



NEXUS Association of REALTORS® Municipal Monitor: June 2022

NEXUS Legislative Committee Stays Connected with Local Officials:

City of Camden, Marc Riondino, Counsel to Mayor Carstarphen, Guest Speaker

On April 14, the NEXUS Legislative Committee met virtually with Mr. Marc Riondino, Counsel to Mayor Carstarphen of the City of Camden. Marc was originally from the Cramer Hill neighborhood, and has served the city of Camden, and its residents, for 34 years. He has come out of retirement recently to serve as Counsel to Mayor Carstarphen and assist with economic development strategies.

City of Camden is actively partnering with State and County for several housing initiatives. The city is comprised of 39% homeowners, and the rest are rental properties. It's the goal of the Administration to change the imbalance and oversaturation of affordable housing and rentals. The city is proactively working with private developers to invest in vacant areas to improve quality of life and repurpose underutilized sites. There are several initiatives focused on attracting employees who work in the city to reside in the area, as well as young professionals with optimal locations being the Cooper Historic District, which is close to the waterfront, and Lanning Square across from Cooper Hospital.

There has been \$3 billion in economic development investment, and there is an uptick in the foot traffic in town, but more amenities are needed, such as grocery stores and restaurants—which are both priorities for the Administration. Camden is also investing significantly in recreation, parks and infrastructure. All four wards have new and/or revitalized parks.

Cramer Hill Waterfront Park was opened recently and is the largest park in the city. The park encompasses 60 acres on the waterfront with hiking/biking trails, a kayak launch, picnic area and playground. The city has passed food truck and festivals ordinance, with the goal of animating the public spaces.

Mr. Riondino said the administration is confident that they have the tools and processes in place to attract investors to the City and has capacity to walk investors through the process. Staff are expected to be supportive and open to investors.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Riondino said he welcomed input from the REALTOR® community on how to make the City of Camden an even better, more welcoming place to live and to do business. He looks forward to continued conversations with NEXUS Legislative Committee and will reach out to ABS with pertinent information to share with the REALTOR® community.

Camden County:

Camden County Announces \$100-million Investment to Overhaul Parks and Add 34-mile Trail

Camden County officials recently announced a \$100 million plan called "Parks Alive 2025," to overhaul the county's park system and add a 34 mile trail. A key component of the plan includes a 12-foot-wide paved LINK Trail that will start at the Ben Franklin Bridge, traverse 17 municipalities, and end in Winslow Township. When finished, which is expected to happen by 2025, the \$10 million trail will connect to the Philadelphia trail system at one end and to the Atlantic County trail system at the other.

In addition, all parks in Camden County will be brought into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. They'll get "interactive mapping," new signs, and other improvements, including thousands of new trees. Several parks will get new picnic tables, better parking lots, nicer trails, renovated sports fields, and lighting for security. The plan calls for the creation of local nonprofit conservancies that would be run by communities, giving them oversight of the parks.

About \$25 million is already committed to a large project underway since 2020 at Newton Lake Park, which runs through Collingswood, Oaklyn, and Haddon Township. The project entails dredging, stream-bank restoration, storm-water management, and the planting of 750 trees. The Cooper River Park, bordered by Camden, Pennsauken, Collingswood, Haddon Township, and Cherry Hill is also slated to receive \$7 million in improvements.

No county tax increase is expected for the improvements with funding coming from existing funds, or county, state, and federal grants. Additional money from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, New Jersey Infrastructure Bank, and private donors is also expected to be put toward the project. For more information on the planned park improvements, visit <https://www.camdencounty.com/100-million-countywide-park-improvement-plan-announced/>

City of Camden Invests in 7th Street Enhancement Project

Mayor Carstarphen, along with the Board of Commissioners, recently broke ground on an enhancement project between Linden Street and Elm Street on 7th Street that consists of pedestrian improvements, flooding mitigation, gateway enhancements and Americans with Disability Act curb and ramp upgrades. Construction will start in May 2022 and be finished by the early Fall 2022. Seventh street is a primary, heavily used road into North Camden neighborhood from downtown and the Ben Franklin Bridge. In total, the project will cost \$2.3 million with funding provided by the state Department of Transportation, U.S. Economic Development Administration, and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.

Haddonfield Road Project Will Cause Traffic Delays For 6 Months

On April 18, a major road project started in Haddonfield that is expected to cause traffic delays for 6 months. Lane shifts will occur near the Kings Highway Bridge Deck near Washington and Westmont Avenues and near the PATCO station in the borough to allow for repairs to part of the bridge, the installation of a concrete curb and sidewalks, and an upgrade to the handicap ramps.

