

**Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County
Wednesday, May 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

In- person meeting at Somerset County Administration Building
Engineering Conference Room-2nd Floor

Voting Members in Attendance

Name/Organization

Troy Fischer, Chair, Bridgewater Commons
Vicky Allen, Robert Woods Johnson
Tony Tufaro, Johnson & Johnson
Eric Colvin, Raritan
Nick Zamora, Raritan Borough
Donald Tozzi, Raritan Borough Council
Joseph Brosnan, Raritan Borough Engineer
Rich Reitman, Somerville Council
Deidre Rosinski, Somerville
Felipe Pedroso, Bridgewater
Michael Pappas, Bridgewater
Bernie Navatto, Planning Board Chair, Somerset County
Daniel Hayes, SC Park Commission (late arrival)
Chris Edwards, Somerset County Business Partnership
Walter Lane, SC Office of Engineering and Planning

Non-voting County Support Staff

Erika Phillips, Somerset County Office of Engineering and Planning, Planning Division

Non-Voting Guests

none

The meeting commenced at 5:20 PM.

Business Items

Call to Order

RCP Chair Troy Fischer called the meeting to order.

Attendance Roll Call

Supervising Planner Erika Phillips did the roll call and noted for the record that there were fourteen (14) voting members present.

Chair's Remarks

Chair Troy Fischer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Action Items

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Chair Troy Fischer asked if there were any corrections to the meeting minutes; with there being none he asked for a motion to approve the March 20, 2024, meeting minutes, Planning Board Chair Bernie Navatto made the motion to move, and Raritan Council Person Don Tozzi seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 13

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Treasurer's Report March 2024 and April 2024

Supervising Planner Erika Phillips presented the March 2024 and April 2024 Treasurer's Reports. She gave an overview and explanation of expenditures and deposits. She asked if there were any questions or comments concerning the Treasurer's Report. There being no questions, comments, or corrections Chair Fischer asked for a motion to approve the March and April 2024 Treasurer's Reports. Planning Board Chair Bernie Navatto made the motion to move and Somerville Planning Board Member Deidre Rosinski seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 13

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion was approved.

Scoring and Approval of Auditor Services for 2024-2025

Director Lane began a discussion with the group about the scoring and approval for auditing services for 2024-2025. He explained that the group is voting on year one of a two-year contract with services costing \$4,900.00. The contract encompasses a two-year time frame and that the group votes on it each year. He reiterated that the pricing stays the same for each year of the contract. Ms. Phillips noted that the Audit Sub-committee met and that those that participated voted to go with Supplee, Clooney and Company with an approval score of 93.4%. This was the only proposal submitted to the Regional Center Partnership. She asked if there were any questions or concerns. There being none, Chairman Troy Fischer asked that the group move to approve the contract with the auditor. Bernie Navatto made the motion and Deidre Rosinski seconded it.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 14

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Information Items:

Strategic Planning Retreat

Erika Phillips reported that four members (D. Tozzi, R.St.Pierre, N.Carra, and R.Reitman) of the group plus staff met to discuss the logistics of the strategic planning retreat for the Partnership. Members chose the Chimney Rock Inn in Bridgewater as the meeting location for the event and decided on May 30th as the event date. Save the date emails were sent out early to the Regional Center membership and it was noted that the event would be held in the evening from 6:30-8:30pm. They made decisions on the menu and the discussion topics. They again reiterated the need to regroup and to decide how they could engage again post Covid. The goals were to re-energize the group, get to know those new to the group and to gain traction with the membership moving forward. Director Lane noted that some of the other goals of the retreat were to develop a work program for the next couple of years and to set the stage for the organization's direction moving forward. There were also some conversations about emphasis on the Raritan River as a marketing piece and or investigating opportunities for a river town designation for neighboring communities. He informed the group that they would utilize Courtenay Mercer of MPA as facilitator to guide the group's discussion and capture important themes.

Director Lane requested approval from the board to utilize up to \$1000 for the food and soft drinks for the retreat at the Chimney Rock Inn. It's anticipated that it will be well under that amount. A motion was made by D. Tozzi and seconded by V.Allen.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 14

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan Update

Director Lane led an update on the development of a draft state development/redevelopment plan, He noted that the State Planning Commission (SPC) was set to release the draft plan in April but that did not happen. He explained that there have been some delays due to various state agencies not being aligned or in agreement with various parts of the draft plan and with one another. These agencies have voiced their concerns. The hope is that the concerns will be ironed out by the May 22nd SPC meeting. He noted that the County's plans and the municipalities plans are aligned with the State Plan so that things should run smoothly. The County Planners have also been working with Donna Rendeiro to offer feedback with the

initiatives related to the update. Somerset County will be adopting a resolution early next month designating the County Planning Board as the negotiating entity for towns in this process. We also want to use this opportunity to get Regional Center Plan Endorsement done during this process.

Municipal Updates

RWJ: Just completed Nurses week and National Hospital Week.

Somerville: Bike racing in Somerville. World class bike riding this weekend at the Tour de Somerville.

Bridgewater: Solaris life science company is expanding. Their campus will be a hub in Bridgewater, and they are anticipating 350 jobs on this site. They are updating their master plan revision and open space revision. The public will be involved in unique workshops. Chick Fila is locating in Bridgewater at Wegmans

Bridgewater Commons Mall: Brazilian steak house Fago de Chao will be opening. The old Banana Republic space will now be home to the Summit Health group. It will be an opportunity for patients to get pre-operative and post operative follow-up work completed. Shaquille O'Neal is opening a Chicken Shack in the village in mid-June. The expectation is that if this opening trends like other ones that the lines will be wrapped around the building. Deals are taking longer to get done and completed due to capital and construction costs.

Raritan: Don Tozzi noted that they have a lot of projects going on and that they are working with the Parks Commission.

SC Parks Commission: Dan Hayes outlined that they are working with Raritan to partner in various initiatives. June 7th having Historic night at the ballpark. Some events at the Van Horn house too this month. Noted that the parks are in good shape. Gardens are blooming and rose day is June 8th. Golf courses are plush due to all the rain and golf rounds are good with 44K rounds to date. Park attendance is up 22%.

SC Business Partnership- Chris Edwards reported that the business hub opened two weeks ago. Offers meeting space and seats up to 50 people. It's open to the public and business community for free. Has great state of the art AV capabilities. Security cameras throughout. Not relegated to regular business hours. Ability to be open after regular business hours. Located at 50 Division St. The Business Partnership has been involved with 19 ribbon cuttings this year. Great deal of momentum in the business community. Finally getting workforce and supply chain issues under control.

Public Comment Period

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05