Chairman William Amann called the meeting to order at approximately 6:10 PM, and the members pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The roll was taken and the following members were Present:
- William Amann, Chairman
- Jeanne Perantoni, Vice Chair
- Wayne DeFeo, Secretary
- Paul Drake
- Jeffrey Grant
- Susan Dorward
- Walter Lane

Absent:
- Axel Breidenbruch
- Jeffrey Foose
- William Knox
- Honorable Sara Sooy, Freeholder Liaison the Energy Council

Also Present:
- Laurette Kratina, Somerset County Planning Division, Staff Liaison to the Energy Council

Approval of the April 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes
A motion to approve the April 18, 2019 meeting minutes without changes was submitted by Ms. Dorward and seconded by Mr. DeFeo. All approved and the motion carried.

Chairman’s Comments
Chairman Amann noted that he will reserve his comments for the discussion of the recently released Draft State Energy Master Plan (EMP) to be addressed during the New Business portion of the meeting.

New Business

Draft State Energy Master Plan: A “Discussion Points” document was provided by Chairman Amann to focus the group’s dialogue on the Draft EMP. Due to the extensive nature of the document, he recommended that review of the seven strategies/sections of plan be divided up among the Council’s standing committees. It was agreed that the Renewable Energy and Technology Committee will cover in a detailed way Strategy 1 (Transportation Sector) and Strategy 2 (Renewable Energy and DER); the Resiliency and Sustainability Committee will cover Strategy 3 (Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Demand), Strategy 4 (Building Sector) and Strategy 5 (Grid and Utility Infrastructure); and the Education and Awareness Committee will cover Strategy 6 (Community Energy Planning and Environmental Justice and Strategy 7 (Clean Energy Technology Economy). Mr. Grant indicated his concern that the draft plan aligns with the “Green New Deal”. He indicated that folks have been asking him to comment on the parts of the draft EMP that pertain to the real estate industry such as making buildings EV ready, converting buildings to all-electric... He requested to shift his review responsibility to the Strategy 4 section of the draft EMP. Ms. Dorward agreed to split Strategies 1 and 2 with Mr.
Briedenbruch to accommodate this shift, which was agreeable to the Chairman. The Chairman suggested that the entire August Meeting could be dedicated to this, or a special meeting could be added to spread the discussion over two meetings. If the Council is considering submitting comments during the public review process, Mr. Grant suggested that the submission deadline of Sept. 16th be taken into consideration. This means the Council should consider adding a meeting in July. Mr. Lane noted that the Freeholders will need a chance to review anything the Council is going to submit. Ms. Perantoni suggested use of a template to help the committees organize their thoughts and generate a consistent product. Mr. Drake noted that the comments will be categorized by the BPU and they are required to provide responses to them. Ms. Dorward pointed out the list of questions in the “Request for Feedback” section at the end of the EMP. The use of a template and the development of short, simple bulleted response comments were recommended by Mr. DeFeo. He noted that the Council could include a supporting matrix with data points linked to the bullet-point overview. Mr. Drake suggested more broadly advertising one of the Council’s public meetings to open the discussion on the Draft Plan. Ms. Dorward indicated the Council’s e-mail service list members could be invited. Mr. Lane pointed out that first the Council needs to define its position on the EMP. The Renewable Energy and Technology Meeting is being held on Thursday, July 18th. It was agreed that the whole Council will meet at 6:00 pm on July 18th in lieu of the committee to discuss half of the Strategies. The balance of the strategies will be discussed at the regularly scheduled August 20th Council Meeting. Mr. Lane suggested that the Council’s draft bullet points be ready for Freeholder review a week or two before the public comment period ends, at an executive session. Chairman Amann noted that the Council’s response should focus on the County’s perspective, and therefore the committees should not be overly concerned about addressing all of the BPU’s discussion questions; only those that are relevant. Mr. Lane obtained the public notice from the internet during the meeting and shared information about the public hearing schedule and confirmed that the deadline for public comment is noon on Monday September 16th.

Ms. Dorward noted the draft plan refers to studies that are underway that will be incorporated into the plan; therefore the Council is essentially reviewing an incomplete document. It was noted that the plan is a guidance document for use in developing rules, regulations, capital spending plans and programs, by Mr. DeFeo, who recommended that the Council focus on finding “common ground” areas, and that there may actually be a lot of them. Ms. Perantoni said she will focus most on aspects she thinks the Council is in agreement with, rather than oppose or criticize. Mr. Grant noted that we can’t avoid speaking out against aspects we disagree strongly with. Chairman Amann advised the committees to focus on what is good for the County and its municipalities; and reminded everyone of the conflict of interest clause in the Council’s Bylaws in terms of how we approach this. The EMP draft goal to make all buildings all-electric is viewed as unrealistic and problematic by Mr. Grant, and he agreed to include some metrics in his review comments.

