

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

FREEHOLD · NEW JERSEY

JAMES GIANNELL
Chairman



JOSEPH BARRIS, PP, AICP, CFM
Director of Planning

Minutes for the Meeting of the
Monmouth County Transportation Council
Tuesday, July 13, 2021
Monmouth County Planning Board
One East Main Street
Hall of Records Annex Building, 2nd Floor
Freehold, New Jersey 07728

I. CALL TO ORDER - 7:05 PM

II. ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL

Members Present

Garaguso, Anthony – Chair
Vernick, Jeff – Vice Chair
Barrett, Betsy

Lucarelli, Ben
Ponzio, Nicholas

Staff Present

Barris, Joe
Ettore, Joe
Neary, Bridget
Popovech, Michael

Quinn, Ruff
Schmetterer, David
Shanahan, Ashlynn

Members Excused

Nelson, Eric

Van Nortwick, Peter

III. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Approval of the Council's June 8, 2021, minutes was sought by Mr. Garaguso. Mr. Vernick motioned to accept the minutes, seconded by Ms. Barrett, and then accepted unanimously by the Council with the exception of Mr. Lucarelli and Mr. Ponzio who abstained.

IV. PRESENTATION

- Byways in Monmouth County

Bridget Neary and Michael Popovech, staff members of the Monmouth County Division of Planning, gave a presentation on the eight cultural and historic byways that travel through the 53 municipalities of the County. The eight byways are separated into two distinct classifications of being State designated or County designated, both maintained administratively by Monmouth County Planning staff. These include

- State Designated Byways
 - Upper Freehold Historic Farmland Byway
- County Designated Byways
 - Bayshore Drive
 - Country to Coast Byway
 - Historic Monmouth Crossroads
 - MoCo Cultural Byway
 - Ocean Drive
 - South Monmouth Emerald Byway
 - Two River Triway

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These scenic byways are intended to elevate the natural, cultural, historic, architectural, and institutional sites throughout Monmouth County. Their development spans from 2003 to the present, with updates performed yearly. County staff maintain the route and points administratively. The sole state-designated byway, the Upper Freehold Historic Farmland Byway (UFHFB), is supported by a committee of volunteers from Allentown and Upper Freehold that consist of local residents, community leaders, business owners, and staff from the state, county, and municipal levels.

All of the byways have corresponding virtual tours that can guide travelers along the route without the need to place and maintain physical signage along the route. These virtual tours are being updated into a new format that allows for easier navigation, better engagement, and access to visit virtually. Additional projects are being conducted among the Division of Planning staff to further enhance accessibility and knowledge of the byways to the public. Staff demonstrated a new virtual tour platform "ArcGIS StoryMaps" to present its capabilities compared to the current platform.

Council members asked questions, as follows:

Q: Does promotional material exist for marketing the byways and the virtual tour platform, and has this been advertised?

A: Yes, a video promoting the byways is available on the virtual tour landing page and more material is expected in the future. Outreach has occurred in the past and future efforts are expected.

Q: What types of sites are included?

A: The sites include municipal boundaries, historic buildings or ruins, railroad history at crossings, farms participating in the Grown in Monmouth program, watershed boundaries, parks, boat launches and bodies of water, and many unique one-off sites.

Q: Does a byway have to be a road?

A: According to state guidelines a byway must be a road that is traversable by a bus .

V. NEW BUSINESS

- AMTRAK Updates

Mr. Vernick gave an overview of new developments in the American passenger railroad industry over the past six months, as follows:

- Policy changes by the Biden administration at the federal level.
- High speed rail infrastructure expansions in Texas, Florida, and California.
- Battery/Electric and Hybrid rolling stock purchases to be made by AMTRAK.
- The creation of an AMTRAK growth plan, identifying possible new routes between emerging cities.

Development in the past has been limited by freight railroad companies which control and operate a majority of rail lines. Recent changes in regulations and appeal from the public for more transportation options has encouraged growth in the American passenger railroad industry.

- NJ TRANSIT Recovery Path Report

Mr. Vernick spoke to the recently published *NJ TRANSIT Your Ride To Recovery* report, which details the actions taken by the NJ TRANSIT agency during the COVID-19 pandemic and the path forward for transit service in the region. The document defines steps that will be taken to return service to existing operating levels and further improvements to better serve its customers.

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- Transportation Electrification Grants

Mr. Garaguso informed the council of an open call for projects that may be covered by an NJDEP Transportation Electrification grant. Members noted that the topic may also be of interest to the Monmouth County Environmental Council and suggested the possibility of jointly reviewing / discussing this and similar initiatives. County staff advised that such work would be of great value to the County and to define the work that will be accomplished.

- MCTC User Guide Revamp

Mr. Popovech gave an overview of changes to the Council *Member Guide* document and the addition of a *Member Guide Appendix*. The council commented on the design and appropriate updates to the documents.

- MCTC Calendar Update

Mr. Garaguso asked for a motion to approve the updated 2021 MCTC meeting schedule. Ms. Barrett motioned to accept the schedule, seconded by Mr. Ponzio, and then accepted unanimously by the Council.

VI. REPORTS OF STAFF

- Tourism and Events Demand Management Update - Monmouth Within Reach

Mr. Schmetterer detailed that project funding has closed and final tasks were being completed. Staff noted that while the study is ending, the work in participating with municipalities throughout Monmouth County is not over and that the action of implementing suggested strategies is only just beginning. Further action is to be led by the Division of Planning staff and will begin in the coming months. Mr. Schmetterer offered to provide a presentation to this Council once the final reports findings have been accepted by the Monmouth County Planning Board.

- CMAQ Program

Mr. Schmetterer reported that Planning staff has performed some preliminary site selection tasks for the Electric Vehicle Charger program. This group will develop a plan of action for site selection regarding safety and accessibility.

- MCTC Newsletter

Mr. Popovech gave an overview of the statistics relating to the MCTC newsletter that was sent out on July 6th. Of the 1,268 recipients, 395 individuals had opened the email and 29 were undelivered. Staff provided comparisons to previous newsletters and noted that these are positive changes. Staff informed the Council that suggestions of articles that are timely and relevant for future newsletters are always welcome.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received at this time.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Garaguso announced that the next meeting of the Monmouth County Transportation Council will be held on Tuesday, September 14th, 2021, at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held in person with a virtual option using Webex. Council members and members of the public will be provided with the Webex meeting information through the agenda notification system and email.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion to adjourn the meeting, made by Ms. Barrett and seconded by Mr. Ponzio, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.