



## **NEXUS Association of REALTORS®** **Municipal Monitor: September 2021**

### ***BURLINGTON COUNTY:***

#### **Burlington County Launches New Business Portal**

The Burlington County Commissioners have launched a new Burlington County Business Portal to serve as a single-location resource for large and small businesses. The new portal provides information and links on subjects such as Starting a New Business, Financing, Permits, Licensing and Inspections and Business promotions. It also has links to the Burlington County Clerk's Office for records and deeds and the Burlington County Economic Development and Regional Planning Department, which administers the County's loan programs, and the Workforce Development Institute at Rowan College at Burlington County. Links to COVID-19 resources for businesses are also on the site.

#### **New Delaware River Heritage Trail 130 Bypass Now Complete**

The Delaware River Heritage Trail 130 Bypass is now complete, enabling riders and walkers to explore Crystal Lake Park and the river towns of Roebing and Fieldsboro without traveling on Route 130, which is one of the most dangerous roads in the state for pedestrians and cyclists.

The new trail includes a former railroad tunnel for crossing under Route 130 and the first-ever signalized, grade-level railroad crossing of the RiverLine light rail that allows trail users to safely cross the tracks. The bypass stretches from Fieldsboro near Route 130 and Burlington-Bordentown Road to and through Crystal Lake Park in Mansfield and on to Roebing. From there the trail crosses the light rail line and follows along Crofts Creek and then along the Delaware River in the Roebing section of Florence and adjacent to where a steel mill once stood. The county trail ends at the Roebing Museum, which is dedicated to preserving the history of John Roebing and his former mill that produced steel for the Brooklyn and Golden Gate bridges.

This 5.5-mile trail connects to the north with the county's first 2.75-mile segment of the heritage trail that crosses through Fieldsboro, Bordentown Township and Bordentown City. The newly completed trail is one of several new trail projects underway in the county, which already has more than 1,000 acres of developed parkland and 50-plus miles of interconnecting hiking, biking and running trails.

The county designed and constructed the \$8.1 million bypass almost entirely with grants from the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Alternatives Program administered through the New Jersey Department of Transportation. Burlington County's trail system is part of the greater Circuit Trails network interconnecting four New Jersey counties and five Pennsylvania counties in the Greater Philadelphia region. The Circuit Trail goal is to reach 500 trail miles by 2025. For more information about the Delaware River Heritage Trail, visit: <https://delawariverheritagetrail.org/>

### **Moorestown Council Approves Mall Redevelopment Plan**

Last month, Moorestown Council unanimously approved a redevelopment plan for the Route 38 shopping center. The multi-stage project is intended to bring a 112,000-square-foot hotel and up to 1,065 homes to the mall's parking lot.

The planned apartments are to include 213 affordable units, helping the township to meet a court-ordered mandate for less-costly housing. A concept plan includes a trio of four-story apartment buildings, with the first to rise in the corner of a parking lot between Nixon Drive and Boscov's. The initial building would hold 375 units, including 75 affordable homes, and a parking structure.

A second phase calls for a 345-unit apartment building in an area that includes a former Lord + Taylor store, part of a former Macy's store and a Sears Auto Center. The final phase would put a similar building in a parking lot between Route 38 and the former Sears store that is now being converted into out-patient medical offices for new tenant Cooper University Health Care.

### **Moorestown Resident & Businesses Asked to Provide Feedback**

Better Together Moorestown – a taskforce organized by Town Council earlier in the year to focus on quality of life in Moorestown – is asking residents and local business leaders to complete a community survey about their experiences living and/or working in Moorestown.

Better Together Moorestown's mission is to make Moorestown a community where all people feel safe, respected, welcomed and included. To assess the community's strengths and areas for improvement, the task force is asking anyone who lives or works in Moorestown to complete community survey.

