



NEXUS Association of REALTORS® Municipal Monitor: March 2023

NEXUS Legislative Committee Stays Connected with Local Officials

Barrington Borough Mayor Patti Harris

On January 12, 2023, the NEXUS Legislative Committee met with Barrington Borough Mayor Patti Harris to discuss issues related to homeownership and development in the municipality. Mayor Harris was voted into office in 2020 as the first woman mayor of the Borough.

Mayor Harris shared that her husband is a real estate agent, so she is very familiar with the challenges of transactions and works to ensure rules and processes in the Borough related to private property are balanced and reasonable. Four years ago, the borough hired several new officials to oversee the CO process and simplify the rules. The town now issues temporary COs to avoid delaying closings and staff are trained to be responsive to residents' needs. In 2019, the Borough increased CO fees to bring them in-line with neighboring municipalities, but have no plans to make any further modifications at this time. The mayor shared fire and inspection fees were raised nominally since she took office to reflect increased costs.

On the redevelopment front, the Mayor said the community was pleased to welcome Tonewood Brewing, which opened last year at the old Mr. Roberts Lumber location. On the horizon is "The Avenue", a mixed-use project located on Clements Bridge Road that will include three commercial properties, three apartment rental units, as well as ice-cream and coffee shops. The borough has 3 liquor licenses – 1 pocketed.

Barrington Borough and Haddon Heights Fire Department have a shared service agreement that went into effect 1/1/23. The short term benefits have been more volunteers have stepped up and faster responses to any accidents.

Barrington is two square miles, with an approximate population of 7,000 residents. Mayor Harris acknowledged that it is an expensive town to live in because of schools, which include Avon Elementary and Woodland Middle School. Students that reside in Barrington attend Haddon Heights High School. With 2,000 residential homes and 1,000 apartment rentals, the borough is fully developed and has met affordable housing requirements. The borough has 3 playgrounds, one of which is all inclusive for individuals with disabilities. Wish Upon a Star Park is located at 490 Reading Ave. It is a very popular park and is fully handicap accessible. This park is the second all -inclusive park in Camden County. All community events in town are free to the residents. For more information about Barrington, visit <https://barringtonboro.com/>

Moorestown Township Mayor Nicole Gillespie

On February 9, Moorestown Mayor Nicole Gillespie, who is serving her 4th year as mayor and 5th year on council, met with members of the NEXUS Legislative Committee to share the "great stuff happening in Moorestown".

Mayor Gillespie said the township's vision for Moorestown Mall is now focused on experience, rather than retail, including a live/work component like a town center. Cooper University

Medical Center is going in the old Sears building and should start seeing patients in 2023. Behind Boscov's, development of The Pearl—a 375-unit apartment complex—has started. The temporary retail store called Turn 7 in the old Lord & Taylor building will soon be replaced with an entertainment/food establishment similar to Dave & Busters. Mayor Gillespie said she expects a referendum to go before voters in the Fall to allow games of chance on site. If approved, amusement games with non-monetary prizes would be permissible.

Mayor Gillespie shared that most commercial spaces are occupied on Main Street. Percheron Park, located at the old gas station location on Main and High streets, is the first park in the business district. She said the Lenola Commercial District Streetscape project should be completed early June. This project includes a partial median and bike lane. Council is hoping to declare this commercial district an area of rehabilitation. This would allow township to offer incentives to businesses interested in locating in Lenola commercial area. The vision is for this area to be a second downtown for Moorestown.

One particularly expensive project underway in the Township is the replacement of the 100 year old concrete water main throughout town. This project will be on-going and anticipated completion at end of 2024. Mayor Gillespie also shared that the Township is looking to establish a historic preservation commission. The first step is applying for a planning grant to have someone help write the ordinance, and the focus will be on the commercial district of Main Street. The township will move carefully and thoughtfully, as the goal is to balance historic preservation with the rights of home ownership.

Moorestown Township recently adopted CO Ordinance 5-2022, requiring a survey for transfer of properties adjacent to land owned by the municipality, out of concern for encroachment issues. The ordinance went into effect on June 1, 2022. NEXUS reached out to the mayor expressing concern that the survey is an expense on property owners that is not required in area municipalities, putting Moorestown out of step with rules in other towns. While the township's concern about encroachment is understandable, this burden should not be placed on select number of property owners. According to the Township, the new ordinance affects approximately 750 properties.

Mayor Gillespie acknowledged that the cost of the surveys can be prohibitive, and that council will unlikely agree to support spending public money to do the surveys. She explained that while the ordinance states that the seller is responsible for the survey cost, it can be a negotiating point between seller and buyer. The ordinance was put in place to protect the buyer but asked for continued feedback from REALTORS® if the rules become problematic.

Looking ahead, the Mayor said Township may consider ordinances around noise and lead-based paint testing. She invited the NEXUS Legislative Committee to reach out again early next year to remain connected and updated on progress in 2023.