Several members agreed that the draft Plan is insufficient in terms of addressing costs. The need for a cost analysis/fiscal impact assessment for many of items in the plan is needed, which is often undertaken as part of the rule-making/legislative process as noted by Mr. DeFeo. Mr. Lane noted that the economic competitiveness of NJ and the County needs to be a major consideration. Ms. Perantoni pointed out the proposed Green Bank called for in the EMP may help get projects off the ground in NJ that wouldn’t ordinarily get done. Mr. Lane suggested that the Council show how the EMP reinforces existing County policies such as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The draft plan is also weak in terms of resiliency. Mr. Grant noted that energy diversity is important from a resiliency perspective. A completely electrified transportation system could increase risks and vulnerability. Back-up energy for buildings is important and will be addressed in Mr. Grant’s comments.
Chairman Amann concluded the discussion on this topic by noting that since one of the goals and recognized benefits in the draft Plan is avoiding and mitigating climate change, the Council needs to decide if it accepts this premise.

**Council Position on Climate Change:** Chairman Amann noted that the EMP includes very definitive statements regarding climate change as a global threat, which is caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with human activities. It is very difficult to evaluate the EMP if the Council does not have a consensus on the fact that climate change is a serious imminent threat caused by carbon and other GHG emissions. Whether or not we agree with this premise will directly shape the Council’s review comments. Chairman Amann recommended that the Council develop a consensus-based statement after debating the issue. Mr. DeFeo and Ms. Perantoni agreed that the Council needs to develop a position on this matter. Chairman Amann and Mr. Lane noted that this was requested by Freeholder Sooy, and emphasized that in addition to the Council taking a position, the Freeholders also need to do this. Mr. Lane recommended that the Council formulate its position statement on this matter and submit it to the Freeholder Board. Ms. Perantoni recommended that identification of science-based climate change threats specific to Somerset County be included in the statement following language acknowledging the root causes; and indicating that these effects are imminent without including a specific timeline, which is why the County needs to take action. She suggested that the Council could have separate majority and minority reporting on this matter if necessary. Mr. DeFeo concurred, noting that the causes are less important than the impacts that have been documented and projected by the scientific community. He emphasized that one of the questions that is debated is whether anything can be done about it. Chairman Amann recommended the group put forth some thoughts and phrases that can be included in the Council’s statement to the Freeholders, along with the identification of some prudent measures that can be taken, which can be refined as needed. Below are some of the phrases that were articulated for which there was consensus among those present:

- Climate change is a serious and imminent threat proven by the scientific community
- The primary cause of climate change is from carbon and other forms of GHG emissions generated by human activities
- Climate change impacts on Somerset County could be identified in the statement, that substantiate why we need to take action
- Prudent actions the Freeholders can take/support could be included in the statement

Mr. Grant indicated that he believes that compared to the increases in GHG emissions caused by China and India, anything the United States could do to reduce GHGs would not have a significant impact in terms of curtailing climate change globally. Ms. Dorward indicated that the U.S. still produces a quarter of total GHG emissions. Chairman Amann stated that since the U.S. is a leading nation in the world, it has an obligation to act. The relationship between carbon emissions and national GDP was raised by Mr. Grant as his preferred metric. Horrendous air quality in China was noted by Mr. Drake, and the need to lead by example in the United States. Mr. DeFeo noted that China is spending more on solar and is transitioning its energy and car industry away from coal and fossil fuels faster than the United States. Mr. Grant said that if we implement the draft Plan as written, it could bankrupt the State. If you go along with the Green New Deal, it could bankrupt the entire Country.

Ms. Dorward asked if the Chairman knows where the Freeholders currently stand with regard to Climate Change. He responded by saying that the feedback on this question that the received from Freeholder Sooy is that they agree that Climate Change is a real threat. The extent to which the Freeholders agree with the Council’s statement from a political and policy perspective is up to them according to Mr. Drake. Mr. Lane concurred, noting that the Freeholders will
decide whether or not they agree with statement when it is submitted to them by the Council. Mr. Lane emphasized that Council’s review of the EMP generated the need for a policy statement on Climate Change by the Council, even though the review comments on the EMP and the Council’s Climate Change Policy Statement are two separate things to be submitted to the Freeholders. He noted that the Freeholders are meeting on August 27th and Sept. 10th. Mr. Lane indicated he would expect the Freeholders will not seek a lot of changes to the Council’s review comments on the draft Plan and that the Council’s Policy Statement could be submitted later in the fall. In response to Mr. Grant’s question, Chairman Amman reiterated that Freeholder Sooy advised him that the Freeholders want to take a position on Climate Change, and requested a policy statement from the Council on this, so that they can use it to inform their own position. Mr. Lane noted that similarly, the County Planning Board has recognized the need for the County to formulate a position on this matter because of its work on the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Energy Council and Freeholder stance on this matter will shape the Planning Division’s upcoming work on the Resiliency Element of the County Master Plan.