The survey is now live and will run through October 31 and can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HD5MXV7>. All responses are anonymous. Those needing assistance completing the survey can contact the Better Together Survey hotline at (856)942-3283 or via email at [bettertogethermoorestown@gmail.com](mailto:bettertogethermoorestown@gmail.com).

## CAMDEN COUNTY:

### **Pine Valley and Pine Hill Slated to Merge**

On September 21, Pine Valley Commissioner voted on a consolidation ordinance, beginning the first step in the formal process of consolidating with Pine Hill.

Pine Valley teed up the potential change in last November's general election when a ballot question proposed a commission to consider "shared services or consolidation opportunities. Residents of the tiny golf-club community approved the measure 10-0.

According to the Census, Pine Valley has 11 residents. Most of the borough is made up of the renowned Pine Valley Golf Club. Pine Hill has almost 10,500 residents and covers almost four acres.

Under the consolidation plan, all of Pine Valley would be zoned as a "planned recreation and conservation district" once it's part of Pine Hill.

The State Department of Community Affairs is expected to play a key role in the transition under the Sparsely Populated Municipal Consolidation Law, which allows consolidation of a municipality with fewer than 100 residents to be accomplished through local ordinances in the affected towns. Pine Hill's council is expected to vote on a consolidation measure in October.

The last municipal consolidation in New Jersey occurred in 2013 when Princeton Township and Princeton Borough merged to become the municipality of Princeton.

Most of the tiny borough is given over to the rolling hills and forested landscape of Pine Valley Golf Club, which is known internationally for its beauty, privacy and challenging course.

Under the consolidation plan, all of Pine Valley would be zoned as a "planned recreation and conservation district" once it's part of Pine Hill and all municipal jobs in Pine Valley, as well as the borough's elected and appointed positions, will be abolished. The ordinance also calls for Pine Valley, with a 2021 municipal budget of \$595,000, to end any currently existing shared service agreement" with other towns.

### **Reforms to Urban Enterprise Zone Aim to Spur Economic Development**

Camden City Officials are hopeful that recently enacted reforms to the state's Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) program will help existing businesses grow and make it easier for new ones to open. Last month, Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver signed the urban enterprise reform package, earmarking \$42.5 million for the program this fiscal year and up to \$82.5 million annually going forward.

The UEZ program was created in 1983, allowing retail stores and other businesses to charge half of the state's 6.625% sales tax, or roughly 3.3%, to attract customers. Camden was one of the state's five original UEZ cities along with Bridgeton, Newark, Plainfield and Trenton. There are now 32 zones in 37 municipalities encompassing over 7,200 businesses.

The new reform measure also makes business-to-business purchases of \$100,000 or less, tax-exempt. Previously, there was no cap, making it a better deal for larger businesses. That full tax exemption will still apply to new construction and major rehabilitation projects. Other UEZ reform measures include:

- Subsidized unemployment insurance for employees who earn less than \$4,500 per quarter
- Energy sales tax exemption for manufacturing firms with more than 250 employees, 50% of whom work in manufacturing.
- Tax Credit Options (owners may choose one of the following)
- Up to \$1,500 for hiring new permanent full-time employees.
- Up to 8% corporate business tax credit on qualified investments.

To take advantage of the UEZ program incentives, business owners in qualified areas must be in good tax standing and must register with the state through the [Premier Business Portal](#). Detailed instructions on how to do that are available online.

### **New Camden High School Opens its Doors to Students**

On September 7, the new \$130 million Camden High School campus, the first entirely new public school built in the city in over 100 years, opened its doors to students from four other high schools. The 270,000-square-foot school accommodates 1,200 students in grades 9 through 12 in four small learning communities - Brimm Medical Arts Academy, Creative Arts Academy, Big Picture Learning Academy and Camden High Academy. Each school has its own separate entrance, designated color, and learning resource center. Built at the intersection of Park and Baird Boulevards, the new school sits on the same site in the city's Parkside neighborhood as the old Camden High, which was razed in 2017.

