

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – February 2, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Gabrielle Bolarakis (arrived at 8:18), Page Stiger, Richard Dodds, Dana Desiderio (arrived at 8:24) Commissioner Jeff Kuhl, Tom Mathews

ABSENT: Marc Saluk, Natalie Zaman, Commissioner Director Rich, Commissioner Van Doren

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Millette, Bob Hornby, Frank Bell (arrived at 8:30), Katherine Fullerton, Sue Pena, Patty Leidner (arrived at 8:20), Rebecca Deakin
Aaron Culton- County Counsel

Planning Board Chair Carol Hoffmann read the Open Public Meetings Act notice and called the meeting to order at 8:16 A.M.

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided by prominently posting and maintaining so posted throughout the year in the Office of the County Clerk, Hall of Records, Main Street, Flemington, New Jersey, a public place reserved for such announcements, and by mailing on or before December 13th, 2022 to The Hunterdon Democrat, The Express Times, Courier News, The Trenton Times, Star Ledger, and TAPinto, newspapers designated by the Hunterdon County Planning Board to receive such notices. Notice has also been posted online in the Hunterdon County News."

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 5, 2023 MEETING

Motion to approve minutes as accepted, Richard Dodds, Page Stiger seconded, Commissioner Jeff Kuhl abstained. Motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Commissioner Kuhl updated that Route 629 around the reservoir has been opened to traffic. New Jersey American Water was concerned about terrorism, but everything is opened back up again. We are working on a high-speed internet system for the County. The library upgrades are just about done. We have also been giving out quite a bit of Historic Grant monies. The Lambertville Historical Society, The River Mill Society, The Hunterdon Historical Society, The Readington Museum, and The Vought House have been the recent recipients of these monies.

STAFF UPDATES

Farmland: Bob Hornby

Bob reported that there are 23 active preservation applications in 10 municipalities: 8 in the County Planning Incentive Grant Program, 5 in the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program, and 10 in the State Direct Easement Program. There are additional applications in preliminary stages. The Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) held their reorganization meeting on January 12, Dave Bond will continue as Chair and Bob Hoffman is vice-Chair. On the agenda for February are two Right to Farm Commercial Farm Certifications, one in Readington and another in Tewksbury. The Special Occasion Events on Preserved Farms bill has passed both houses of the Legislature and is effective immediately. Preserved farms that produce over \$10,000 in agricultural goods will be permitted to host up to 26 events annually with certain restrictions on size and public safety measures. Soil Protection Standards for Preserved Farms continues to be debated by the SADC and interested parties. The CADB and the Land Conservancy of NJ are gathering public comment on the Comprehensive Farmland Development Plan through March 7. There will be a public meeting March 9 at 8pm, a digital copy of the plan is available on the County website. First adopted in 2008, the plan is required to be updated every 10 years to qualify for continuing SADC preservation funding. Board members asked Bob to explain the Special Occasions Event bill more.

Open Space: Bill Millette

Bill reported that nonprofits and municipalities are preparing to submit their 2023 historic preservation grant applications. Staff have been providing guidance to complete the applications, as well as Municipal grant applications. Many municipalities are looking to utilize the grant program to fund park improvements or historic projects. The Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) met on January 23rd and reviewed Lambertville's request for funding for trail building in Ely Park. POSAC recommended approval and the request now

moves on to the Commissioners for approval. At the POSAC meeting members reviewed the County park improvement projects that are slated to occur in 2023. These include Deer Path Park improvements such as the playground installation, pavilion construction and rehab, bathroom upgrades, upgrades to the horseshoe pits as well as the dredging of the pond and dam reconstruction. We are also moving forward with the dam rehabilitation at Echo Hill and the installation of the long-awaited bridge over Prescott Brook. We are looking at possible February delivery of the bridge. A few other park projects funded by the Open Space Trust Fund that are underway are the planning of the Arboretum upgrades, resurfacing the Landsdown and Columbia trails, upgrades to signage and kiosks around the park system, and a large-scale invasive species removal project at Tower Hill, where we will be converting a 44-acre former farm field that is choked with invasives back to meadow condition. Further updates will be provided to the Board as these projects progress.