STATEWIDE NEWS

NJ Department of Community Affairs Announces New Programs to Assist Homeowners, Renter and Communities Still Struggling from Impacts of Hurricane Ida

More than 16 months after the Hurricane Ida devastation, New Jersey homeowners, renters and communities still struggling from the devastating impacts of the storm may be able to apply to a handful of new programs in March.

Next month, the State expects to launch a handful of relief programs, including:

- **The Homeowner Assistance and Recovery Program** (\$68.9 million) will provide grants up to \$300,000 to eligible homeowners to help restore homes damaged by Ida, such as elevating their homes, rebuilding or improving drainage systems or installing more efficient utility equipment.
- **The Small Rental Repair Program** (\$20 million) offers forgivable loans without interest to owners of rental properties with seven units or fewer requiring fixes after Ida. Properties will be required to charge “affordable” rents for an unspecified period of time.
- **The Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program** (\$15 million) will provide help with rent for low-income families affected by Ida, prioritizing families earning less than 30% of the county median income.
- **Housing Counseling and Legal Services** (\$3 million) will support nonprofits and legal organizations that provide foreclosure prevention services, relocation help, debt management, help with applying to other Ida programs and legal advice.

To receive updates about the programs, go to: <https://www.state.nj.us/dca/ddrm/programs/ida/index.shtml>

BURLINGTON COUNTY

Four Burlington County Libraries to Receive \$1M in Improvements

The Burlington County Library Commission voted to accept \$1M in state funds for capital improvements at the Burlington County Library in Westampton—which is now more than 50 years old—and at the branch libraries in Cinnaminson, Evesham and Pemberton Township. The county library system will use the money to redesign interior spaces in each of the four buildings to improve customer experiences.

New 4-Mile Regional Trail on the Horizon in Willingboro

Burlington County Commissioners recently voted to approve an application for a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Local Recreation Improvement Grant Program that would fund the engineering and design for a four-mile trail in Willingboro, connecting the county's Willingboro Lakes Park and the township's Mill Creek Park. The proposed path would be wheelchair accessible and safe for pedestrians and bicycles to travel. This project is part of the County's plans to connect the proposed Willingboro trail to neighboring Westampton.

Mount Laurel to Get New Municipal Building

Mount Laurel Township officials recently announced the Township is under contract to purchase 750 Centerton Road to house all municipal services, excluding the police department. The building is located within the Laurel Creek Corporate Center. The police department will take over the current municipal building when renovations on the Centerton site are complete.

Services offered at the new municipal building will include the Township Clerk/Registrar, Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, Community Development, Construction, Court, Public Works, Recreation and Township Council offices. New spaces and services will also be added to the building, including a Resident Welcome Center in which residents can use public computers and where new residents can obtain a welcome packet with all information necessary for their move to Mount Laurel.

Mount Laurel Planning Board Approves Large Warehouse Near Route 38

In mid-February, the Mount Laurel Planning Board approved a large warehouse with 38 loading docks on a 31.8-acre vacant lot off Briggs Road near the Route 38 intersection. The 190,470-square-foot warehouse, which does not yet have a tenant, is a permitted use in the Township's industrial zone.

The approval included a variance that reduced the required number of parking spaces. The development required more than 600 spaces under the zoning law, but the Planning Board ruled that the proposed 142 spaces with 47 more "banked" in a grassy area as adequate. If the 635 spaces were required, the impervious cover from a paved parking lot would need to increase substantially. Plans also call for 189 trailer parking spaces on the property for short-term parking.

Burlington Township Zoning Board Approves Doubling the Size of Pet Supply Distributor on Route 130

Burlington Township's Zoning Board recently approved site plan for A & E Cage Company, a family owned pet supplies distributor, to roughly double the size of its facility located at 4451 South Route 130. The company needed Zoning Board review and approval because the site falls within residential and business zones with differing construction standards. The expansion would add 51,681 square feet of building area. On completion the facility will have 103,308 square feet.

Misfits Market Inc. to Close Distribution Center in Delanco

Misfits Market, a grocery-delivery service, has announced plans to close a distribution center in Delanco, ending 446 jobs. The Coopertown Road facility will close on April 8.

CAMDEN COUNTY

Campbell Soup Announces Plans to Expand Corporate Campus in Camden City

Campbell Soup Company recently announced plans to bring approximately 330 jobs to its Camden City headquarters from operations in North Carolina and Connecticut. The company plans to invest approximately \$50 million over the next three years to enhance its Camden facilities to accommodate the more than 1,600 employees that will now be located on the renovated campus.

The expansion will include a new campus center, a Snacks Research and Development center, and a pilot plant. It will include on-site daycare, a café, complimentary health and fitness center

and other services. Campbell Soup has operated from Camden for over 150 years. Construction is scheduled to start in March.

