

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

JAMES GIANNELL
Planning Board Chairman



Anthony Garaguso
Council Chairman

Minutes for the Meeting of the
Monmouth County Transportation Council
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Monmouth County Planning Board
One East Main Street
Hall of Records Annex Building, 2nd Floor
Freehold, NJ 07728

I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 PM

II. ATTENDANCE – ROLL CALL

Members Present

Frost, Barry
Vernick, Jeff
Garaguso, Anthony
Grbelja, Nancy
Ben Lucarelli

Staff Present

James Bonanno – Staff Advisor
David Schmetterer
Joe Ettore

Members Excused

Van Nortwick, Peter
Barrett, Betsy
Nelson, Eric
Nicholas Ponzio

III. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Council's approval of the January 14, 2020 minutes was sought by Mr. Garaguso. Mr. Vernick motioned to accept the January 14th minutes which was seconded by Mr. Lucarelli and accepted unanimously by the Council.

IV. PRESENTATION

- *Monmouth County Regional Trails Programs – Paul Gliezt, Monmouth County Parks Department*

Mr. Garaguso welcomed Mr. Gliezt of the Monmouth County Parks Department and introduced his presentation on The Parks Department's Regional Trail Programs.

Mr. Gliezt thanked Mr. Garaguso and began his presentation by reminding the Council of his previous visit regarding the County's Open Space Plan which was adopted by the Monmouth County Planning Board in

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

JAMES GIANNELL
Planning Board Chairman



Anthony Garaguso
Council Chairman

December and has been added to the County's Master Plan. The Open Space Plan calls for improved connectivity and access to Monmouth County and State parks as well as adjacent county facilities with the goal of becoming part of a larger system not confined within Monmouth County. Mr. Glietz explained that the Park System is aiming to complete this goal with the use of facilities such as the Henry Hudson and Union Transportation Trails.

Mr. Glietz described the Henry Hudson Trail as following twenty four miles of decommissioned rail line traveling from The Highlands through numerous Bay Shore municipalities until it reaches the Garden State Parkway in Aberdeen Township. The Trail is currently incomplete through the Matawan Aberdeen area but begins again in the southern area of Aberdeen Township and travels through Marlboro into Freehold Borough with only a small gap outside of Big Brook Park.

Mr. Glietz continued with the Union Transportation Trail stating that it is encompassed entirely within Upper Freehold Township traveling nine miles between Monmouth County's borders with Mercer and Ocean Counties. This trail is also a rail trail running along a decommissioned rail line and is being continued by Mercer and Ocean Counties.

Closing the gaps in the Henry Hudson Trail is a high priority for Mr. Glietz. He resolves to use federal money available through the Transportation Alternative Program to complete three projects. The first of which is the construction of eighteen hundred linear feet of trail from the current terminus of the trail on County Route 537 to a new park being constructed in the center of Freehold Borough. The second project is the completion of a gap 1.6 miles long from State Route 79 in Marlboro to Big Brook Park. The Third is the upgrading of at grade crossings along the Henry Hudson Trail in the Bay Shore municipalities to include solar powered pedestrian beacons, and high visibility crosswalks. Mr. Glietz illustrated the importance of these projects and how they will improve safety along the trail as well as extend the trail to additional users.

Mr. Glietz elaborated that these projects would nearly complete the trail between The Highlands and Freehold Borough with the exception of one gap around the Matawan-Aberdeen Train Station. Monmouth County Parks is partnering with NJ TRANSIT to develop a transit way from the current end of the Henry Hudson Trail in the southern portion of Aberdeen Township north to the Aberdeen-Matawan Train Station which includes the replacement or upgrading of an old wooden trestle bridge. This portion of the trail would operate differently from the rest of the Henry Hudson Trail as it would be operated by NJ TRANSIT rather than Monmouth County Parks. Currently Monmouth County Trails operate as parks and operate from Dawn until Dusk and are policed and maintained by Park Rangers. The transit way would operate past dusk, have lighting and security cameras, and be policed by NJ TRANSIT. This is due to NJ TRANSIT's desire to utilize this portion of the trail for train station access for alternate modes of transportation.

