



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*

LT. GOVERNOR TAHESHA L. WAY  
*SECRETARY OF STATE*

THOMAS K. WRIGHT  
*CHAIRMAN*

DONNA A. RENDEIRO  
*Executive Director/Secretary*

**New Jersey State Planning Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on November 6, 2024  
Zoom Video Conference**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wright called the November 6, 2024 video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 10:01 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**

Joe Grillo, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities (joined at 10:41 a.m.)

Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member

Susan Weber, Designee for Francis K. O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Transportation

Bruce Harris, Municipal Member (joined at 10:27 a.m.)

Stephen Santola, Public Member

Nick Angarone, Designee for Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, Department of Environmental Protection

Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs

Danielle Esser, Director of Governance, NJ Economic Development Authority

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 10:03 a.m.)

Julia Somers, 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 October 1, 2024, with non-substantive changes. Edward McKenna made the motion, and Julia Somers seconded it. With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote: Ayes: (9) Danielle Esser, Susan Weber, Nick Angarone, Edward McKenna, Shanel Robinson, Keith Henderson, Elizabeth Terenik, Melanie Willoughby, Julia Somers, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0). Abstains: (1) Stephen Santola. The October 1, 2024 minutes were approved.

## **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Wright referenced the national election, which had taken place the day prior, in which we participated in supporting our democracy. He continued that it's terrific that we as a nation made up of individual citizens have the right to participate in said elections and that everything done by the State Plan Commission is in an effort to build greater communities and celebrate and maintain the democratic freedoms we have.

Chairman Wright also referred to questions regarding the timing of the Preliminary Plan from the members of the Public and Commissioners that were posed during Director Rendeiro's report at the last Commission meeting. He stated that a consultant team worked on the Plan several months ago, delivered it to the Commission, and at this point, we're waiting for it to be released to the Commission by the Governor's office. Once released, the document would be reviewed, and hopefully adopted, and the Cross-Acceptance process would begin. Chairman Wright stated that he was very involved in Cross-Acceptance during the last State Plan adoption and believes firmly in the processes and dialogue that the public hearings create between communities, counties, state government, civic organizations, and private individuals. He then ceded the floor to Director Rendeiro for her report.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Rendeiro shared that the new Senior Planner, Steven Simone, joined the Office on Monday, November 4. Additionally, she is mentoring two students from the Edison Magnet School. They are high school seniors who are majoring in Civil Engineering and Business. As an official notification, Director Rendeiro will be retiring on February 1 and OPA has been lucky enough to get Walter Lane to agree to join the Office as her deputy for an overlap period, in anticipation of him taking her spot once she is gone. He will start in the Office on November 18 and will be joining us at the League of Municipalities.

Walter Lane commented that he looks forward to working with OPA and is excited and humbled by the opportunity. He shared that it was a tough decision as he loved what he was doing in Somerset County but was confident with his choice.

Commissioner Somers asked if this would be Director Rendeiro's last SPC meeting.

Director Rendeiro responded that she would be in attendance during the December and January meetings. She indicated that she wanted to stay involved and was determining how to make that a reality without having too much responsibility. Director Rendeiro shared that she had been advised to teach, consult, or volunteer and asked the Commission to propose any suggestions they might have.

### Since the October 1 SPC meeting:

- Staff is working with Dover, Seaside Heights, Little Egg Harbor, Ocean Township, Woodstown, Ocean City, Barnegat, Sparta, Dennis, Berkeley, Manchester, and Red Bank on mapping and other requirements toward Plan Endorsement.
- Staff is working on the Plan Implementation Agreement for Newton; we have an initial agreement with DEP on Newton mapping. We continue to work regarding Center boundaries, although we are in agreement with DEP on the Critical Environmental Site designation, we are working on some minor differences.
- We continue to work with Little Egg Harbor. They have substantial environmental concerns that we are trying to work around to give them economic growth opportunities.
- Staff continues to work on the build-out analysis, trends analysis, and the Opportunities and Constraints Report for Ocean City and Red Bank.
- Staff sent Red Bank's MSA to the State agencies for their review. As part of the Plan Endorsement process, they have requested assistance with their application for Transit Village Status.
- Staff is working on mapping for Barnegat, Seaside Heights, Ocean Township, Berkeley, Manchester, and Red Bank.
- The Office received notification from Lakewood advising that they will be looking for a map amendment at their regularly scheduled biennial review. Previous requests to put the area in question in a node were denied due to the data that says there are threatened and endangered species on the site. We have been told that they have reports that negate those concerns.
- We received notification from Dover that they are ready to proceed with Plan Endorsement. We will be setting up a meeting in the next few weeks.
- The Office received three petitions (Mountain Lakes, Bernardsville, and Harding Township) for Highlands Plan Conformance for comments. Staff are reviewing the documents.