Ms. Dorward referred to the first sentence in the EMP for some wording that could be adapted by the Council as follows: “There is near unanimous scientific consensus that the global threat of climate change is grave and that it demands a swift local action and focused state leadership…” It goes on to say in the next paragraph, “In response, New Jersey is undertaking a new EMP that encompasses a dramatically broader scope than previous EMPs…” The Council could include a similar statement about Climate Change as something that needs to be acted upon; and here’s what we are doing…. She asked about the length that the Council’s statement should be. Mr. DeFeo suggested 2 or 3 paragraphs. Mr. Grant suggested that the Council and County may not need a separate policy statement, since the State’s policy statement would apply. It would be redundant. Other members felt it is appropriate for the County to have its own policy. Mr. Grant suggested that the Council could ask the Freeholders to affirm the position stated in the draft EMP.

Mr. DeFeo provided clarification on terminology, indicating “climate change” is more appropriate than “global warming”.

Chairman Amann concluded the conversation on this matter by stating that he will work with Ms. Kratina to craft a draft Climate Change Policy Statement that will be circulated, and everyone will be invited to use MS Word’s track change tool to share their recommended refinements.

Creating Vibrant Neighborhoods Workshop: Chairman Amann noted that due to the delays regarding when the new EMP is scheduled to be adopted (tentatively in December 2019) the original concept for the Energy Council’s ½ day conference on the EMP that was scheduled for Sept. 13th does not work for timing reasons. An alternative event concept has been put forth by the County Planning Division associated with the significant growth in affordable housing development that will occur as a result of recent Mount Laurel IV court decisions. The Planning Board wants to promote the use energy efficient, resilient and sustainable building and site design for these projects. (He referred to the 82 projects totaling 9,000 housing units are proposed countywide noted in Ms. Kratina’s presentation to the County Planning Board this afternoon). He noted the Planning Board wants to educate local planners, developers and officials about good design and construction practices and a ½ day workshop for this purpose is proposed. Chairman Amann noted that he reached out to Matt Kaplan from ReVireo, Inc. who is the Green Building Council’s residential construction expert, who will be happy to come and speak, and present some residential case studies.

Ms. Dorward raised a suggestion about including the Community Energy Planning Grant now being offered by the BPU as part of the BPU’s presentation at this event. This grant program is
targeted toward low income and environmental justice communities. Applications must involve a partnership with businesses and non-profits. Mr. Lane noted that the event would take place at a County facility. Ms. Kratina noted that the case studies presented during the first half are intended to inspire and raise interest, and the second half of the event would focus on resources available to get them done. An opportunity to showcase County initiatives would be provided at the end. Mr. Lane noted that a decision needs to be made concerning the time of day it should be held, which would maximize the number of people who can attend. A morning event may attract more staff-level participants whereas a late afternoon event may attract more elected officials. The Sept. 13th date is tentative until space availability is determined. The hope is to get a panel from the BPU and Clean Energy program, DCA, and EDA to discuss incentives and resources available to residential redevelopment and new construction. Chairman Amann noted that BPU is making major changes to the Clean Energy Program and more funding may become available, so they may end up dominating the discussion, potentially consuming the whole time slot. LEED certification and Well Building will have to be rolled into Matt Kaplan’s presentation. Ms. Kratina will refine the proposal to reflect the Council’s feedback and work with Mr. Lane to lock in the date and location. A resource sheet containing links to the programs and resources described at the event could be distributed as part of the event packet. Ms. Dorward agreed to provide Ms. Kratina with the contact information for the new outreach person in NJBPU-Clean Energy Program. It was agreed that the targeted audience should be staff and consultant planners, business administrators, engineers, clerks, etc. and holding the event in the morning.

Mr. Lane pointed out that on Sept. 25th, a representative from the Energy Council will be speaking at the Planning Board’s quarterly Planning Partner’s Forum, which has a potential audience overlap that may result in folks choosing to attend one or the other event. Therefore, keeping with an earlier date – possibly Sept. 13th may be best. Chairman Amann reaffirmed that since the goal is to influence how the affordable housing projects take shape, having this event sooner rather than later would be appropriate.

Old Business

Project Prioritization and Tracking: Chairman Amann noted that no significant changes to the status of the projects included in the tracking sheet have taken place other than the progress underway on various initiatives at the Committee level, which will be discussed under Committee Reports.

