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2019 Women in Building Services: Bonnie Franson, Nelson Pope Voorhis, Hudson Valley Office

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Name: Bonnie Franson, AICP CEP, PP

Title: Partner

Company Name: Nelson Pope Voorhis, Hudson Valley Office

How many years have you been in your current field? 33

List up to three CRE organizations that you are currently a member of:

American Institute of Certified Planners,
Certified Environmental Planner,
Licensed Planner State of New Jersey,
NY Planning Federation,
Rockland Municipal Planning Federation

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?
Managing a public workshop with 200 people in attendance. Residents and business owners were empowered to express a vision for their community, and trusted that their comments would be considered during planning for the redevelopment of a rural hamlet. For this project, it was important to gain the public's trust, so they did not feel that a plan would be imposed upon their community from the upper levels of government. Our team manages workshops in a way that residents and other stakeholders have a voice and that no one person dominates the process. When residents approach our team and thank us for listening, I know we have accomplished our objective.

What does it mean to you to be a team player?

As a partner and project manager, the value of being a team player comes from being able to acknowledge and give credit to my entire team for a job well done. To be able to pitch in even if it is not my project especially if it helps them meet timelines. It means working together to produce and deliver the best product for our clients.

What trend(s) do you predict to dominate your industry in 2019?

On Long Island and in the Hudson River Valley, I see a movement back into community centers, i.e., the hamlets, villages and cities in a region. My firm reviews and participates in developing land use regulations for the redevelopment and retrofits of failing or underutilized shopping centers and central business districts into mixed use communities that will activate these locations. Residents and employees are drawn to these communities, seeking a quality of life that is less goods driven, and more experiential with entertainment, restaurants, and other venues offering a desirable social environment.

Which of your philanthropic endeavors are you most proud of?

Being chairwoman of the Town of Monroe Planning Board. I enjoy working with a group of like-minded volunteers who all strive to protect the beauty of our town, its natural resources and landscape, and allow development that fits with the vision for Monroe.

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