The Smart Growth Explorer team has updated the spreadsheet that accompanies the Beta site so users can see details of weighting and source data. This data, along with the "one-pager" created by the folks at Rowan, was presented at the Conservation Blueprint meeting on October 16. We received feedback and some comments which we are incorporating.

The Governor signed Executive Order 369 creating the New Jersey Economic Council. Melanie Willoughby, as the Executive Director of the Business Action Center has been named to the Council. We were previously asked for comments and provided them; some of the comments were included.

DCA has published the Round 4 affordable housing obligations. Based on the methodology, it is estimated that the calculations could provide approximately 84,000 new affordable units. It's a little less than half of what some folks think is needed but we're here to support DCA in that effort.

We continue to work on the affordable housing siting guidance and hope to have a draft completed in the coming weeks. The next draft of the affordable housing siting guidance has been completed, is under internal review, and will be forwarded to Commissioner Henderson before general distribution

The Executive Director will be presenting at three sessions at the League Conference. The first is joint with the New Jersey Planning Officials on the State Plan status; the second is part of a listening session for the State's Interagency Council on Climate Resilience; the third is a presentation on the Smart Growth Explorer where we will provide training to municipal officials. Additionally, on November 21<sup>st</sup> the Executive Director will be presenting at the Salem County Economic Development and Leadership Summit as a representative of the Business Action Center.

We will resume activities related to the model warehouse ordinance now that our new Senior Planner, Steve Simone, is on board.

The Office participated in meetings related to

- NJTPA, DVRPC, SJTPO
- County Planners Association
- Coastal Coalition
- NJ CRC
- NJIAC
- NJIAC Extreme Heat Communications workgroup

The Executive Director was a guest lecturer at a Rowan undergraduate class on NJ Planning Practice, attended the NJ Future Smart Growth Awards, and participated in NJ Future and Princeton's Great Neighborhoods for All Event.

Approval was received to speak with the reporter from Retail Brew. He asked about mostly technical issues related to zoning and master planning and how municipalities can protect themselves regarding overbuilding. Discussed were options for warehouse placement and how location on farmland versus previously industrial sites compare. The article should be coming out within the next few weeks.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **State Plan Update**

We hope to hear something soon in terms of the Preliminary Plan and want to get it to the Commission members as soon as possible. Conversations are still occurring and we're encouraging its forward movement as quickly as we can.

The Mercer County kick-off meeting was held. We continue to provide assistance to municipalities on Survey 1,2,3. We are assisting 15 of the 21 counties. Many of the remaining counties are waiting for the Preliminary Plan to be issued. Thus far, Bergen is the only county to have waived their role as Negotiating Entity. We have secured the services of Heyer, Gruel, and Associates to assist in that effort.

We continue to monitor the comment section and receive many question regarding the timeframe of the Plan release.

Commissioner Somers asked if the Commission will have the opportunity to see the Preliminary Plan before its release.

Director Rendeiro replied that she hopes to send it to the Commission for review at least two weeks before there would be proposal to have any action.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **RESOLUTION 2024-06 Approving the Methodologies for Population and Employment Projections**

Director Rendeiro stated that the action item on the agenda was to talk about and hopefully approve the methodologies for population and employment projections. Tim Evans from NJ Future has joined to assist with

questions she may not have answers for. Our recommendations from the previous discussions have not changed. We recommend going with the MPO's population projections but not the MPO's employment projections. We feel that the employment projections are somewhat overstated, a bit aggressive, and unrealistic. The recommendation we're proposing is to look at the historical ratio of jobs per 100 residents and use that number to calculate employment projections. That is what was presented at last month's Commission meeting. The Commissioners were asked for feedback and Commissioner Harris requested a more in-depth analysis regarding the industries included in the projections. At this time, what we are presenting is a first step to move the process forward after which we will work with our State agency partners on expanding the analysis to include types of industries and where they might be located.

Tim Evans agreed that the industry-specific analysis will take some time and is out of the scope of what is being done at this time. The NJ Department of Labor and NJ Economic Development Authority would be good resources to reach out to in that regard. He also emphasized that the MPO's employment projections were unrealistically high most likely because they use sources in addition to the NJ Department of Labor that tend to overstate present-day employment. An easy way around that problem is to link employment directly to the population which will preserve a historical relationship that has been fairly stable through changes in the economy and is preferable to trying to explain a sudden leap in employment relative to population.

Director Rendeiro referred to a spreadsheet included in the materials sent to the Commission in which the numbers were consistent and emphasized that the recommendations being made are the most prudent to accept.

Mr. Evans stated that Director Rendeiro requested that he revise some of his previous writings regarding the population projections and that a detailed summary regarding the steps that brought them to the current recommendation is included.

Commissioner Henderson asked if there were any noteworthy inconsistencies between the methodologies employed by the different MPOs.

