

Our Panelists



Dennis O’Neal, retired Engineer for Hopewell Borough

Dennis O’Neal was the planning board engineer for Hopewell Borough for 30 years. In addition to Hopewell Borough, he was the planning board engineer for East Amwell (24 years), Stockton Borough (19 years), and was a consultant and conflict engineer for Hopewell Township (10+ years). He received a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, is a licensed professional engineer in New Jersey and New York, and is a licensed professional planner in New Jersey. Dennis retired from Ferriero Engineering, Inc. on December 31, 2019. For 6 years, he served on the Watershed Institute’s board with 3 additional years on the advisory board.

Today, he is an avid musician, motorcycle rider, and owner of O’Neal Engineering, LLC. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a life member of New Jersey Society of Municipal Engineers. Dennis was also Co-Chairman of the 10th annual Hopewell Harvest Fair, and has served on the board for 10+ years.

Jim Kyle, Professional Planner

Jim Kyle graduated from cook college at Rutgers University in 1996. With over 20 years of experience in the field of environmental planning and design, Jim has both a public and private sector perspective. He has served on the staff of the Hunterdon County Planning Board in Flemington (1997), is currently appointed as consulting municipal planner in Bethlehem Township and the Town of Clinton in Hunterdon county, Franklin and Oxford Townships in Warren county, and is the planning consultant for the Zoning Board of Adjustment in West Amwell Township.

He is also assisting the Borough of Alpha in Warren county and the Borough of Raritan in Somersset county with their affordable housing planning efforts. Jim Kyle is the founder of Kyle Planning and Design. During the course of his career Jim has worked with municipal planning boards, zoning boards and governing Bodies...prepared a number of master plan elements and related planning studies including farmland preservation plans, open space and recreation plans, land use plans, housing elements and fair share plans and conservation plans.

Marylou Millard Ferrara, Hopewell Borough Planning Board Member

Marylou Millard Ferrara is a former Mayor of Hopewell Township who presided over the Master Plan re-exam and subsequent re-zoning of the Township that resulted in the creation of the Valley Resource Agriculture and Mountain Resource Conservation zoning districts.

That rezoning was subsequently challenged in court, and upheld at the Superior Court level, and again by the Appellate Division. Since leaving elected office, she has continued to serve on Planning boards and Zoning boards.



Michele R. Donato, Land Use Attorney

Michele R. Donato graduated from Rutgers Law School, where she was an editor of the Rutgers Law Review. She clerked for the Honorable Merritt Lane, Jr., who handled the prerogative writ calendar for Monmouth County. She currently represents the Planning Boards in the City of Plainfield and Boroughs of Shrewsbury and Roosevelt and is special counsel to several municipalities for land use, environmental and historic preservation matters. Ms. Donato has represented municipal agencies, developers and citizen groups throughout her career. Her practice is almost exclusively devoted to land use, historic preservation and environmental law.

Ms. Donato is General Counsel to New Jersey Planning Officials and Secretary for the Institute of Local Government Attorneys. Ms. Donato is the Ocean County Chair for the Citizens' Campaign. She is an Adjunct Professor with Rutgers University, Bureau of Local Government Services, and she teaches and lectures frequently for organizations and agencies throughout the State. Ms. Donato participated in the prestigious Oxford University Roundtable. She received the Monsignor Harding Award of Merit honored her with an award for her work in preserving the environment. Ms. Donato received the William Cox Award for Excellence in Land Use in 2013.