Committee Meeting Schedule: Ms. Kratina noted that the Council’s Standing Committee Meeting Schedule was updated to reflect alternate dates chosen by the Education and Awareness Committee for the balance of the year. The schedule was also expanded to include the Council’s Executive Committee and the dates and times it is scheduled to meet during the balance of the year. Copies of the updated schedule were distributed at the meeting and will be provided electronically to each member.

Committee Chair Reports

Renewable Energy & Technology: Ms. Dorward noted that her Committee met on May 23rd. The committee is still figuring out what it wants to do in terms of presenting information on the various technology topics being researched by the Committee to the Freeholders. Chairman Amann followed-up on this question with Freeholder Sooy. According to the Chairman, Freeholder Sooy indicated the Freeholders would absolutely be interested in receiving presentations on these topics from the Council. He recommended that the Committee come up with a short list of meaningful, actionable presentation topics. Mr. Lane noted that about 5 to 8
minutes is generally allotted for presentations given at regular Freeholder meetings. More than one presentation may be needed that address the different topics. Ms. Dorward agreed to will provide a slide template in response to Mr. Grant’s request. A special meeting could be arranged if the Freeholders would like more detailed information. A presentation focused on electric vehicles would not be necessary due to prior Freeholder initiatives dealing with this topic. Mr. Grant noted that there is cross-over between the technology research his committee is doing and its review of the draft EMP.

A recommendation was made by the committee that the County examine the schedule it is using to recharge its electric vehicles so that this is occurring off-peak. There may be a way of programing the one class-2 charger the County currently has to facilitate this. Mr. Lane noted that this it is being used for 4 vehicles currently, and that informal arrangements are in place to share the charging station until deployment expands.

**Education and Awareness:** Chairman Amann noted that the County Videographer released the revised version of the video just before this meeting started. A few members present were able to watch it. Mr. DeFeo noted it the message is very clear and to the point and is appropriate in length. Ms. Dorward noted that the website link at the end needs to be shortened. A more memorable URL would be better. It was also recommended that the Chairman’s license plate number should be blocked-out in the video. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Lane was able to access the video via cellphone so that everyone could watch it during the meeting. Once these two changes are made the group agreed it will be ready to release to the public.

Ms. Perantoni noted that her committee met on May 16th at which a 15-20 minute-long Energy Council presentation to be given at September 25th Planning Partners Forum was discussed. The video and Home Energy Efficiency Self-assessment Tool will be unveiled at this meeting and at the September 24th Freeholder Meeting at which the Energy Efficiency Day (October 2, 2019) Proclamation would be acted upon. Refinements resulting in a “Version 1” of this Tool based on the Chairman’s recommendations were discussed, which eliminates the scoring system. Ms. Perantoni thanked those who tested the tool on their own homes, and invited others to do it as well and submit their findings. A more suitable scoring system could be developed later on and added to a future “Version 2”. A greater percentage of LED light bulbs rather than total number should be emphasized. Removal of the transportation topic was also agreed to as recommended by Chairman Amann. It was agreed that transportation efficiency should be treated separately through another venue, perhaps in partnership with RideWise. Mr. DeFeo noted that including recommendations about proper ventilation in this Tool was very appropriate.

Mr. DeFeo noted his involvement in organizing the Sustainable Living tent at the Burlington County Green Fair, and that Techniart, which has a state contract to sell low-cost LED lighting, is a key participant. This is the company that let the Council the bulbs featured in the video. The goal of the Green Fair event was to get everyone to take something with them to make their home more efficient. Thousands were sold at a discount. He recommends a pop-up type lighting fair be held tied to an existing event in Somerset County in the future. This company’s warehouse is located in Somerset County. The committee agreed to look into this, and will work on identifying an appropriate pairing. Mr. DeFeo can help put the committee in touch with Techniart.

**Resilience and Sustainability:** Mr. Drake noted that he is working on scheduling a meeting of the committee. In the meantime, the Planning Division’s draft Energy Resiliency Framework Document was circulated for review and feedback by the Committee. The intent is for an updated version of this report to serve as the background for a new resiliency element to be
added to the County Master Plan. Mr. Drake complemented the direction this project is heading, noting that the draft report includes a lot of good information and will be very helpful for this purpose. There are synergies with the committee's review of the draft EMP.

**Public Policy:** Mr. DeFeo noted that state legislation is on hold until an agreement can be reached regarding the state budget.

**Upcoming Meetings and Events**

- The USGBC - NJ is holding a “Women in Green” event on June 19, 2019 at Montclair State University
- A Mini Green-Build Conference “Build it Better” is being held on September 12th in Jersey City involving a full day of training and discussion opportunities which is open to a nationwide audience.

**Public Comment**

No members of the public were present.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was submitted by Mr. DeFeo and seconded by Ms. Perantoni at approximately 8:15 pm.