### **Cherry Hill Opens New Dog Park**

Cherry Hill Dog Park at Croft Farm is now open and ready to welcome the Township's furry friends. The dog park, which is nestled in the wooded area next to Croft Farm's gravel parking lot, features both fenced-in wooded trails and open spaces for dogs to explore across a full acre.

The amenities at the park include separate fenced-in areas for large dogs and small dogs, along with the covered pavilion, picnic tables, water fountains, and a waste station. The Park, which is open from dawn to dusk, is also located across from Camden County's Challenge Grove Park and Jake's Place, an all-inclusive playground.

## OCEAN COUNTY:

### **Seaside Heights Demolishes Unsightly Steel Structure to Make Way for Redevelopment**

The unsightly steel structure that was erected as the skeleton of an elaborate pool and entertainment complex that was never completed on a 0.6-acre lot on The Boulevard between Hamilton and Webster avenues in Seaside Heights has been demolished. The move is a huge step forward in redeveloping the underutilized property.

In 2018, the Borough Council declared it to be “an area in need of redevelopment,” leading to the borough’s condemnation of the property and its forced acquisition from the previous property owner. A Superior Court Judge recently signed off on the condemnation while legal battles continue between the Borough and former property owner regarding compensation for the site.

A group of investors known as SHH Boulevard LLC has been designated as the site’s developer, with plans for a \$40 million mixed-used project including 80 condominium units plus parking, retail and restaurant space, consistent with a redevelopment plan adopted by the borough in August 2020. The mixed-use project would be eight stories tall, towering above everything but the water tower in Seaside Heights. The goal is for the project to be complete by the end of 2022.

### **New Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic to be Built in Toms River**

Toms River officials recently announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs selected the municipality as the location of a new outpatient clinic for veterans that will be built between the Seacourt Pavilion shopping center and the Esplanade Office Park off Hooper Avenue and near Caudina Avenue. The new 68,000-square-foot facility will have 480 parking spaces on the site and will be located near the new 121,000-square-foot, three-story building that will house Ocean County’s Board of Social Services, as well as the county’s Veterans Service Bureau. County officials recently broke ground for the new social services building.

### **Toms River Council Approves First Phase of Redevelopment Plan**

In late August, Toms River Council approved the first phase of its downtown redevelopment plan that includes two 10-story apartment towers on Water Street, a riverfront restaurant, a small performance venue and a two-level boardwalk along the water. The two apartment towers, located on the former site of Red Carpet Inn, will hold 285 apartments that would be a mix of studio and one-, two-, and three-bedroom market rate units, as well as 43 affordable 2- and 3-bedroom units set aside for low- and moderate-income earners.

Under the agreement with township’s designated redeveloper for the land—Capodagli Property Company—the developer will pay a “service charge” or payment in lieu of taxes to the Township, which will equal 7% of the gross revenue from the project. PILOTs are often controversial because none of the money paid by the developers are distributed to the school system, even though the project can have a significant impact on the schools.

### **Stafford Township Planning Board Approves Another 121 Houses**

In August, Stafford Township Planning Board approved another 121-houses on a 37-acre tract as part of the third phase of the redevelopment at Stafford Park located just off Exit 63 of the Garden State Parkway. Houses in the Stafford Park redevelopment area began going up following approval of the first phase of the plan in 2017. The first two residential phases of Stafford Park are now nearly completed comprised of 224 single-family homes.

Stafford issued more building permits for 1- or 2-family houses than any other municipality in New Jersey in 2020, with a total of 356, according to New Jersey Department of Community Affairs data.

### **Fall 2021 Legislative Committee ZOOM Meetings**

Please join us if you can! E-mail [vjones@nexusaor.com](mailto:vjones@nexusaor.com) to be added to the meeting distribution list. The committee is looking for more active REALTOR® participation!

Wednesday, October 20, 2021 – Guest Speaker Mayor Myhre Stafford Township

Wednesday December 15, 2021 – Guest Speaker Mayor Kanitra of Point Pleasant Borough