Camden County's New Sustainability Center Opens In Gloucester Township

In April, Gloucester Township had a ribbon cutting ceremony revealing a new, sustainable 10-acre space on the grounds of a former hospital. The Sustainability Campus is designed to educate the community about sustainability, and for the public to experience outdoor recreation.

The new complex will include a vineyard to collaborate with local colleges and harvest grapes for local wineries, as well as a multi-purpose building that will be the hub of the educational and sustainable programming. An amphitheater, walking path are also planned for the site.

Winslow Township Closes Cedar Brook Fire Station Due to Staffing Shortage

Winslow Township was forced to recently close its Cedar Brook Fire Station due to staffing levels falling below acceptable numbers to maintain emergency services. Community emergency services will still be provided, but response times may be longer as calls will now be handled by the remaining five fire stations in the township.

Route 70 Construction Project to Last until 2026

The Route 70 corridor improvement project that includes almost nine miles of construction in Pennsauken, Cherry Hill and Evesham Township is expected to last until May 2026. The comprehensive reconstruction project includes milling and repaving, bringing sidewalks up to ADA compliance, improving drainage and other upgrades. To keep the community informed, NJDOT has a website with construction updates:

<https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/roads/rt70corridor/>

Burlington County:

Bordentown Township Working with State to Develop Plans for New Waterfront Park

Last year, Bordentown Township purchased a 72-acre property along the Delaware River between Fieldsboro Borough and Mansfield Township that was previously slated for high-density housing. The Township intends to convert the land into a new waterfront park and is now working with the state of New Jersey to develop the plans for the destination park for passive recreation.

Moorestown Now Requiring Survey for Transfer of Properties Adjacent to Land Owned by the Municipality

Moorestown Township recently adopted CCO 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 goes into effect June 1, 2022.

The Nexus Legislative Committee is meeting with Moorestown Mayor on June 16 to discuss the new ordinance, along with other issues in the Township. Not only does the ordinance add another requirement on property owners, which is always a concern of the Association, but it also places the burden on the seller to pay for the survey in these instances when surveys are typically paid for by the buyer. NEXUS will keep members updated on the issue going forward.

Willingboro Holds Information Session for Realtors on Added Assessment

On May 20, Willingboro Township Tax Assessor Justin Lamicella hosted a follow-up information session to further explain the added tax assessment and evaluation process that has brought confusion to many REALTORS®. NEXUS shared this opportunity with members who do business in the Township. Those members who have remaining questions and concerns are encouraged to contact NEXUS' Vernon Jones at vjones@nexusaor.com as the Legislative Committee is working on another meeting with township officials on the issue.

Ocean County:

Toms River Officials Met with NEXUS Members to Answer Questions About New Certificate of Occupancy Requirement that Goes into Effect July 1

Craig Ambrosio, Toms River Division MGR Housing & Code Enforcement, met with NEXUS members in late April to answer questions about Tom's River's new Certificate of Occupancy requirement that goes into effect on July 1, 2022. This was the second opportunity for members to weigh in and seek clarification on the rules—the NEXUS Legislative Committee also met with Mr. Ambrosio in February just weeks after Council adopted the new rules in late December 2021.

While the inspection requirements of Toms River's "Municipal Certificate of Continued Use and Occupancy" (commonly known as a Certificate of Occupancy) for the sale or transfer of residential dwellings are similar to neighboring municipalities, the excessive fees to obtain the CO continue to be a concern for the Association, which the Legislative Committee has shared with Township. Going forward, the Legislative Committee plans to remain engaged with Township Officials on the new rules, sharing feedback from REALTORS® regarding implementation. Members are encouraged to reach out to NEXUS' Vernon Jones at vjones@nexusaor.com detailing their experience with the process, as the Legislative Committee is planning to meet with the Toms River Mayor again in the fall.

Ocean County Commissioners Approve New \$11.5M Library Branch in Stafford

Following a public hearing, a new \$11.5 million branch of the Ocean County Library in Stafford was unanimously approved at a meeting of the Board of Commissioners. It will be built on the grounds of the Ocean County Southern Service Center on Route 9 near the Route 72 interchange, and the new building will be 19,700-square feet. The library will be a separate structure about 65% bigger than the existing library branch.

