

NEXUS Municipal Monitor November



Welcome to NEXUS Municipal Monitor—a bimonthly newsletter focused on real estate related issues on the local level that matter to you! Stay informed of pending or recently passed ordinances that may affect the way you do business, and redevelopment projects that could impact the market.

Want to contribute ideas or be more involved? Look for details in the newsletter on Legislative Committee meetings with local officials and how you can make your voice heard. If there's an issue or development project that you think should be covered, please contact **Liz Peters at Lpeters@nexusaor.com

Join Us! Legislative Committee upcoming meetings via Zoom: 11/17 & 12/15 all at 10am. **Email Liz for Zoom info**

NEXUS Legislative Committee Stays Connected

Throughout the summer and early fall, the NEXUS Legislative Committee not only met with local elected officials to stay on top of what is happening in towns throughout the region, they also connected with property appraisers and tax assessors to discuss the impact of the pandemic on the market. In July, for example, Jim Duda, property appraiser and Certified Tax Assessor discussed current revaluations and municipality exposure in Burlington, Camden and Ocean counties and detailed a property analysis and valuation software tool that his company [LOJIK](#) offers real estate professionals.

In this age of automation and algorithms, LOJIK's technology is aimed at leveling the playing field. The company's Comparative Market Evaluator (CMA) enables authorized users to generate individual or multiple listings with speed and precision that can easily be shared between Agents, Clients and Appraisers. The company is offering demonstrations for NEXUS members. To schedule or request more information, please contact at support@lojikeval.com. LOJIK is currently servicing the Bright MLS region for Bright MLS subscribers. Mr. Duda also suggested that realtors check out New Jersey's [Table of Equalized Valuations](#) which is a great tool for agents to see how close their assessed values are to market values in their county.

In October, the Committee met with Martin W. Lynch, municipal property tax assessor for Manchester Township, Waretown, Lakehurst and Island Heights. Mr. Lynch discussed how the pandemic is impacting the South Jersey real estate market with more and more people moving out of the city into South Jersey suburbs. With homes selling quickly and values rising, he expects that several municipalities will be required to undergo property revaluations in the next year or two.

Mr. Lynch also shared that several municipalities are implementing bans on short term rentals, likely to prevent so-called “pop-up” parties that have become a recent trend with restaurants and bars operating at limited capacity. While the rules are intended to preserve quality of life for residents, there is some concern that the rules go too far preventing property owners from earning extra income renting their homes on a short-term basis.

NEXUS members interested in joining the Legislative Committee and being part of these conversations going forward are encouraged to contact Liz Peters at lpeters@nexusaor.com

BURLINGTON COUNTY

Burlington County Grants Preliminary Approval to Preserve Six New Farms

On October 16, the Burlington County Freeholder Board vote to preliminary approve six new farms to enter into the County’s Farmland Preservation Program, which would add 346 acres the total acreage of preserved farmland in the county boosting the total to 63,064 acres. Burlington County is ranked No. 1 in New Jersey for acres of farmland preserved and No. 7 in the nation.

Through the program, the County will make offers to purchase the development rights for the properties in order to have them deed restricted to remain in agriculture, but the farmers will retain ownership of the land. All six farms are eligible to enter the preservation program and were recommended by the Burlington County Agricultural Development Board for pre-approval. They also ranked high enough to qualify for the state to cover 60% of the costs for acquiring the lands’ development rights.

The six properties that received preliminary approval are:

- The Roohr Farm in Southampton, a 58-acre grain and hay farm off Birmingham Road;
- The Columbus Farmers Market LLC in Springfield, a 28-acre grain farm off Route 206 adjacent to the iconic farmers market and shopping mall;
- The Whalen-Robinson Farm in Shamong, a 16-acre cranberry farm off East Stokes Road;
- The Emmons Home Farm in Pemberton, a 90-acre grain and hay farm off Pointville and Catesville Road;
- The Emmons West Farm in Pemberton, an 80-acre sod, grain and hay farm off Pointville and Catesville Road;
- The Stevens Farm in Tabernacle, a 74-acre vegetable farm off Medford Lakes Road.