After the completion of the transit way, Mr. Glietz pointed out there would still be one small gap in the trail north of the train station to the Garden State Parkway. While no money is set aside for the completion of this portion yet, Mr. Gleitz assured the Council that Monmouth County Parks is working on a solution to this connection and possibly the crossing of the North Jersey Coast Line. However, Mr. Glietz stated that the connection will most likely be made at the train station rather than crossing the existing commuter rail.

Mr. Frost asked if there was a time frame for the completion of these projects to which Mr. Glietz responded there currently is not. He elaborated that these projects are at different stages of acquiring funding and still require some studies to determine the specifications of improvements needed which makes it difficult to speculate any dates of completion.

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

JAMES GIANNELL
Planning Board Chairman



Anthony Garaguso
Council Chairman

In addition to the planned improvements, Mr. Glietz described a few future plans he and Monmouth County Parks are planning for the trail network. Specifically a continuation of the Henry Hudson Trail alongside the existing freight rail traveling from the center of Freehold Borough to Halls Mills Road and beyond to Farmingdale. From Farmingdale, the trail could then be extended to connect with the Howell Park Golf Course, The Manasquan Reservoir and finally the Edgar Felix Bicycle Trail. Mr. Glietz would also like to build a trail alongside the rail line heading from Freehold Borough through Manalapan to the Middlesex County border. If completed, this would create an off road bicycle trail extending from Highlands Borough to Manasquan Borough through the bay shore, western, and southern Monmouth as well as provide Middlesex County residents the ability to bicycle to Monmouth County beaches and attractions.

Monmouth County Parks is also attempting to secure right of way to build a trails connecting Fort Monmouth to Wolf Hill Recreation Area then to Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park to provide beach access, and the Manasquan Reservoir to Allaire State Park as park of the Capital to Coast Trail. Mr. Glietz explained he has been in contact with most of the towns along the route and have their support but has not yet been able to contact a representative of Oceanport. Mr. Lucarelli made it known that he is an acquaintance of the Mayor of Oceanport and offered to provide Mr. Glietz with his contact information as well as invited him to speak with another group he is a part of called the Two River Council of Mayors which consists of mayors of many of the towns along the Fort Monmouth to Seven Presidents Park Route. Mr. Glietz gladly accepted Mr. Lucarelli's help and said he would be happy to meet with the Two River Council of Mayors.

Mr. Glietz proceeded to tell the Council that Monmouth County Parks will be working with the County Planning Association to help other counties develop their own national trails based on Monmouth County's experiences with developing trails. The end goal is hopefully for New Jersey Counties to develop state wide network of interconnecting trails.

Mr. Vernick asked if he had been in contact with the Rails to Trails organization which Mr. Glietz responded that he regularly works with them. Mr. Vernick also asked if the Monmouth County Department of Tourism has been involved in these trail initiatives and that they may be able to assist in the development and advertisement of trails. Mr. Glietz explained that they regularly participate in an information exchange with Monmouth County Tourism to allow for advertising available trails and recreational facilities however they do not participate directly in the development of trails.

Mr. Garaguso thanked Mr. Glietz for a very informative presentation and directed staff to incorporate Monmouth County trail information in the Council's upcoming Spring Newsletter. He remarked that it is the perfect opportunity to advertise Monmouth County's parks and trails as warmer spring weather approaches.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- NJ TRANSIT Positive Train Control Installation Costs

Mr. Vernick updated the Council on the current status of NJ TRANSIT's installation of positive train control (PTC). He informed them that costs have far exceeded expectations and due to current setbacks NJ TRANSIT is speculated to be unable to meet the December 31, 2020 deadline of having PTC installed. Mr. Vernick warned the Council that if NJ TRANSIT fails to meet the deadline they may be forced to stop running trains leaving many without means of transportation and forcing many commuters to resort to driving personal vehicles which will further congest our

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

JAMES GIANNELL
Planning Board Chairman



Anthony Garaguso
Council Chairman

roadways. Mr. Vernick suggested the Council continue to monitor the situation and research the possible consequences to NJ TRANSIT and effect on the public if installation is not completed by the target date.

