



NEXUS Association of REALTORS® Municipal Monitor: March 2022

NEXUS Legislative Committee Stays Connected with Local Officials

Information Session with Audubon Borough (Camden County), Mayor Jakubowski

In February, the NEXUS Legislative Committee met virtually with Audubon Mayor Jakubowski who shared the latest on redevelopment projects and investments being made in the municipality. In addition to serving as mayor, Mr. Jakubowski is the Director of Public Works, Parks & Buildings for the Borough and holds a fulltime job as Homeless Services Coordinator for Camden County.

Mayor Jakubowski, born and raised in Audubon, said the focus of his Administration is preserving quality of life for the 9000+ residents and maintaining affordability. He shared that over the last 12 years, municipal taxes have increased only two times and that he remains committed to keeping costs down while providing efficient, high-quality service. As example, the borough recently merged planning and zoning boards to increase response time and streamline transactions.

Enhancing recreational opportunities for residents is a big priority for the Borough. Audubon Family Park was recently renovated, and the recreation center has been rebuilt, with new walking and bike paths, basketball and pickleball courts. And 37 miles of multi-use paths along the Atlantic Avenue Conrail line in Audubon were recently completed as part of Camden County's "Rails with Trails" project.

The mayor shared that while many residents have lived in the borough for generations, his Administration is focused on drawing in new investors and residents. He welcomes input from the REALTOR® community on how to make the Borough more "business-friendly". As example, prior to the Legislative Committee meeting with the mayor, NEXUS reached out to him expressing concern about Audubon's requirement that property owners or the REALTOR® provide certification that the sump pump is functioning properly as part of the CO or rental registration process. This responsibility was never placed on the seller or the REALTOR® before, but added because the Borough halted in-person inspections during the pandemic.

When NEXUS reached out to the mayor on the matter, he recognized the REALTORS® concerns and removed the requirement noting that the goal was to protect the buyer, not hinder transactions for the seller or renter. Going forward, Mayor Jakubowski said the Borough has no plans to make further changes to the CO process or rental registration at this time.

The mayor also mentioned the Borough has a shared service agreement with the school district to create a new, more user-friendly township website. This website will provide the most up-to-date information regarding all rules and regulations affecting real estate transactions. For more information about Audubon, visit <https://www.audubonnj.com/>

Legislative Committee Met with Toms River (Ocean County) Officials to Review New CO Ordinance

Last month the NEXUS Legislative Committee - in coordination with members of the New Jersey REALTORS® legislative team – also met with Toms River officials to discuss the recently approved Certificate of Occupancy (CO) requirements for residential sales that will take effect on July 1st. The goal of the meeting was to clarify some of the particulars, and share member concerns and feedback. The meeting proved fruitful in maintaining open lines of communication with the Township to aid members and consumers in navigating these changes.

The Legislative Committee continued to express concerns about excessive fees associated with the CO and has again asked the Township to reconsider them. NEXUS is committed to continuing the dialogue with the Township in a bid to garner more reasonable fees and address any other concerns members have about specific provisions within the requirement. In addition, the Association is working with the Township to host an open forum on the topic to review the rules in detail with REALTORS® who do business in the Township. Details are forthcoming.

Update Session with Cherry Hill Township (Camden County), Mayor Susan Angulo

On March 16, the NEXUS Legislative Committee met virtually with Cherry Hill Township Mayor Angulo, Director of Communications Michelle Caffrey, and Director of Community Development Cosmas Diamantis to discuss issues related to real estate and development. Over these past two years, the Township has made great strides in making it easier for residents, investors and those who do business in Cherry Hill to connect with municipal services online. Increased accessibility and responsiveness from the Township is a priority for the Mayor.

Over the past several years, the Mayor shared that the township has experienced smart sustainable growth focusing commercial development at existing vacant sites. She discussed how the commercial sector (food, retail, and hospitality) in Cherry Hill is fast becoming the “cutting edge in South Jersey” with high-end establishments such as Sugar Factory, Wild Foods Food Market, Crab Du Jour Cajun Seafood & Bar all opening their doors in recent months. The township is proud to be a regional shopping destination with many specialty, high-end retailers choosing to locate in Cherry Hill.

Cherry Hill is the largest municipality in Camden County and is an ideal location for visitors from Philadelphia and close proximity to Philadelphia airport. Three new hotels with over 100 rooms are being built to accommodate these visitors.

On the residential side, the mayor highlighted the substantial growth with Garden State Park Community under development with a total of 1700 new mixed-use units to be located on the site when completed. 202 Park residential complex, overlooking the Cooper River, is also highly desirable, especially with young professionals. The complex is comprised of 192 luxury apartment and townhomes with 182 units already filled. There is a lot of development along Cooper River with landscaping and biking/walking trails, making it a destination for recreation.

