued with the Coastal Resilience Strategies document, which he expressed is a "work in progress". He continued with the six strategies for adapting to climate change which contained six strategies:

- Support and Share the Science
- Plan and Design for the Future
- Support Local Action
- Invest in Nature
- Promote Coordinated Governance
- Expand Funding and Financing

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt also showed the Coastal Resilience Plan along with the Strategies for Adapting to Climate Change Sections.

Commissioner McCabe commented that it's very important to adapt to climate change in New Jersey, that she felt very lucky to have Rutgers University and working with researchers in New Jersey focusing on specific things like how hot it is going to get and how high the sea is going to rise. Commissioner McCabe expressed the importance of getting the word out to everybody not only to other State agencies to understand the challenge that is in front of us. The way Mr. Rosenblatt presented the Executive Summary and the Science Report, showed that there is no need to read the entire report, referring to the boxes and bullets can give the reader an understanding of the situation.

Commissioner McCabe commented that it's been very useful to have scientists working on this effort and to know that there will be a foundation formed by the Interagency Council under Executive Order 89.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt continued with the Coastal Resilience Plan Summary, that there was intended to be 6 regional Q&A sessions open to the public to discuss resilience. Unfortunately, because of COVID, these sessions are on hold. Instead, today there was a Webinar with an audience of 250 people and with a survey with 165 responses.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt shared with the Commission that people are interested in sea level rise, but are also looking for incentives; part two of the Coastal Resilience Plan showed strategies to move to a safer areas. There are a lot of questions that need to be answered. A planning horizon needs to be selected. Right now, one planning horizon is 2,100 which is 80 years from now. When presented to the Builders Association a less aggressive planning horizon was identified as 30 years. Scenarios of 2050, 2070 and 2100 are being considered.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt commented that this plan is open and discussed internally on the daily basis. He commented that outside feedback indicate that the resilience program is very much aligned with the regulatory program. As they move forward with adjusting regulations, policies regarding the planning horizon will be determined.

Commissioner McCabe asked Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt to give an overview of the table that details the different sea level rise scenarios. Assistant Commissioner showed the Rutgers scientific technical advisory panel report, as an example, with the 2030 scenario and explained that there is a 95% possibility for the sea-level to rise .3 feet from the 2000 levels.

Commissioner McCabe commented that an important issue for the Planning Commission is the guidance to help municipalities determine where development should be encouraged and where it should be discouraged. For the DEP, protection against climate threats must be incorporated into regulations

Director Rendeiro commented that this was a great information and suggested opening the floor for any questions from the Commissioners, then members of the public. There are a number of things to think about, including the cost for upgrading the infrastructure. As members know, as part of the Executive Order 89 the Commission is mandated to require Resilience Planning as part of Plan Endorsement. OPA had including this requirement on a voluntary basis prior the EO 89, but has since mandated the requirement.

The Director commented that this is very new for everyone and nobody is really sure exactly the best way to do it and how to use this information and, frankly, how to pay for it. This implementation will be expensive.

The Director commented that there are number of policy decisions that are coming in the not-too-distant future. These don't need to be decided today; but policies like what to do with the Barrier Islands that are going to be under water in the future are going to be needed. We cannot ignore the \$40 billion tourism industry. How do we balance economic growth needs and sustainability for municipalities whether they are in the coast or not. At the same time, we need to recognize and mitigate the risks. Those are some of the conversations we're going to have moving forward. It's going to be interesting to see how we're going to achieve both sets of goals. Decisions will be made on what is expected in order to build. The State Planning Commission has a great influence and important role in advising people.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt explained that raising homes 3, 5 or 7 feet is not hard; the difficult part is addressing the infrastructure, such as roads, water, storm water, and electrical systems. Engineering the infrastructure to support economic growth is why they are looking to update the regulatory process.

## **COMMENTS**

Director Rendeiro commented that where we are today is providing information to the municipalities, helping them with technical assistance regarding how to make a decision, not telling what the decision should be, but giving them all the factors that they need to help make informed decisions. We need to educate the public; there is knowledge that there is a climate change risk, but a lot of their constituents don't see these numbers. We'll be working on what some of those policies recommendations can be moving forward.