VII. REPORTS OF STAFF

- Tourism and Events Demand Management Update

Staff informed the Council that the Request for Proposal document is close to completion and will be being released as soon as possible.

- Real ID

Staff apprised the Council to new information released by the Motor Vehicle Commission regarding Real ID's. While the online registration and interview process is still continuing, the Motor Vehicle Commission is also making Real ID's available by walk-in to those who meet specific conditions. Walk-ins will be permitted between the fifth and twentieth of each month at participating Motor Vehicle Commission locations to drivers whose licenses expire within three months. Staff elaborated that this change is in response to the interview appointments have been filling rapidly by overwhelming demand for Real ID's. The Council was happy to hear their concerns with the interview process were being addressed.

- NJ JARC

Staff explained that NJ TRANSIT's 836 Bus Route service is supplemented by a grant called the Job Access Reverse Commute Grant (JARC). While weekday service is fully funded by NJ TRANSIT, Monmouth County and NJ TRANSIT evenly split the costs of paying a private contractor to operate busses along this route on the weekday evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays. Staff continued that they were recently informed by NJ TRANSIT that the costs of this important service will be increasing due to lower fare box recovery caused by lower ridership and increasing costs of the private contractor. NJ TRANSIT informed staff that Monmouth County will have the option of increasing their share of funds or reducing service to lower costs. As this is an important service to Monmouth County, staff assured the Council that they have requested detailed ridership data from NJ TRANSIT in the hopes of finding another solution rather than cutting service or needlessly increasing funding.

- Transportation Section Update

Due to time constraints, this item was tabled for a future meeting.

- Active Shooter Guidance for Transit Customers Update

The Council asked Staff if there had been any response from NJ TRANSIT to their letter regarding active shooter guidance for transit customers. Staff responded that no response has been received from NJ TRANSIT on this matter. Mr. Garaguso directed staff to reach out to NJ TRANSIT at the end of February to request an update on NJ TRANSIT's response and report back to the Council at their March 10, 2020 meeting.

- Planning Board Resolution

Staff informed the Council that the Monmouth County Planning Board directed staff to draft a resolution on their behalf to the Board of Chosen Freeholders advising them to revise the Transportation Council's founding resolution. The intention of this revision is to lower the number of Transportation Council members allowed to a number that more realistically represents the Council's current membership. Staff explained the founding resolution calls for the Council to have fifteen full time members including: One member of the Planning Board, one member representing the interests of the elderly and disabled, eight commuter representatives from the categories of automobile, rail, bus, ferry, and bike/ped, one member representing each of the five planning regions within Monmouth County and two alternate members. Despite the resolution calling for seventeen total members,

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

JAMES GIANNELL
Planning Board Chairman



Anthony Garaguso
Council Chairman

the Transportation Council has been functioning with nine members for a number of years and has not had a full membership in over a decade. To better align the Transportation Council with other committees, councils, and boards operating under the Planning Board, staff recommended to the Planning Board the Council's membership be changed to ten full time members, including: One member of the Planning Board, nine members representing the needs of all travelers such as the transportation disadvantaged, transit riders, cars, carpools, and active and non-motorized travelers and two alternate members.

Staff presented the Council with draft copies of the resolution to keep them informed and notified them that this resolution is scheduled to go before the Monmouth County Planning Board at their February 18, 2020 Meeting.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next public Monmouth County Transportation Council meeting to be – 7:00PM Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the Monmouth County Division of Planning Conference Room at 1 East Main Street, 2nd Floor, Freehold, NJ 07728

X. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Lucarelli and seconded by Mr. Frost, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.