



# State of New Jersey

Department of State  
New Jersey State Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 820  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0820

MIKIE SHERRILL  
*Governor*

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL  
*Lt. Governor  
Secretary of State*

THOMAS K. WRIGHT  
*CHAIRMAN*

WALTER C. LANE  
*Executive Director/Secretary*

## **New Jersey State Planning Commission Minutes of the Meeting Held on January 7, 2026 Zoom Video Conference**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wright called the January 7, 2026, video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 9:30 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, Director of Governance, NJ Economic Development Authority  
Joe Grillo, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities (joined at 9:47 a.m.)  
Susan Weber, Designee for Francis K. O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Transportation  
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member  
Nick Angarone, Designee for Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection  
Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member (joined at 9:33 a.m.)  
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs  
Shanel Robinson, County Commissioner Director, County Member  
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member  
Melanie Willoughby, Designee for Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State, Department of State (joined at 9:45 a.m.)  
Stephen Santola, Public Member  
Julia Somers, Public Member  
Jeffrey Oakman, Public Member  
Thomas Wright, Chairman

### **Others Present through Video conference**

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 December 17, 2025, with non-substantive changes. Commissioner Esser stated that her title was incorrect, and Executive Director (ED) Walter Lane indicated that the minutes would be updated. The motion was made by Danielle Esser and seconded by Julia Somers. Ayes: (11) Danielle Esser, Susan Weber, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Keith Henderson, Shanel Robinson, Elizabeth Terenik, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (0) The December 17, 2025, minutes were approved.

## **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Wright expressed pride in the adoption of the new State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP or the Plan) at the December 17, 2025, SPC meeting after almost 25 years since the last adoption. He highlighted the strong support from Governor Murphy and his team, noting that the Plan's adoption was a gift to the incoming administration. He also mentioned that Executive Director Walter Lane and the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA or the Office) staff played a crucial role in achieving this milestone, as well as the Commission, state agency partners, and state, county, and local government officials. Chairman Wright noted that with several steps to complete, such as map amendments and special resource area recognition, the Commission remains committed to seeing these through.

With that, Chairman Wright ended his comments and ceded the floor to ED Lane for his report.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Before presenting his report, Executive Director Walter Lane stated that all comments made using the chat feature would be read into the meeting record for the sake of transparency. He proceeded to provide a brief overview of the Office's work since the December 17, 2025, State Planning Commission meeting, with the exception of Plan Endorsement (PE) and State Plan updates, which would be covered later in the meeting.

ED Lane stated that staff finalized the layout of the final SDRP, posted the Plan and the final Infrastructure Needs Assessment (INA) to the OPA website, and distributed the Plan on December 22, 2025, to all required stakeholders, planning partners, state agencies, county and municipal governments, and the interested parties list. He thanked Laura Gould, Assistant Planner at OPA, for perfecting the layout of the Plan.

Staff continues to attend various meetings, including:

The Interagency Council on Extreme Heat Coordinated Communications workgroup meeting, OPA/DEP Staff level Mapping Meeting, OPA/DEP Managers level Mapping Meeting, NJ IAC on Climate Resilience Monthly Senior Staff Meeting, a meeting with Dover (Morris County) and the NJEDA to assist the town in moving forward with Plan Endorsement, NJ Delaware Bayshore Meeting, DVRPC Regional Technical Committee Meeting, the NJCRC Full Partnership Meeting, the DVRPC Municipal Exchange: Leveraging TOD Meeting, and the MACH CSAP/GAC Meeting.

ED Lane stated that work on the 2025 Annual Report had begun and hoped to have a draft for the Commission in the coming months. He announced that temporary GIS Specialist, Nikisha Mistry, is scheduled to start with the Office on January 12, 2026. With both planning and GIS experience, Ms. Mistry will be a great addition to the team.

With no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Wright requested that ED Lane introduce Resolution 2026-01.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Resolution 2026-01 Rescinding Resolution 2023-13 – Adopting the Plan Endorsement Petition for the Borough of Stone Harbor, Cape May County and Designating One Center**

Executive Director Walter Lane stated that in July of 2023, the SPC adopted Resolution 2023-13, which adopted the PE Petition for the Borough of Stone Harbor and designated a center. A condition of the resolution required the Borough to provide a resolution approving the Planning and Implementation Agreement by September 3, 2023. The Borough was scheduled to approve the required resolution at a Borough Council meeting on July 18, 2023.

In September of 2023, the Borough's consultant stated: "The Stone Harbor Borough Council has decided not to approve the Plan Implementation Agreement and Map at this time." The Borough did not initiate any additional conversation since September 2023.