Commissioner Fiordaliso thanked Commissioner McCabe and Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt for the presentation and feels very proud that the Board of Public Utilities is a partner. This is something that requires policy decisions. We have been doing this collaboratively with our individual Agencies. Promoting a green economy is one thing that we don't promote enough. There is an economic opportunity by creating manufacturing jobs. Yesterday there was an announcement of a new port in North Alloway Township that will make New Jersey a focal point as part of an extensive supply chain and will bring in over 1,500 jobs. Climate change is real and is something we'll have to work on by educating the public and in dealing with local communities.

Commissioner Fiordaliso expressed that in any event, the State Planning Commission has to be a major part of this process in helping to develop and promote guidelines for local municipalities to follow as the DEP and the Board of Public Utilities does on a daily basis.

Commissioner Harris commented that whenever there is a talk about climate change, it should also involve flooding. People understand sea-level rise but there are impacts that result from climate change beyond sea-level rise that will affect most of the municipalities of New Jersey, both inland and on the coast. What are the recommendations, what are the planning implications for increased heat and other impacts?

Commissioner McCabe commented that the most current information about all the different aspects including sea level rise can be found in the Scientific Report. The most important thing that needs to be done is to educate the public. There are going to be a major policy decisions to be made. The Commissioner recommended looking at the Scientific Report. We need to plan for all the aspects of climate change.

Director Rendeiro commented that as we talk to the municipalities, we not only look at the sea level rise but at the 100 year flood and the 500 year flood risk. Perhaps these are no longer 100 year and 500 year floods, rather 50 and 100 year floods?

Director Rendeiro commented that we also look at what is on the ground as well. We need to differentiate between new growth and redevelopment. There is a municipality that is entirely within a 100 year flood and has existing infrastructure. If the infrastructure is already there I think is easier to make an argument to redevelop than to develop undeveloped land. Does it make sense to support redevelopment of existing infrastructure to ensure that it is done in a resilient fashion? Inland communities may not have the sea level rise issue, but they will have a flooding risk. Mitigating flood risk by redeveloping smartly is another policy we are working through now as well.

Commissioner Fisher commented that coming from an area where he grow up (Cumberland County) he saw small towns washing away, and continues to see areas in the part of the State that are retreating. That is going to continue and there is not a density of population in those areas. However if we talk about population in terms of the climate change projections, how do we match them up? Everything has a carrying capacity. New Jersey has 9,000,000 residents. Some areas are built out, the Hudson River area is totally built out. We're still under threat in built out communities.

Commissioner Fisher continued, I heard you said that the builders want to know what the incentives are to build. Incentives to build is sort of foreign way to look at it because builders just build and that is what they are supposed to do. We're talking about trying to figure out where we are going to successfully populate our State, at the same time have that resilience. What is the capacity of the State if we're going to talk about how are we going to retreat, we're going to lose land mass and some of the towns. As I said, I witness towns washing away. The Barrier Islands are slowly disappearing and that is a major part of our economy. I'm trying to understand how to match up population with the land we all live on.

Commissioner McCabe commented on the carrying capacity of New Jersey or any particular place. When I worked for the EPA, I spent a lot of time in China for an international operation trying to set up an Environmental Protection Agency and I was struck by how rapidly little villages became Manhattan overnight. When the population is growing, that's the way people adapt. People will move in and people will build up. That will be my best guess of what the future looks like for the population to continue to grow and adapt to a smaller space. China had done a particularly bad job on this because they went so fast and that is one of the things we need to be very careful about as we go forward; hopefully this will take place in 100 years and not 10. We need to plan smart to make sure we don't lose the natural environment that is so incredibly precious and unique in New Jersey. As highly developed as we are with wonderful land and natural resources including an agricultural sector, we need to be smart.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt commented that, as a partial response to Commissioner Harris' comment, we do cover much more than sea level rise and flooding strategies in our Science Report. None of our projects are going to be stuck. As soon as we get done, we will be looking for more information to put in the next edition. The Science Report and the following editions of the strategy will include more analysis and responses.