The Victory at Woodcrest Station "luxury apartment" complex of 370 units is also currently being built with 54 of the units set aside for affordable housing. Many residents are renovating their existing homes and that number is up 14% from 2020.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Mayor said she welcomed input from the REALTOR® community on how to make Cherry Hill an even better, more welcoming place to do business. She said the Township is not looking to add additional requirements to inspection processes at this time and is hopeful that the meeting is the beginning of continued with the REALTOR® community.

Burlington County:

Mansfield Township Passes Ordinance Banning Additional Warehouses

On March 2, Mansfield Township passed an ordinance banning the development of additional warehouses in the Township. Not impacted is the nearly 5.1 million square feet of warehouse development already approved—4 of the eight are under construction.

The new rules would prohibit any further development. The measure appears to be the strongest move by any municipality seeking to control the flood of warehouse development in the state. For detailed information on ordinance 2022-3:

<https://www.mansfieldtwp.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Ordinance-2022-3-V2-as-amending-Zoning-to-Prohibit-Warehouses.pdf>

Moorestown Planning Board Approves Apartment Complex at the Mall

Last month, the Moorestown Township Planning Board approved a plan for a seven-building, 375-apartment complex called The Pearl to be built in the corner of the parking lot between Nixon Drive and Boscov's at the Moorestown Mall. The complex will include studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom units in four-story buildings with 75 affordable units dispersed throughout. A club house, fitness center, pool, courtyards, and a 682-space parking garage including designated spots for electric vehicles are also part of the plan.

Willingboro Holds Information Session for REALTORS® on Added Assessment

On March 4, Willingboro Township Tax Assessor Justin Lamicella hosted an information session explaining the added tax assessment and evaluation process in Willingboro at the Township Municipal Building. NEXUS shared this opportunity with members but is seeking input and questions from REALTORS® who do business in the Township, as this is a complex issue, and many questions remain about appraisal process and how the numbers are calculated. NEXUS is seeking a meeting with Township Officials and would like to send questions in advance. Please send your feedback to NEXUS' Vernon Jones at vjones@nexasaor.com by April 1, 2022.

Burlington County Urges Residents to Sign Up for Emergency Alerts

The Burlington County Commissioners are encouraging county residents to register on the Department of Public Safety's CivicReady Emergency Alert system to receive real-time alerts and notifications about severe weather, fires, power outages, floods, road closures and other emergencies.

To sign up for the CivicReady alerts online go to <http://co.burlington.nj.us/210/Emergency-Notification-Systems> and complete the registration form which will ask for an address and preferred method of contact. Residents can select to be notified on a home phone or cell phone, by text message or email. The address is used to tailor alerts, so residents don't receive ones that don't pertain to their geographic area. Residents can also request alerts for specific towns. The alerts are provided free of charge but standard text messaging rates may apply.

Camden County:

Cherry Hill Planning Board Approves Warehouse on Site Where Transit-Village Complex was Envisioned

The Cherry Hill Township Planning Board recently approved a final site plan for a new 162,150-square-foot warehouse with 37 loading docks on Woodcrest Road.

In 2018, the Township approved a redevelopment plan for the 34-acre site near the Woodcrest Station of the PATCO Speedline with the hope of building a transit-oriented complex on the site with apartments, offices, shops and restaurants. The retail component never came to fruition, much in part to the pandemic, but The Victory at Woodcrest Station "luxury apartment" complex of 370 units — including 53 affordable units — in six buildings now is being built.

In December, the Township Council in December amended the plan to allow a warehouse on 15 acres of the site.

Camden's Oldest Public Housing Community to Undergo \$35M Renovation

Ablett Village, a 306-unit affordable housing community that was built in the 1950s is set to be renovated by the Michaels Organization with grant awarded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development. This will be the eighth affordable housing community that Michaels and Housing Authority of Camden County have transformed over the last decade. The first phase, known as Cramer Hill Family, will bring 75 new townhome-style affordable homes spread across three separate sites in East Camden.

Camden City Adopts Parks and Open Space Plan

Camden City recently adopted and implemented its first Parks and Open Space Plan that aims to prioritize open space investments while improving the urban environment.

The plan was created by the Trust for Public Land and Camden Community Partnership Inc. in collaboration with the city, the county and the county Municipal Utilities Authority. The Parks Plan aims to achieve the following:

- Creating safer recreation environments
- Increasing high-demand park amenities
- Improving maintenance
- Increasing programming
- Maximizing climate resilience

- Increasing park funding
- Giving community members more information
- Increasing collaboration between stakeholders

The plan will help guide an anticipated \$25 million in investments by 2035 and maintenance efforts for the \$100 million invested in parks over the last 10 years.