The State Planning Rules: 15:30-7.16 state in section A 4:

If the petitioner fails to execute the resolution to enter into the Plan Implementation Agreement and become endorsed by the State Planning Commission within 60 days of receiving the Plan Implementation Agreement and State Planning Areas Map, or within a reasonable period of time as agreed to by the Executive Director, in consultation with relevant State agencies, the petition will be considered to have been withdrawn without prejudice and the petitioner so notified. Notice of any such withdrawal shall be provided by the Office of Planning Advocacy to the petitioner, and the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 15:30-1.7(h) and 7.4(b).

As more than two years passed since the SPC adopted Resolution 2023-13, ED Lane sent a letter to the Borough on November 17<sup>th</sup>, informing them that they had not met the resolution's requirements for PE, and indicating that he would be recommending the SPC withdraw the Borough's PE Petition and rescind Resolution 2023-13. The Borough did not respond to this letter. During the week of December 22<sup>nd</sup>, ED Lane contacted the Borough Administrator to ensure they were aware that the SPC was taking action on this matter. On December 29<sup>th</sup>, he spoke with the Borough Administrator, who requested that the SPC delay taking action for one or two months while he determined if the Borough would like to reconsider their previous action. The Borough Administrator explained that he was new to his position, and several new Council members had recently taken office. ED Lane agreed to inform the Commission of the request but recommended that the Commission rescind Resolution 2023-13 today, as the Borough failed to take the required action within a reasonable timeframe.

ED Lane stated that if the Borough informs the Commission that they would like to obtain Plan Endorsement, OPA staff would review the previously submitted petition materials and develop a strategy to best move the petition forward.

Chairman Wright asked the Commission to provide questions or comments and noted that, following those statements, both representatives of Stone Harbor Borough and members of the public may comment.

Commissioner Terenik asked ED Lane to explain the implications of not being endorsed and what would change for Borough development after adopting a Plan. ED Lane explained that Stone Harbor is not shown as being endorsed on the map, which was not updated with any mapping changes. He continued that if they pursue Plan Endorsement, a CAFRA center process would begin with DEP, and the Borough may obtain additional impervious coverage benefits. Additionally, priority for funding and additional technical assistance might be provided to the Borough once endorsed.

Commissioner Harris inquired as to the timing of the action, and Commissioner Esser requested that ED Lane detail the follow-up actions taken by OPA, as well as the responsibilities of Stone Harbor in the process. ED Lane indicated

that several of the planners originally working on the issue were no longer with OPA. There was correspondence to follow up with the Borough after the Commission took action on July 5<sup>th</sup>. At the June PIC meeting, the Borough indicated that they were scheduled to adopt a resolution on July 18, 2023. The Borough's consultant emailed OPA staff in September 2023 and stated that the Borough decided not to adopt the resolution. ED Lane sent a letter on November 17<sup>th</sup>, and after receiving no response, reached out to the Borough Administrator in December. He reaffirmed that at this time, the Commission needs to take formal action as the Borough did not meet the requirements of the agreement. In the future, OPA would love for the Borough to re-engage in the process and would make every effort to move quickly toward endorsement.

Chairman Wright and ED Lane discussed the possibility of postponing the scheduling of SPC action on a petition until the municipality adopts the necessary resolutions. Commissioner Santola and ED Lane discussed the reasons Stone Harbor decided not to move forward with the Plan Endorsement process, such as the effort involved versus the benefits received. ED Lane indicated that he intended to speak about revisiting the Rules and the PE process during the State Plan update.

Commissioner Robinson noted the importance of upholding the integrity of the PE process and not setting a precedent by making exceptions.

Chairman Wright invited representatives of Stone Harbor Borough, followed by members of the public to comment. There were no comments offered.

With no further discussion or questions from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2026-01. The motion was made by Ed McKenna and seconded by Shanel Robinson. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (13) Danielle Esser, Susan Weber, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Ed McKenna, Keith Henderson, Shanel Robinson, Elizabeth Terenik, Melanie Willoughby, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Resolution 2026-01 was approved.

The Resolution can be found here:

[https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/updated\\_Certified\\_Resolution\\_2026-01.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/updated_Certified_Resolution_2026-01.pdf)

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked ED Lane to provide the Plan Endorsement Update.

### **PLAN ENDORSEMENT UPDATE**

Executive Director Walter Lane reported that staff continues to work with Little Egg Harbor, North Wildwood, Salem City, Dennis, Manchester, Wildwood City, and Ocean City, as well as Woodstown, Barnegat, Sparta, and Berkeley, on mapping and other requirements needed to achieve Plan Endorsement.

He continued that several towns are nearly ready for the PIC to review their Plan Endorsement Petitions. These towns are: Little Egg Harbor, Wildwood City, Barnegat, Berkeley and Woodstown. While the other municipalities are not as far along in the process as these communities, progress is being made to advance the other petitions. The Office does expect a few more municipalities to initiate the PE process in the coming months.