Commissioner Designee Andrew Swords commented that the DOT has a great investment in road and bridges and they are working internally to try to figure out how to factor in resilience and expected sea level rise because roads and bridges last for a long time. I know that we're part of the Executive Order 89 group and working in partnership with all of you. Commissioner Designee Swords asked Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt if they are looking for the department to do this work. Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt responded that yes, that they are listening to input from agencies for climate change resilience strategies. After listening to today's comments from the Commission, I think we should put the Science Report out there and it's time to hold another Interagency Council meeting.

Commissioner Designee Swords commented that as Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt said there are a great number of tools for municipalities and others. Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt offered to send out a link provided by Rutgers University to all the agencies.

Elizabeth Semple commented that Office of Planning Advocacy, DEP and other state agencies are meeting with communities now, providing them with mapping, and talking to them about developing local resilience strategy so that they are identifying actions in a comprehensive manner to address shorter and longer term vulnerabilities that they have. We're not telling them something definitive but we're providing information and trying to get them to look at their vulnerability comprehensively.

Ms. Kelly Pflicke from FEMA commented that she had the privilege to work with many coastal communities in New Jersey and found out that regardless of where you sit on the political side of climate change that our communities are seeing increased flooding. Ms. Pflicke questioned what the State is thinking about in terms of budgeting for hazard mitigation and how to support the communities. This is the need I heard from communities; they are aware of the risks. They see more and more frequent flooding. But there is a funding deficit to help them to take action. There is also a potential deficit of leadership in terms of protecting critical assets. New Jersey is facing a budget crisis as many states are as a result of COVID-19. Finally, I just want it to raise the question of whether any of your conversations at the state level have included thinking about strategies to help to fund local resiliency measures.

Director Rendeiro commented that at this point we need to wait and see. I'm always a proponent for the municipalities that are in the Plan Endorsement process that have done good planning, whether it is on sea level rise or a flooding issue or other land use concerns, to have incentives for implementation on a lot of these programs. I don't know if we can answer that question now until we see what happens as a result of the current budget crisis.

Commissioner McCabe commented that in the longer term Climate Resilience Strategy, there will be a focus on that question but as of right now, we're not there yet. First, we need to figure out what it is that we need to do and it is going to take a while. I don't think there is going to be any extra money to spare in the state budget this year. I'll not expect to see any immediate changes here in New Jersey. But we recognized that the long term decisions we all have to make are very fundamental. What is going to be the level of state investment in the end, particularly, if you think about places like Money Island in Cumberland in the Delaware Bay already experiencing the effect of climate change? We don't only have to think of where we want to invest, but what we need to do about those areas that you decide not to invest in. The sea level rise numbers are very scary. I'm very much in favor of one step at a time when dealing with a huge scary problem. I come back to getting on the same page about what we are expecting and developing those strategies, including the financials as we go.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt commented that since working with planning office, I tell people that we're not going to engineer our way out of this for the future, it's going to be about planning and the decisions that are made at the local level. We can continue with some projects but the sea level rise is going to require some very creative future planning.

Director Rendeiro commented that we can't do this in a one off way. We have to have a plan on what make sense. We need to ensure that whatever funds we get are used efficiently and effectively as of opposed to one off projects here and there. It goes back to the planning concept; we have to come back with a comprehensive plan whether is regionally or statewide.

Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt commented that the state agencies are aware of what each of one is doing. We're not duplicating effort, we're not creating new tools independently. We're pointing in the same direction and council participation is going to be very crucial.

Ms. Pflicke thank everyone's perspective and answers. I just want to encourage not putting off this conversation, recognizing that many Federal funding sources require local a match. FEMA will have a new program coming later this year called BRIC - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities that will required a local match and a lot of localities are hurting financially. I just would not want the State to miss out on mitigation opportunities by not planning for those federal sources that are coming.

Chairman Wright thanked Ms. Pflicke for mentioned about BRIC. He mentioned that he was recently briefed about BRIC. The potential funding, I guess, is all still to be determined but my understanding is that the potential source here is quite significant.

Ms. Pflicke commented that all depends on who you ask. BRIC is nationally competitive. We don't have the number for this year's grant yet; it will be released with a notice of funding opportunity later this year. I think that this is something that, even recognizing that every government at every level is hurting financially, we can't lose site of the fact that we need to set aside funding for the challenges that we're facing.