Jackson Township Tables Sign Ordinance Indefinitely, NEXUS Urges Members to Review Sign Rules on the Books for Full Compliance

On May 24, Jackson Township Council tabled an ordinance indefinitely that would have added several restrictions and requirements for real estate signs after REALTORS® in attendance at the Council meeting reiterated concerns with the new rules.

When the ordinance was first introduced earlier in the year, leaders from NJ REALTORS® and NEXUS met with the Township to share their concerns, which led to several favorable changes to the original rules. However, REALTORS® were still concerned with the requirement of a sign permit for sale and open house signs, which is an added expense not required by neighboring municipalities. The Council ultimately agreed to hold the ordinance indefinitely in hopes REALTORS® will comply with rules on the books. To that end, NEXUS is urging members to

[review Jackson's real estate sign rules](#) to ensure full compliance. Jackson may also be holding an information session on the sign ordinance for REALTORS®, which NEXUS will share details on when set.

Berkeley Township Votes to Prohibit the Sale of Homes in Age Restricted Communities to Those Under Age of 55

On March 29, Berkeley Township Council passed Ordinance 22-13-OA prohibiting the sale of homes in age-restricted communities to those under the age of 55. The ill-advised ordinance contradicts Federal and state laws that limit the age of occupants, not the age of owners.

Prior to the vote, New Jersey REALTORSs® implemented a CALL TO ACTION urging the Mayor and Council to oppose the ordinance and not place unnecessary limits on home sales in the Township. The CALL TO ACTION campaign included direct mail sent to Berkeley residents asking them to contact the Mayor and Council to oppose the ordinance and attend the council meeting on March 29. Despite overwhelming participation in the call to action expressing opposition, the Council adopted the age restriction ordinance unanimously. Bruce Shapiro, Director of RPAC & Regulatory Affairs at New Jersey REALTORS®, was in attendance and testified in opposition. The Association is considering next steps with the ordinance now on the books.

Groundbreaking of VA's new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Toms River

Local officials recently held a groundbreaking on the new VA clinic in Toms River that will be located at 1051 Hooper Ave., right next to the new Ocean County Social Services building that is being constructed, along with the county's veterans services office. The clinic is projected to encompass 68,000 square feet of space, and it will have 480 parking spaces. In the plans is state-of-the-art medical equipment and access to services from dentistry to mental health to physical therapy. The clinic is anticipated to be completed in the spring of 2024.

Brick's Launches New Dredging Permit Program

Brick Township is utilizing a new town-wide dredging permit pilot program intended to save residents on Nejecho Beach Lagoon a significant amount in construction costs. Nejecho Beach Lagoon runs through the Nejecho neighborhood, and the sand that is dredged will be transported to Windward Beach. The sand has been tested, is free of pollution, and will be spread evenly over beachfront to provide beach nourishment.

Brick engineering department began developing a dredge permit application to be submitted to the State Department of Environmental Protection back in 2019. Officials took on the responsibility in order to maintain the 128 miles of lagoons throughout Brick Township. The permit was granted, only the second permit granted in state's history, and allows dredging projects to take place in any lagoon in Brick, without residents having to complete a costly survey and permitting process. The residents of lagoon neighborhoods will still pay for the physical dredging, however, the costly administrative process has been permanently eliminated.

5.5-acre Surf Park Coming to Jackson

Jackson Township zoning officials have approved an 88-acre expansion of the Adventure Crossing USA theme park on Route 537, in close proximity to Six Flags Great Adventure. An initial part of the project will be a 5.5 acre man-made surfing lagoon, capable of creating more than 500 waves per hour. For those not interested in surfing, a 70,000 square foot indoor water

park is also planned adjacent to the wave pool. New retail and restaurant offerings, and a 134-room hotel, are also in the works. Adventure Crossing will also offer an indoor sports complex, Top Golf, outdoor multi-use sports fields, and a virtual reality arcade event space. The project was approved by a vote of 6-1, and the company is hoping to have a grand opening on September 1, 2022.

Targeted Municipalities Legislative Committee Plans to Meet with in 2022:

- LEHT, Mayor John Kehm Jr.
- Point Pleasant Borough, Mayor Kanitra
- Willingboro, Mayor Kaya McIntosh
- Mansfield Township, Mayor Mojena

2022 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 looking for more active REALTORS® to participate!

Thursday June 16, 2022 – Guest Speaker Mayor Gillespie of Moorestown Township

Thursday July 14, 2022 – Guest Speaker Mayor Bianco Bezich of Haddonfield Township

August – no Legislative Committee meeting scheduled