New \$6 million birthing center in Voorhees is the first in South Jersey

Virtua Health opened South Jersey's first free-standing birthing center in Voorhees. The \$6 million Midwifery Birth & Wellness Center is located on Route 73 adjacent to the health system's Voorhees hospital. The center will offer a natural approach to labor and birth, also known as physiologic labor and birth, in a setting that resembles a home. The facility includes three birthing suites, each equipped with a queen-size bed, walk-in shower, birthing pool, and private patio.

Ocean County:

Jackson Township Tables Sign Ordinance to Review REALTOR® Concerns

Jackson Township recently tabled an ordinance that would have added several restrictions and requirements for real estate signs after a few members of the NEXUS Legislative Committee met with Township Officials to detail REALTORS®' concerns. The Jackson Township attorney responded sharing the changes that the Mayor/Council are willing to make to the ordinance.

1. Reduces (not eliminates the sign permit fee) from \$45.00 to \$25.00 (includes for sale and open house signs). Permits must still be closed out prior to issuance of sign permit.
2. "For sale" sign no longer has to be removed within 7 days of execution of a contract, rather has to be removed within 3 days of closing or expiration of listing agreement.
3. Up to 5 open house directional signs are permitted, to be placed 1 hour before open house and removed upon conclusion of open house.

Bruce Shapiro, Director of RPAC & Regulatory Affairs New Jersey REALTORS®, continues to be in communication with Jackson Township Administration on the rule changes, as the ordinance has yet to be posted for further consideration.

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

Berkeley Township Council has introduced a second Ordinance 22-13-OA prohibiting the sale of homes in age-restricted communities to those under the age of 55. Federal and state laws limit the age of occupants, not the age of owners.

Per NEXUS request, New Jersey REALTORS® 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 includes direct mail being sent to Berkeley residents asking them to contact the Mayor and Council to oppose the ordinance and attend the **next council meeting on March 29.**

Members are encourage to make their voice heard on this onerous proposal by participating in the Call to Action here:
<https://www.votervoice.net/NAR/1/campaigns/92588/respond?TrackingID=otherassn>.

Condo Complex Proposed to Replace Seaside Heights Parking Lot

On March 30, the Seaside Heights Planning Board will consider a proposal from Mila Homes, LLC to build a townhome complex to replace a parking lot on the property located at 33 Hamilton Avenue near the borough's post office. The proposed construction would include a four story, seven-unit multi-family condominium building.

Construction of 128 Additional Apartments Underway in Toms River

Construction of an additional 128 apartment units are being built in at the Camelot at Toms River apartment complex located behind the Seacourt Pavilion on Caudina Avenue. The new apartments will be comprised of one- and two-bedroom units with up to 1,540 square feet of living space. 28 units will be set aside for affordable housing.

Toms Rivers River Establishes Small Business Committee

Toms River Township Council created a Special Advisory Committee on Small Business that held its first meeting on March 15 at the Town Hall. The committee members are interested in ways that local government can support entrepreneurs and business owners. REALTORS® are welcome to attend the meeting and share ideas. For more information, or if interested in attending future meetings, contact Art Gallagher in Mayor Hill's office at agallagher@tomsrivertownship.com or 732-341-1000, ext. 8469.

Lacey Township Approves Expansion of Age Restricted Apartments in Georgetown Village

The Lacey Board of Adjustment recently approved the third phase of construction in Georgetown Village Inc., an age-restricted apartment community off Musket Road. Construction will include expanding and adding a three-story building to the existing complex. The new building will hold 29 new units, 17 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom apartments. Access to the new building would be through the existing complex's entrance off Musket Road.

Historic Barnegat Lighthouse to Receive \$1.3 Million Restoration Upgrade

Starting March 14, the Barnegat Lighthouse will be closed through October to undergo \$1.3 Million Restoration upgrade that will take place this Spring and Summer. The construction upgrade will include a complete exterior restoration, masonry recoating, and repairs to the brick façade. The restoration also includes roof repairs, interior lantern steel platform repairs, and the installation of new windows. Barnegat Lighthouse State Park will remain open for visitors.

Targeted Municipalities Legislative Committee Plans to Meet with in 2022:

Camden, Mayor Vic Carstarphen
LEHT, Mayor John Kehm Jr.
Point Pleasant Borough, Mayer 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 meeting distribution list. The committee is looking for more active REALTORS® to participate!

Thursday April 14, 2022 – Guest Speaker TBD

Thursday May 12, 2022 – Guest Speaker TBD