

# MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

**JAMES GIANNELL**  
Planning Board Chairman



**Anthony Garaguso**  
Council Chairman

DRAFT Minutes for the Meeting of the  
**Monmouth County Transportation Council**  
Tuesday, January 12, 2021  
Monmouth County Planning Board  
One East Main Street  
Hall of Records Annex Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Freehold, NJ 07728

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## **I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 PM**

## **II. ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL**

### Members Present

Garaguso, Anthony  
Vernick, Jeff  
Barrett, Betsy  
Ponzio, Nicholas  
Nelson, Eric  
Lucarelli, Ben

### Staff Present

Bonanno, James – Staff Advisor  
Schmetterer, David

### Members Excused

Van Nortwick, Peter

## **III. MCTC Officer Elections**

Chairman Garaguso opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Monmouth County Transportation Council. Mr. Nelson nominated Mr. Garaguso for the position of Chairman which was seconded by Ms. Barrett. With no other nominations for the position of Chairman, Mr. Garaguso asked for a vote on the appointment. The Council voted unanimously in favor of Mr. Garaguso for the position of Chairman.

Mr. Garaguso thanked the Council and assumed the role of Chairman. He then opened the floor for nominations for a Vice Chairman. Mr. Nelson nominated Mr. Vernick to continue in his position as Vice Chairman which was seconded by Ms. Barrett. With no other nominations for the position of Vice Chairman, Chairman Garaguso asked for a vote. The Council voted unanimously in favor of Mr. Vernick for the position of Vice Chairman.

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## **IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Approval of the Council's December 8, 2020 minutes was sought by Mr. Garaguso. Mr. Vernick motioned to accept the December 8, 2020 minutes which was seconded by Ms. Barrett and accepted unanimously by the Council with the exception of Mr. Nelson and Mr. Lucarelli who abstained.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

*- NJ TRANSIT completed PTC installation and Discussion*

In past meetings the Council has expressed concern for NJ TRANSIT's December 31, 2020 deadline to complete the federally required installation of the Positive Train Control (PTC) System. Staff informed the Council that NJ TRANSIT was able to meet the deadline.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

*- Draft MCTC 2021 Meeting Schedule*

Staff presented the Council with a draft 2021 Meeting Calendar for their approval. The 2021 Meeting Calendar has a scheduled meeting on the second Tuesday of every month with the exception of August which has no meeting scheduled for the month. Due to the continuing COVID-19 Pandemic, The Monmouth County Transportation Council will continue holding meetings virtually. Staff made sure to reflect this information in the 2021 Meeting Calendar as well as provide information where interested parties may subscribe to receive email notifications for meeting agendas and announcements. If a scheduled meeting date has to be rescheduled, an announcement will be distributed to all email subscribers and announcements will be posted on the Council's webpage as well as in physical locations within the Hall of Records building. Mr. Lucarelli motioned to accept the Transportation Council's 2021 Calendar as proposed. Ms. Barrett seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously by the council.

*- 2021 Issues Identification and Discussion*

Mr. Vernick requested the Council identify priority topics for the Council to investigate or address during the 2021 calendar year. He explained that topics focusing on and related to education for the public or the Council itself as well as activities or actions they can advise the planning board to support should receive priority when planning discussions for upcoming meetings.

Due to the ongoing Tourism and Events Travel Demand Study Monmouth Within Reach and other tourism related conversations, Mr. Lucarelli suggested the council reach out to the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism to see if they have any shared interests the Council could assist with. The Council also asked for a presentation on the findings of the Monmouth Within Reach Study which is scheduled to be completed in June.

Mr. Vernick asked if the Council would be interested in inviting NJ TRANSIT to a future Council meeting for a follow up discussion on the Council's review of NJ TRANSIT's Strategic and Capital Plans. He explained the goal of this meeting would be to assist NJ TRANSIT with advancing plan objectives. Council officers and staff have worked to identify "low hanging fruit" items from the Council's list of recommendations that should be achievable and would foster a constructive discussion. These recommendations are:

- Add bus shelters, amenities, and lighting
- Implement the Train Battery Pilot Program
- Develop and test dedicated railcars for bicycle and micro-mobility users.

The Council supported inviting NJ TRANSIT to a future meeting to discuss these topics and advised Staff to make NJ TRANSIT aware of the Council's intentions to discuss the recommendations mentioned.