Four of the farms – the Roohr, Emmons Home, Emmons West and Columbus Farmers Market – are located within a 5-mile military buffer zone around Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and are eligible for military funding to cover up to 50% of the preservation costs. The buffer helps to minimize security issues and reduce land-use conflicts, including limiting development, between the base and nearby communities. Since 2008, the county has preserved 32 farms totaling 2,229 acres in the buffer zone.

The County's share of the preservation expense will come from the county's dedicated tax for open space, farmland and historic preservation, which was approved by voters during referendums in 1996, 1998 and 2006. The Freeholders reduced the tax from 3 cents per \$100 of assessed property value from 2 cents per \$100 earlier this year.

Burlington County Offering Zero-Interest Loans to Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19

The Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders and Burlington County Bridge Commission recently launched a new interest-free loan program aimed specifically at aiding small businesses impacted by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. A total of \$660,000 in federal CARES Act funding was secured by the Burlington County Bridge Commission.

Commission's Economic Development Office for the new Health Emergency Loan Program (HELP), which will extend up to \$50,000 in zero-interest financing to any business operating in the county for business-related purchases, expenses and improvements.

The loans will be managed by the Bridge Commission, which serves as the county's economic development authority, and will supplement the county's existing business loan programs, the Small Business Loan Program, which extends low-interest lending to businesses located anywhere in the county, and the Route 130 Revolving Loan Program, which extends zero-interest loans to businesses within the Route 130 regional corridor.

Three additional small business loans were finalized this summer through the County's COVID-19 business relief program. Through an entirely County/Bridge-funded program, businesses could apply for low interest loans with no application fees and an expedited process.

Also in response to the pandemic, the Freeholders and Bridge Commission announced they would offer all businesses participating in the county's small business assistance programs the option of deferring their loan payments until November.

Like with the other two loan programs, the new HELP loans will provide businesses working capital for purchases and can also be used to retain jobs that might be lost due to cash shortages during the pandemic.

Unlike commercial loans or U.S. Small Business Association loans, the county programs have no closing costs, and county officials said the HELP loans will be interest-free to aid businesses with their recovery.

More information about the county loan programs and other resources for businesses is available online at <http://www.bcbridges.org/covid19-resources/> or by calling the Bridge Commission's Office of Economic Development and Regional Planning at [609-265-5055](tel:609-265-5055).

Moorestown Planning Board Approves Mall Redevelopment Study

On October 13, the Moorestown Planning Board approved a study to determine whether the Moorestown Mall on Route 38 meets the criteria of being declared an area in need of redevelopment. The preliminary investigation could lay the groundwork for a plan that would include affordable homes and other housing at the 83-acre mall.

Mount Laurel Zoning Board Says No to Medical Marijuana Dispensary

On October 16, the Mount Laurel Zoning Board rejected an application by Curaleaf to operate a medical marijuana dispensary on Route 73, forcing the company to now seek another site in South Jersey. The proposal required a variance from the zoning board because the site — between Commerce Parkway and Lincoln Drive — would have been within 1,000 feet of a residential area and a child-care facility. Opponents were concerned about the traffic and quality-of-life impact on nearby residents.

Just last month, Bordentown Township Planning Board approved Curaleaf's application for a dispensary on northbound Route 130 near Ward Avenue at the site of the former Stony Brook Sew and Vacuums. It is expected to open early next year. The company already operates a dispensary in Bellmawr, which opened in May 2018.

CAMDEN COUNTY

Camden County Launches Rental Assistance Program

On October 1, the Camden County Freeholder Board launched a new program aimed at supporting renters at risk of losing their homes or facing an eviction threat due to lost employment or income caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Camden County Rental Assistance Program makes available up to six months of back rent (April 2020 through September 2020) for a maximum of \$4,000. While tenants will apply to take part in the program, payments will be made directly to landlords. To qualify for the Rental Assistance Program, tenants must meet [eligibility requirements and rules](#) applications will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis and will be accepted until all available funds have been awarded. To apply, visit: www.CamdenRentGrant.com. For any questions about the program call (833) 487-0462.

