



State of New Jersey

Department of State
New Jersey State Planning Commission
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0820

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
*Lt. Governor
Secretary of State*

THOMAS K. WRIGHT
CHAIRMAN

WALTER C. LANE
Executive Director/Secretary

New Jersey State Planning Commission Minutes of the Meeting Held on July 1, 2026 Zoom Video Conference

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wright called the July 1, 2026, video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission to order at 9:30 a.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

It was announced that notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting had been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Joe Grillo, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities (joined at 9:54 a.m.)
Nick Angarone, Designee, Department of Environmental Protection
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs
Michael Manzella, Designee for Priya Jain, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Melanie Willoughby, Designee for Lt. Governor Dr. Dale Caldwell, Secretary of State, Department of State
Shanel Robinson, County Commissioner Director, County Member
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member
Danielle Esser, Director of Governance, NJ Economic Development Authority
Jeffrey Oakman, Public Member
Stephen Santola, Public Member (joined at 9:32 a.m.)
Julia Somers, Public Member
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member
Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member (joined at 9:34 a.m.)
Thomas Wright, Chairman, Public Member

Others Present through Video conference

See Attachment A

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Wright asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 3, 2026, with no changes. The motion was made by Danielle Esser and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. Ayes: (12) Nick Angarone, Keith Henderson, Michael Manzella, Melanie Willoughby, Shanel Robinson, Bruce Harris, Danielle Esser, Jeffrey Oakman, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Elizabeth Terenik, Ed McKenna, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (0) The June 3, 2026, minutes were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Wright provided brief comments about the upcoming 4th of July celebration marking the 250th anniversary of the nation, noting its significance in the context of the work done by the meeting attendees to improve their communities and to participate in state and local government.

With that, Chairman Wright ended his comments and ceded the floor to Executive Director Walter Lane for his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Before presenting his report, Executive Director Walter Lane noted that all comments made using the chat feature would be read into the meeting record for the sake of transparency. He proceeded to provide a brief overview of the Office of Planning Advocacy's (OPA) work since the June 3, 2026, State Planning Commission (SPC) meeting.

He reported that staff continued working on a wide range of activities to advance the implementation of the new State Development and Redevelopment Plan, while diligently working with 11 municipalities on requirements needed to achieve Plan Endorsement. Executive Director Lane stated that OPA hosts biweekly meetings with Manchester and Dennis Townships, and noted progress with Salem City and North Wildwood. At the June 17, 2026, Plan Implementation Committee, the Committee recommended advancing Wildwood City's petition to the Commission for consideration at the August 5, 2026, meeting. Executive Director Lane also mentioned productive meetings with both NJDOT and the Transit Village Task Force to streamline Plan Endorsement and transit village applications, respectively, and his new role co-leading the Mapping Working Group for the Governor's Housing Council.

Executive Director Lane stated that staff continued to attend various meetings, including the following: the NJ Transit TOD in Your Downtown Forum, Transit Village Taskforce Meeting, NJ County Planners Association Meeting, the NJ League of Municipalities Mini Conference, the NJ Climate Change Research Symposium, the NJ Planning and Redevelopment Conference, the NJ Historic History and Preservation Conference, the IAC Extreme Heat Coordinated Communications Workgroup Meeting, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Regional Transportation Committee Meeting, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Board Meeting, State Agricultural Development Committee Meeting, the NJ Delaware Bayshore Council Meeting, and the Plan4HealthNJ Advisory Council Meeting.

The group discussed the upcoming work of the Governor's Housing Council, convened by Executive Order No. 17, a coordinated, statewide effort to boost housing production and expand access to housing for New Jersey residents. Executive Director Lane reported that Lieutenant Governor Caldwell spoke about using the State Plan to guide the Council's work. Commissioner Somers raised concerns about communities being overwhelmed by multiple large projects happening simultaneously without considering cumulative impacts. Executive Director Lane indicated that the involvement of many state agencies, including NJDEP and NJDCA, would provide opportunity for cross-agency collaboration that supports a more holistic and regional approach, rather than siloed efforts.

With no further comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked Assistant Planner Laura Gould to present the Carneys Point Township State Plan Policy Map amendment request.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2026-04 Approval of a State Plan Policy Map Amendment Request: AACHCP Property, LLC, (AA), Block 268, Lots 5, 5.01 and 6, Courses Landing Road, Carneys Point Township Salem County, New Jersey

Assistant Planner Laura Gould proceeded to present the State Plan Policy Map amendment request for three parcels in Carneys Point Township, Salem County, proposed by AACHCP Property, LLC to support warehousing development. The original petition was deemed incomplete initially but was later approved after additional mapping materials were submitted. The Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) found the original proposal inconsistent with the State Plan due to concerns about wetlands and tidal flooding impacts, and recommended a modified amendment that would decrease the size of the requested map change area by about 29 acres to better align with State Plan intentions. At the June 17, 2026, Plan Implementation Committee, the Committee voted to move the OPA-proposed amendment forward to the State Planning Commission for final determination.

The presentation can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/meeting-materials/2026-07-01-SPC-Carneys-Point-Township-Presentation.pdf>

Chairman Wright invited comments from Carneys Point Township or Salem County representatives. David Roberts of dgRoberts Planning & Design, representing the applicant, commended the staff's approach of using environmentally sensitive boundary lines for Planning Areas as a fair compromise. He noting that the approved site plan drawings helped solidify the boundary recommendations.

With no comments or questions from the Commission, Chairman Wright opened the floor to any member of the public to make comment. Dan Kennedy of the Commercial Real Estate Development Association raised a concern about setting precedents for using unverified lines in the future, emphasizing that the current approach should be based on site-verified environmental constraints.

Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2026-04. The motion was made by Julia Somers and seconded by Shanel Robinson. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (14) Joe Grillo, Nick Angarone, Keith Henderson, Michael Manzella, Melanie Willoughby, Shanel Robinson, Bruce Harris, Danielle Esser, Jeffrey Oakman, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Elizabeth Terenik, Ed McKenna, and Thomas Wright Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) Resolution 2026-04 was approved.

The Resolution can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/2026-04-SPC-Carneys-Point-Certified.pdf>

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked Executive Director Walter Lane to introduce and then Vice Chair McKenna to read aloud Resolution 2026-05.

Resolution 2026-05 Recognizing the Contributions of Melanie Willoughby, New Jersey Business Action Center Executive Director

Executive Director Walter Lane reported that Commissioner Melanie Willoughby, Executive Director of the Business Action Center (in which the Office of Planning Advocacy [OPA] is housed) would be retiring effective August 1, 2026. He thanked Commissioner Willoughby for the opportunity to head OPA, for her advocacy for the staff, and for her unwavering support of the State Plan.

The Commission celebrated Commissioner Willoughby's retirement after 50-year career in New Jersey State government and her integral role in supporting the development and implementation of the 2025 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Commissioners expressed appreciation for her steadfast commitment, leadership, communication skills, guidance, and support of staff.

Commissioner Robinson thanked Commissioner Willoughby for her friendship, wisdom, and guidance. Former Office of Planning Advocacy Executive Director Donna Rendeiro praised Commissioner Willoughby's communication abilities, her support of the State Plan, and her uncommon respect for her staff. Commissioner Oakman acknowledged Commissioner Willoughby's hard work in both supporting the State Plan and New Jersey's businesses. Chairman Wright acknowledged Commissioner Willoughby's steadfast support, both in her role as a Commissioner and in her behind-the-scenes guidance to staff.

After Vice Chair McKenna read the Resolution aloud, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2026-05. The motion was made by Ed McKenna and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (13) Joe Grillo, Nick Angarone, Keith Henderson, Michael Manzella, Shanel Robinson, Bruce Harris, Danielle Esser, Jeffrey Oakman, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Elizabeth Terenik, Ed McKenna, and Thomas Wright Nays: (0). Abstains: (1) Melanie Willoughby Resolution 2026-05 was approved.

The Resolution can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/2026-03-Approval-Of-2025-Annual-Report-Certified-Final.pdf>

Commissioner Willoughby shared that state planning was her lifelong passion, and indicated how meaningful it was to finally see a State Plan adopted. She thanked the Commission for their support and recognition, and the staff of OPA for their dedication and teamwork.

With no additional comment from the Commission or the public Chairman Wright asked Executive Director Walter Lane to provide the State Plan Implementation Update.

STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Executive Director Walter Lane reiterated that during a detailed review of the State Planning Rules, the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) staff identified unclear provisions regarding different processes for the SPC (State Planning Commission) as well as state agencies to initiate changes to the State Plan Policy Map. This could lead to a potential for inconsistent outcomes and procedures, as the term "State Agency" is used interchangeably throughout the text, as previously discussed with the Commission. Additionally, during a brief update at the June 17, 2026, Plan Implementation Committee meeting, the Committee supported starting the process to update the Rules. As such, Executive Director Lane reported that he submitted a request to officially begin the process to update the Rules, which is currently under review by Department of State leadership. The update would streamline the process for Cross Acceptance and Plan Endorsement, ensuring efficiency and advancing Governor Sherrill's goal of saving time and money; updates will be provided to the Commission once feedback is received.

Executive Director Lane also mentioned a wide range of ongoing outreach activities, including presentations at various conferences and forums, and continued coordination with state agencies and regional planning partners.

With no comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright Assistant asked Planner Laura Gould to provide the Special Resource Areas Recognition Process Update.

SPECIAL RESOURCE AREAS RECOGNITION PROCESS UPDATE

Assistant Planner Laura Gould reported that staff is developing a timeline for the Special Resource Areas recognition process, and expects to bring a draft to the SPC for review in the coming months. Executive Director Walter Lane explained that after feedback is provided by the Commission, staff will incorporate those changes and then release it for public comment. During the public comment period, input will be gathered from all planning partners. Once the process is complete, staff will make any final adjustments with the Commission's concurrence and incorporate the changes into the Rule update; he aims to have this complete by the end of 2026.

With no questions or comments, Chairman Wright opened the floor to the public.

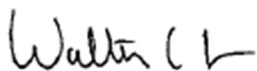
PUBLIC COMMENTS

No member of the public wished to comment.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Ed McKenna and seconded by Joe Grillo. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Walter C. Lane
Secretary and Executive Director
Date: August 5, 2026

ATTACHMENT A
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES
DATE: JULY 1, 2026 TIME: 9:30 AM

A. Gibson
Anthony Soriano, Morris County
Barbara Allen Woolley-Dillon, PP, AICP, NJDEP
Bill Millette, Hunterdon County
Dan Kennedy, CREDA
David Heller, SJTPO
David Roberts, dgRoberts Planning & Design, LLC
Dillon McNamara
Donna Rendeiro
Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau
Hannah Kate Simon
H. Knight
Jack Zybura
James Humphries, NJ Highlands
Jason Kasler, AICP, PP (NJPO)
Jelena Lasko, NJDOT
Jonathan Axoulai, NJ Transit
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County
Katie Elliott, NJ Pinelands Commission
Larry DiVietro
Lauren
Matt Baumgardner
Mike Davis, HGA
Mirah Becker, Middlesex County
Olivia Hirsch
Ruth Foster, NJDEP
Samantha DeAndrea, Somerset County