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Mr. Vernick recalled Mr. Gleitz of the Monmouth County's Parks System attended a Council meeting early in 2020 to present the progress of regional trail development and requested Staff contact him for an update, specifically regarding the Henry Hudson Trail.

Mr. Lucarelli made the Council aware of a plan developed by Fair Haven Township for the repaving and striping of County Route 10 River Road to include Complete Streets designs such as bicycle lanes. When approaching Monmouth County Engineering with the plan he found that they were not receptive to the inclusion of a bike lane and narrowing of travel lanes. It is his understanding that these changes are acceptable under the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards and would like to have further discussions about Complete Streets designs and how the Council can help encourage the implementation of Complete Streets designs. The Council shared Mr. Lucarelli's interest in this topic. Mr. Vernick suggested Staff invite Monmouth County Engineering staff to this discussion in order to gain their professional viewpoint on feasible Complete Street designs and the implementation of AASHTO standards.

Mr. Ponzio suggested the Council investigate the status of LIDAR technology, autonomous vehicles, and the legislation applied to driverless vehicles. He acknowledged that their implementation is still yet to come but feels that the Council would benefit from preparing for the new technology and policies involved. Mr. Vernick asked if Mr. Ponzio knew a speaker that would be able to present information to the Council on this topic. Mr. Ponzio said he was aware of someone who would be appropriate for this topic and will work with Staff to invite them to a future Council meeting.

Ms. Barrett would like to learn more about the Oceanic and Sea Bright Bridge Replacements as they will have a large impact on transportation and tourism within Monmouth County. The Council agreed and asked Staff to invite Monmouth County Engineering Staff to discuss the plans and project status.

Mr. Vernick recalled a Staff report regarding grant money that has become available for shuttle services and asked if Staff could provide an update. Staff reminded the Council of a grant that was awarded to EZ-Ride to operate a shuttle between Sandy Hook and the Middletown Train Station, and Staff's work to assist Brookdale Community College in applying for a grant to operate a shuttle between the Asbury Park Train Station and Brookdale's Wall and Neptune campuses.

Mr. Ponzio informed the Council of an article he read pertaining to COVID-19's effect on transportation, specifically commuting to work and the growing trend of working from home. He suggests the Council investigate and discuss both COVID-19's long term effect on transportation trends and the possible repercussions these trends may have on transportation funding. It is his concern a large increase in working from home could result in a cut for highway funding which could lead to future infrastructure complications.

Mr. Vernick asked Staff if Ms. Andrea Friedman of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection would be willing to come back and provide the Council with an update on electric vehicle legislation and the progress of electric vehicle charger installations statewide. Council offered to extend an invitation to Ms. Friedman for an update on the subject of electric vehicle adoption, legislation, and infrastructure development.

## *- Bylaws Review*

Mr. Garaguso directed members' attention to the Monmouth County Transportation Council By-Laws which are subject to review at least once every three years. He noted that the last review was in January of 2019 and encouraged Council members to review the By-Laws on their own time and bring any revisions or updates to the Council's February Meeting for discussion. Mr. Vernick reminded the Council of their past recommendation to the Monmouth County Planning Board advising a lower maximum number of regular members and update to member composition and representation. He asked Staff for the status of these recommendations and if they would warrant changes to the Council's By-Laws. Staff responded that the Planning Board

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forwarded these recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration with Planning Board Resolution 2020-10. If the Board of County Commissioners chooses to act on the recommendations then the By-Laws would require editing. Staff assured the Council they would keep them apprised of any new information regarding the Commissioner's actions on this topic.

## **VII. QUARTERLY TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER**

### *- January 2021 Newsletter Analytics*

Staff informed the Council that the Transportation Newsletter now has 1,090 subscribers. The winter newsletter released on January 4, 2021 was distributed to 1,090 recipients, which is an increase of 58 recipients from the fall newsletter. Staff continued that the winter newsletter saw an increase from the fall newsletter of 205 total opens at 666, as well as 75 greater unique opens at 343 which accounts for 32% of all recipients. The winter newsletter also saw an increase of 93 in total clicks and increase of 68 in unique clicks which are 14% of all recipients. As the subscriber list increases the open percentage fluctuates but has held relatively steady for the past few newsletters implying a steadily growing readership.