Commissioner Esser wanted to applaud Commissioner McCabe and her team, the Department of Environmental Protection, for the hard work that the department is doing on resilience planning for the State of New Jersey and the leadership that is happening there. I know this Commission, as Donna and the Chairman have stated, is very interested in this work and supporting this work as well as other state agencies that are involved. I think that folks are very interested in mapping and what the implications are in how plans are implemented. Again, thank you for

the work on this and look forward to continuing conversation on how we can support this throughout the State of New Jersey.

Chairman Wright commented. Thank you for the extraordinary job that your team is doing.. It is so impressive and so much needed. New Jersey is back in putting \$40,000,000 in to electrification and President Fiordaliso what your Agency is doing it shows we can move forward on these things. I have been listening to this conversation with this specific question in my mind, "What is the role of the State Planning Commission and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan on all of these?" I think it is clear to many of us around these issues. First, is publishing and sharing this information and making sure that it goes out to people to see it. Through the work of this Commission, and Donna's report highlighted just how much activity there is around Plan Endorsement, the work that we do and that the office does with the communities can assist in achieving this goal. In each of those, is an opportunities to publicize this information. Share this information, give it to the people who need to have it and I think that is a very important role for us in this.

The second is coordination and we have talked around this topic. We have in New Jersey a highly localized planning structure in place. I don't care what side of the political divide you are on it; we have legacy structures in place in communities and we are making sure that we're emphasizing regional planning efforts up to state planning so that communities are addressing these issues at scale. It's so important to make sure there is coordination between state agencies. We find ourselves and communities wanting to do the right thing but find that they get contradictory direction from different agencies and that is an opportunity, I think through again the Plan Endorsement process.

To do this, we all know we're working with the State Plan that is close to 20 years old and it really didn't address these issues. As we really think about it, policy development probably needs to be considered as we take another look at the Plan. Thinking about it, does say enough of this issue? I think the obvious answer is going to be no and so there is something to do there too. But we want to be working right now with DEP in this effort as this information comes out. First, we will publicize everything we can through the Endorsement process and what we're doing to help provide that coordination, again, between communities and state agencies in the State. There is going to be a larger set of issues for us to think about it, such as when policy and regulatory issues overlap, where they line up and where they don't and really take a close look at the policies and make sure they are appropriate. Thank you for this very impressive and an important work. I'm very excited to work with you and to help get this information out as you are rolling this out and to work on implementing the Executive Order.

Rhyan Grech from Preservation Alliance commented. Thank Commissioner McCabe, Assistant Commissioner Rosenblatt and the all team at DEP for this really crucial work. Commissioner McCabe had mentioned planning for the movement of folks inland; we have to be very cognizant of the spaces in New Jersey that we have made a lot of effort and dedicated a lot of resources to preserve and of course the Pinelands National Reserve is one of those spaces. The development pressure in the Pinelands is going to dramatically increase and the Pinelands Commission has taken steps. They created a climate change committee to start looking at some things like how the Pinelands can be resilience and mitigate the effects.

Walter Lane from the New Jersey Planners Association commented. Thank you, DEP, for an excellent presentation. The County Planners will be more than happy to have a conversation with DEP or a presentation about how we can partner to assist on these efforts. We're all working for the same goals.

Chairman Wright - Thank you Walter, I think the County Planners Association play a vital role in so much of the dynamic between the communities and the State in this area. You provide excellent work.



## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by President Fiordaliso and seconded by Freeholder Director Robinson. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES**  
**DATE: JUNE 17, 2020      TIME: 9:30 AM**

David Rosenblatt - NJDEP  
Kelly PFlicke - FEMA  
Nick Angarone - NJDEP  
Walter Lane - NJ Planners Association  
Elizabeth Semple - NJDEP  
Michael Egenton -  
Becky Hill - NJDEP  
Jason Kasler, NJPO -  
Sabrina Pereira - NJDEP  
Dennis Reinknecht - NJDEP  
Ryan Grech - Preservation Alliance  
Sam Kaplan - NJBPU  
Meg Cavanagh - NJDEP  
John Miller – NJDOT  
Jonathan Sternesky, NJHMA  
A.Taylor  
Jack Heide, FEMA  
Grant Lucking