Commissioner Somers congratulated ED Lane and the OPA staff for continuing work on Plan Endorsement during Cross Acceptance and highlighted the importance of keeping the municipalities engaged during that time.

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked ED Lane to provide the State Plan Update.

## **STATE PLAN UPDATE**

Executive Director Walter Lane stated that after the Commission voted to adopt the new SDRP on December 17th, staff formatted the document and posted it on the OPA website at 3:30 p.m. on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The Governor's Office issued a press release shortly after the Plan was posted on the website. He thanked OPA staff for their work on having the Plan posted with expediency. ED Lane gave a special thank you to Assistant Planner Laura Gould, who completed the layout of the Plan in the format approved by the Commission.

He continued that on December 22nd, the final SDRP and the final INA documents were distributed via email to all municipal and county governments and interested parties. The documents were also submitted to the State Library Depository.

ED Lane reported that staff is developing a framework for the process to address all State Plan Policy Map (SPPM) amendments (roughly 1,500 requested amendments) proposed during the Cross Acceptance Process that were deferred until after the new State Plan was adopted. As the framework is being developed, staff will meet to discuss the proposed process with the County Planners Association to refine it, gain buy-in, and ensure that the Counties remain engaged in the process to implement the new State Plan. Several meetings have already been held with the County Planners Association. Over the next month or two, staff will be discussing the potential map amendment process with the PIC and eventually with the full SPC.

ED Lane revisited the suggestion that the SPC create an entirely new State Plan Policy Map (SPPM) based upon the policies of the new Plan and stated that OPA's recommendation is that mapping changes requested by counties and municipalities be addressed and prioritized, rather than initiating unilateral changes to the SPPM. He requested input from the Commission.

Chairman Wright stated that prioritizing those mapping changes would further the collaborative process and emphasized the need to create a system to expedite the 1,500 requested map amendments.

Commissioner Angarone asked if those requesting mapping changes were given the opportunity to propose changes based on the new mapping policies in the adopted Plan. ED Lane responded that all requested changes were made before the final Plan was released. He stated that the Office is working with the Commission's Deputy Attorney General to determine if the Rules allow additional opportunities for the towns to request changes.

Chairman Wright emphasized that communities should be encouraged to go through the PIC for map amendments.

Commissioner Somers recommended that the simpler requested changes be addressed first. A discussion ensued regarding OPA reviewing mapping requests to ensure that all necessary information was provided, as well as grouping and addressing requested changes for ease and consistency, particularly those in CAFRA areas.

Commissioner Henderson proposed that the requested changes be grouped in such a way that eliminated the need for individual resolutions.

ED Lane stated that OPA staff will begin developing the process and outlining the requirements for recognizing or designating Special Resource Areas (SRAs). The Office recommended that the SPC opt for recognition rather than formal designation to avoid a lengthy rule-making process. He requested feedback from the Commission.

A discussion ensued, with the Commission requesting a memo summarizing SRA requests received by OPA to help the SPC assess their scope before proceeding.

ED Lane reported that OPA staff have begun reviewing potential rule changes to improve Cross Acceptance, Plan Endorsement, and Map Amendment processes. Staff will discuss these changes with the PIC in the coming months and later with the full SPC.

Chairman Wright asked the Commissioners if they had any further questions or comments regarding anything previously discussed. As no member commented, he opened the floor to the public.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau, expressed appreciation that farming and agriculture were mentioned multiple times within the Plan, as well as farm preservation and agricultural viability being introduced. He thanked Executive Director Walter Lane on behalf of the farm community, noting that the Plan appears to support farming viability.

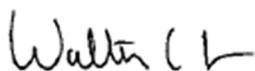
Ryan Conklin, Warren County, and the County Planners Association emphasized the need for municipalities to revisit the mapping changes they submitted. He also suggested that engaging in collaboration with the municipalities and correctly categorizing the requested changes would expedite the process.

John Crane of Bernards Township raised concerns about the lack of clear communication regarding upcoming map changes, which ED Lane addressed by explaining the process and commitment to addressing all mapping requests, as well as offering to meet with the Township to address their concerns. Chairman Wright also indicated that the information was included in the resolution that adopted the Plan.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Danielle Esser and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



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Walter C. Lane  
Secretary and Executive Director  
Date: February 4, 2026

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES**  
**DATE: JANUARY 7, 2026 TIME: 9:30 AM**

Anthony Soriano, Morris County  
Barbara Woolley-Dillon, NJDEP  
Bill Millette, Hunterdon County  
Brian Ragunan  
David Schley  
Donna Rendeiro  
Elise Bremer-Nei, NJDOT  
Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau  
Jennifer Gorini  
Jason Kasler  
John Crane  
Kamal Saleh  
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County  
Laura  
Matt Baumgardner  
Peter Kasabach, NJ Future  
Ryan Conklin, Warren County  
Sandy Collom