Mr. Evans replied that SJTPO didn't overtly consider redevelopment. Additionally, NJTPA used 2022 as their baseline for population projections versus the other two using 2020 but the effects were negligible by 2050.

Director Rendeiro recommended that we take a look at the projections in a year or two as there are unknowns such as what effects COVID, new COVID patterns, or post-COVID patterns may be on employment as well as work-from-home status and industry specifics.

Mr. Evans agreed that these factors are in the process of stabilizing and that in a year or two a new equilibrium may be reached.

Without any questions or comments from the Commission members, Chairman Wright referred to Director Rendeiro to read the resolution.

Director Rendeiro read the resolution.

The Resolution can be found at:

<https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/resolution-2024-06-approval-of-population-and-employment-projections-methodologies.pdf>

With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2024-06. The motion was made by Edward McKenna and seconded by Shanel Robinson. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (12) Danielle Esser, Susan Weber, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Edward McKenna, Keith

Henderson, Shanel Robinson, Elizabeth Terenik, Melanie Willoughby, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Thomas Wright. Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) Resolution 2024-06 was approved.

Chairman Wright asked if any Commission members had any further comments before the public was invited to comment.

Commissioner Somers expressed concern about how little time is left in this administration to move the process forward and emphasized that it should be moved quickly as any concerns will be addressed during Cross-Acceptance.

Commissioner Willoughby shared how thrilled the Business Action Center is to welcome Walter Lane to the BAC and the Office of State Planning. The BAC has worked closely with Mr. Lane for years and he is a welcome addition.

With no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Wright opened the floor to the public and asked that everyone use the "raise hand" function and keep their comments or questions to a duration no longer than two minutes.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mirah Becker requested clarification on the release of the Preliminary Plan from Director Rendeiro. Ms. Becker noted that Director Rendeiro mentioned that the Governor's Office had the draft State Plan, that it has been submitted to the agencies, and that the agencies are reviewing it and submitting comments. She further asked if the agencies are making written changes to chapters or parts of the Plan which will then be submitted to OPA who will synthesize the document before its release to the public.

Director Rendeiro responded that she is working with the governor's office to ensure that all comments and concerns are addressed and in line with State Planning Act requirements. Once the draft is received, it will go to the Commission members for their review and comment.

Commissioner Angarone clarified that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has not been provided with the draft recently.

Director Rendeiro confirmed Commissioner Angarone's assertion and stated that the state agencies have not received a final document as it is not yet in existence.

Joseph Maraziti thanked Director Rendeiro for her work and welcomed Mr. Lane, with whom he had worked on the 2001 Plan. The 2001 Plan was adopted six months before 911 and in his estimation was not as forward-looking as it should have been. Specifically, it didn't include any reference to our biggest issue of climate change. Equity concerns were also not on the table. Mr. Maraziti thanked the members of the Commission, the staff, and the members of the public who were commenting. He had the opportunity to look at some of the strategy sessions and is particularly concerned about proceeding much longer without a Plan that covers the two previously mentioned topics. Mr. Maraziti's main concern is climate change and sea level rise as his readings have indicated that the New Jersey/New York region is one of the most threatened areas in the world. Sea level is not uniform and rises up in certain locations as was seen with Hurricane Sandy because of the geography, the Gulf Stream, and the fact that our land is sinking due to glacial effects and the withdrawal of groundwater. As a member of New Jersey Future, Mr. Maraziti has also become very interested in equity, diversity, and inclusion and is a member of a committee focusing on those topics. He reaffirmed his assertion that the prompt distribution of the Preliminary Plan and beginning the Cross-Acceptance process is critical as we are running out of time in the current administration.

Chairman Wright, Commissioner McKenna, and Director Rendeiro thanked Mr. Maraziti for his comments.

Chairman Wright stated that he is very eager to see the Cross-Acceptance process begin as the Plan will be improved by the process. He looks forward to engaging with communities, individuals, and agencies around the State to discuss how the process can be improved.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Ed McKenna and seconded by Stephen Santola. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES**  
**DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2024 TIME: 10:01 AM**

Angela Knowles, APA NJ  
Anthony Soriano  
Ashley Kerr  
Carlos Rodrigues, APA NJ  
Charles Shadle, NJDAG  
Dillon McNamara  
H. David Dumont, NJDEP  
Jason L. Kasler, AICP, PP, NJPO  
Jelena Lasko, NJDOT  
John Hasse, Rowan University  
Joseph Maraziti  
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County  
Kyle Cruz, NJHFMA  
Megan Fackler, NJDOT  
Michael Davis, HGA  
Mirah Becker  
Ruth Foster, NJDEP  
Stuart Bressler  
Susan Bristol, The Watershed Institute  
Tim Evans, NJ Future  
Walter Lane, Somerset County