Cherry Hill Moves to Preserve Kingston Swim Club as Open Space

In September, Cherry Hill Council unanimously approved two resolutions that paved the way for the township to purchase Kingston Swim Club and preserve it as open space. The 3.98 acre site sits in the middle of the Kingston neighborhood on Princess and Deland avenues. The swim club didn't open for the 2020 season and was headed toward a sheriff's sale when the Township stepped in to prevent it from development. The location near baseball fields and hockey rinks makes it prime for a neighborhood park or walking trail. The township will be holding meetings with nearby neighbors to seek input for the site.

OCEAN COUNTY

Ocean County to Offer Mobile Senior Assistance Services

Ocean County is rolling out a new Mobile Assistance for Seniors at Home (MASH) that will bring services right to senior communities rather than requiring residents to come to the county's Toms River Senior Services office. The plans for MASH were formulated over the summer and tested earlier this month during an outreach at Leisure Village in Lakewood. This mobile senior services program is the first in New Jersey.

Brick Proposes Limits on Short-Term Rentals

On November 10, Brick Township Council will consider an ordinance that would ban short-term rentals of less than 30 days year-round in most of the township with the exception of the barrier island where rentals would be permitted from May 15 through September 15 with a seven-day minimum. The ordinance would also bar room rentals unless a rental certificate of occupancy has been issued by the township and the house must have at least two bedrooms and enough parking to accommodate a tenant. In addition, rentals of swimming pools at private residences would be banned.

Violations of the ordinance would be subject to fines of up to \$2,000 per day and up to 90 days in jail. Legally operating motels, hotels, rooming houses, boarding houses, and bed-and-breakfast inns are exempt from ordinance.

These rules closely mirror those being implemented in nearby towns to prevent so-called "pop-up" parties that have become a trend during the pandemic with capacity at bars and restaurants strictly limited. Supporters say the rules are needed to preserve public safety and quality of life for residents while opponents believe the regulations go too far preventing property owners from earning extra income renting their homes on a short-term basis. Brick's proposed ordinance can be viewed in full beginning at page 28 of this document: <http://www.bricktownship.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Press-Copy-10-27-20.pdf>

State Reviews Sidewalk Access Plan for Long Beach Island Causeway

Environmental and transportation officials are reviewing a plan for a walkway that will allow Cedar Bonnet Island residents a safe way to access new sidewalks on the north side of the rebuilt old Causeway for residents living on the south side of the island. Once approved, the NJ Department of Transportation will construct the sidewalk.

The new sidewalk is part of the final phase of the \$312 federally funded improvement project of the Route 72 Causeway to Long Beach Island. Project contracts are expected to go to bid by end of year. Contract 1A addresses the safety and operational changes at the Route 72/Marsha Drive intersection. Contract 1B will reconfigure the Causeway circle in Ship Bottom, where the state highway intersects with Long Beach Boulevard.

Work on expanding and rehabbing the Causeway began in 2013. It is expected to continue through 2022.

Toms River Undergoes Property Revaluation

Professional Property Appraisers, the company hired by Toms River Township to bring properties up to current value, has begun exterior inspections throughout the Township. Toms River has not performed a revaluation since Superstorm Sandy hit in October 2012. For more information about the process, visit the following links:

[Toms River Revaluation Information](#)

[What is Revaluation FAQs](#)

[Understanding Revaluations](#)

[2020 News for Taxpayers](#)

[Inspection Notice](#)

[Batch 1 Inspection Map](#)

[Toms River FAQ](#)

[Professional Property Appraisers, Inc.](#)

Toms River Increases Requirements for Flood Elevation Certificates

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently warned Toms River about its status in the Community Rating System (CRS) after a routine audit of elevation certificates for homes in the flood plain were rejected because of typos and other small errors. As a result, the Township is now requiring homes in the flood plain applying for a final engineering inspection for a certificate of occupancy to obtain a copy of the built survey, and, two copies of a fully signed and sealed elevation certificate.

Elevation certificates have been required of homes that have been rebuilt or new construction since Superstorm Sandy devastated the area eight years ago. The documentation certifies efforts have been made to reduce the risk of property damage from another historic flooding event. Township properties receive a 15 percent reduction in flood insurance premiums because of Toms River's participation in the FEMA Community Rating System. To be eligible in CRS, the township must show that 90 percent of every elevation certificate is correct. For more information about Toms River Floodplain Management, visit <https://www.tomsrivertownship.com/431/Floodplain-Management>