The most popular articles in the winter issue were related to the Motor Vehicle Commission closures and new online support. The MVC Checklist link received 36 total clicks and 26 unique clicks making it the most popular link included in a Transportation newsletter to date. Additionally, links for New Jersey's Electric Vehicle incentives programs and the Monmouth Within Reach Study were popular.

## **VIII. REPORTS OF STAFF**

### *- Tourism and Events Demand Management Update*

Staff notified the Council of the Consultant team's work with location based data from Streetlight to assist with the selection of study locations and announced the Monmouth Within Reach Study's second Advisory Committee Meeting scheduled for January, 22 2021. A press release and social media campaign were launched towards the end of December 2020 to promote the project's website and survey. Staff stated over 100 surveys have been completed and they are continuing to work to spread awareness of the website and study in an effort to continue collecting surveys. Staff requested that Council members take the survey themselves and share it with other interested parties who either live in or visit Monmouth County for its many events and attractions.

Mr. Vernick asked how Monmouth County's Tourism Department has been involved with this study. Staff made the Council aware of the Director of Monmouth County Tourism Department's participation in the study's Advisory Committee and of conversations staff has held with Tourism Department Staff regarding this project. After the project team receives input from the Advisory Committee study sites will be selected and analyses of traffic conditions at each location will begin.

### *- 2021 Membership Update*

Mr. Garaguso informed the Council of Mr. Barry Frost's resignation from the Monmouth County Transportation Council and that Ms. Nancy Grbelja was not reappointed to the Monmouth County Planning Board and Transportation Council after her appointment term expired December 31, 2020. Mr. Garaguso expressed his sorrow for the loss of two involved and insightful members and requested Staff prepare resolutions recognizing and thanking them for their years of service to the Monmouth County Transportation Council. Mr. Garaguso continued by encouraging the Council to reach out to any Monmouth residents that may be interested in becoming a member of the Transportation Council and direct them to apply for appointment through the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners.

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Staff also informed the Council that Staff advisor Mr. James Bonanno will be ending his employment with Monmouth County for a new employment opportunity and will no longer be serving as the Council's Staff Advisor as of January 31, 2021.

Staff introduced Mr. Victor Furmanec, the supervisor for the Integrated Planning Section of which Transportation is a part, and Mr. Quinn Ruff who will both be assisting in Staff Advisor duties after Mr. Bonanno leaves Monmouth County.

The Council thanked Mr. Bonanno for his efforts over the past five years and wished him well in his new position. They then welcomed Mr. Furmanec and Mr. Quinn and thanked them for attending. The Council looks forward to working with them.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

*-Ms. Nyna McKittrick*

Ms. McKittrick thanked the Council for including the Motor Vehicle Commission information in the Winter Transportation Newsletter. She felt the information was very helpful and stated she shared it with others. She suggested a future newsletter include information regarding Complete Streets policies and information. Ms. McKittrick found the topic interesting after hearing the Council discuss it as a future meeting topic. She also added to the discussion regarding the Council's NJ TRANSIT Strategic and Capital Plan Review by encouraging the Council to pursue the "Re-envision current transit real estate policies" suggestion. She said she found this to be a very interesting suggestion as she has witnessed an increase in public interest around the Belmar train station due to the café and farmers market located on the train station property. She feels more cooperation between NJ TRANSIT and local businesses may increase interest in using public transit not only for commuter use but also for more recreational uses close to stations.

Mr. Vernick thanked Ms. McKittrick for her comments and agreed with her statement. He expressed that the Council likes the idea of looking into this issue, and specified that the challenge is the word "policy", and that it is a significant financial question for them. He offered that in today's greater interest in supporting local businesses this may be a discussion the Council could take up post-COVID. Mr. Garaguso thanked Ms. McKittrick for attending and for her comments and directed Staff to continue including useful Motor Vehicle Commission information and add Complete Streets information in future newsletters.

## **X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next public Monmouth County Transportation Council meeting will be – 7:00 PM Tuesday, February 9, 2021. The meeting will be held via Webex. Council members and members of the public will be provided with the Webex meeting information through the agenda notification system and email.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Following a motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ms. Barrett and seconded by Mr. Ponzio, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.