Port of Camden Revitalization

\$750,000 in federal grants has been secured to make improvements to the Port of Camden. South Jersey Port Corporation is evaluating all of the port's needs at this time, as the infrastructure is in need of significant repair. The construction will create new temporary jobs initially, and more permanent jobs at the port when operations expand.

\$1.86M Referendum approved for Winslow Fire

Winslow taxpayers have approved a \$1.86 Million referendum to fund a second fully staffed fire apparatus and nine firefighters to operate from the Waterford Works Fire Station on Southard Avenue. The referendum also preserve the volunteer firefighter program and support additional volunteer coverage and training.

Winslow Township fire officials had requested the referendum due to a low number of volunteer firefighters, and the agency is struggling to maintain service levels. The Winslow Township Fire District (Department) #1 serves the township, as well as Chesilhurst Borough. Staff consist of career and volunteer firefighters, serving approximately 20,000 residents in a 60-square-mile area.

Vineland developer plans 'flex space' building at Woodcrest and Burnt Mill roads in Cherry Hill.

A Vineland developer has applied to the Cherry Hill Planning Board to build a 25,000-square-foot "flex space" building with parking and box truck loading at the northwest corner of Woodcrest and Burnt Mill roads.

Applicant VCC 100 Woodcrest Road LLC is scheduled to testify to the board at its March 6 meeting and present the preliminary and final major site plans for approval. The Zoom meeting caucus is at 7 p.m. and the regular meeting is at 7:30. A flex building is a permitted use in the Township's Industrial Restricted Zoning District.

Historic Cherry Hill Diner to be Replaced by a Car Wash

The Cherry Hill Planning Board recently approved a proposal to demolish the historic Cherry Hill Diner on Cooper Landing Road to make way for a drive-through car wash with 24 self-service vacuum stations.

Ocean County

NJDEP to Hold Public Meeting on Ciba-Geigy Settlement Hearing in Toms River

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has scheduled a public meeting on its proposed natural resources damage settlement with BASF for March 13. The public engagement session is scheduled for 6pm and will be held at the Toms River High School auditorium located on Old Freehold Road. Additional information will be provided about proposed settlement and NJDEP officials will be available to take questions from the public. NJDEP announced the time for written public comment to be submitted on the proposal has been extended to April 5.

Ocean County Moves to Preserve 32-Acres in Brick

The Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund Advisory Committee recently approved the purchase of 32 acres of undeveloped land known as Breton Woods in Brick to be preserved as open space for \$8.55 million. The land, located between Drum Point and Mantoloking roads, is owned by The Church of the Visitation in Brick and the Diocese of Trenton. Before the deal can be finalized, a public hearing on the purchase will be held on March 1 at 4pm at the Ocean County Administration Building in Toms River.

Plans to build 59 single-family homes on the land were pending before the Township's planning board but had not yet been approved. The project was facing growing opposition from residents who wanted the land to remain undeveloped. Brick Township is expected to pay \$1.71 million and Ocean County will contribute \$6.84 million to preserve the land. Both the town and the county are expected to also seek grant funding from the state's Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres program for the remainder of the purchase.

Ocean County Funding \$7.5 Million Beach Replenishment

The entire local cost of a planned beach replenishment for the northern barrier island will be paid by Ocean County Government.

Last year the county agreed to pay half of the \$7,550,000 local cost for the project. Each town would have to contribute towards the beach replenishment project. Berkeley, Seaside Park, Seaside Heights, Toms River, Lavallette, Brick, Mantoloking, Bay Head, and Point Pleasant Beach make up the northern barrier island municipalities that will be receiving assistance.

The county reconsidered based on the financial struggles the local municipalities have faced as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. They announced that the board has agreed to pay 100 percent of the local cost of the project.

Officials said the total state-wide project will cost \$60 million. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will pay \$30 million, with the remaining \$30 million coming from the state and local share.

Manchester Township Proposes Rent Control Ordinance for Mobile Homes

The Manchester Township Council introduced an ordinance that aims to limit how much property owners can increase rent for those who live in mobile homes or manufactured homes in an effort to assist low-income residents and seniors struggling with living costs.

The proposed ordinance would set a limit of the lower of either the increase in the consumer price index or 3 percent for communities where the utilities are included in rent. For communities where the mobile or manufactured home residents pay for their heat, the limit is the lower of either the increase in the consumer price index or 2 percent. It also would limit property owners to one increase every 12 months.

The proposed ordinance is scheduled for public hearing and vote on February 28.

Targeted Municipalities Legislative Committee Plans to Meet with in 2023

Delanco Township, Mayor Kate Fitzgerald

Evesham Township, Township Manager Robert Corrales

Mansfield Township, Mayor Mojena

Pemberton Township, Mayor David Patriarca

Willingboro, Mayor Kaya McIntosh

2023 Legislative Committee ZOOM Meetings

Please join us if you can! E-mail vjones@nexusaor.com to be added to the NEXUS Legislative Committee meeting distribution list. The committee is always looking for more REALTORS® to participate!