GIS: Patty Leidner

Patty reported that there was one request to participate in Hunterdon Harvest this past month. This will be our first Farmer's market. They have not completed the survey yet, so there is no change to the web mapping app. We will send out a Social Media post soon to remind people of the app and hopefully get more requests to participate in time for the spring season. There was one addition to the HuntHistory.org web mapping app. Holcombe House in Lambertville was added in advance of an event they were holding this past weekend. They are continuing with the data clean up and conversion for the new Signs maintenance application for the Engineering Department. The Board of Elections is making two changes to Raritan Township's Election Districts. They are working on new County-wide and Municipal Election District Maps to show those changes as well as the change to the State Legislative Districts. In addition, staff are updating the Election Districts web mapping app to include these changes as well as the drop-off and early voting locations. This app will provide more information regarding representation and links to websites. As time permits, staff are also working on adding missing and correcting existing addresses in the State's address layer in preparation for NextGEN 911.

Planning Issues: Katherine Fullerton

Katherine reported that the Growth Management Plan sub-committee met on January 19th to review the current recommendations. Staff will meet with the Commissioners today to review the recommendations and confirm that the plan reflects their views also. The draft Farmland Preservation Plan is on the website for review. We will compile comments as they come in. The Plan will go to the CADB board for approval, then to the Planning Board for adoption, and then to the Commissioner Board for acceptance, hopefully by May. The second quarter NJTPA grant has been submitted. Staff will be attending the "At Grade" freight crossing study meeting today. The study to review any gaps within the LINK services has been completed. The recommendations from the consultants are very good, hopefully the rest of the County feels that way. They are working to get the existing routes more static, so that residents can rely on those routes. They propose creating more sedan service for medical appointment purposes. There is also a recommendation of "feeder" loops to connect residents from distant communities. DRC applications have been quiet through the holidays. We had one return, one non-county, and two site plan applications for January. The two site plan applications were granted conditional approval not to construct; we need easements from them. We had a lot of previously approved applications that have submitted further documentation per the conditions of approval. We have one application today for a potential car dealership on Route 202, and a pending application for February 16th.

Administration Projects: Frank Bell

Carol asked if Frank had any report, even though he was not on the agenda. There was no Administration Projects update. Katherine explained that Frank, Natalie, and Marc will be on the agenda quarterly unless something comes up that is substantial and needs to be reported.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol said that the Executive Committee did not meet. The Committee is planning to meet to discuss future Breakfast Talks.

DRC Committee Report:

Carol reported that Gabrielle and Page have volunteered for today's DRC meeting. Phil and Richard volunteered for the February 16th meeting if needed.

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom reported that:

- Bridge RT-16 by the old Merck site, the 3-year project is substantially complete.
- Bridge W115 on Alexauken Creek Road, a stone arch bridge that got completely washed away during Ida will be replaced with a precast concrete arch starting today.
- The Prescott Bridge is being delivered today. The bridge connects Echo Hill Park to the Arboretum. County will create the concrete abutments that the bridge will sit on. The anticipated opening will be in March.
- Bridge U19 on Baptist Bridge Road, which was damaged by Ida, is being fixed by the County. It is taking longer than expected, as it keeps getting set back due to the storms we have been having. Anticipated opening before the month of February is over.

Starting this year, there are a few projects the County will begin:

- The County will start the rehabilitation of the Historic Covered Bridge in Delaware Township. This is a multi-year project, and we are in year two of three. We are replacing the deck with white oak and will have the siding replaced and painted. The project is anticipated to start in June or July.
- We are going to resurface the Landsdown and Columbia Trails. These projects are out to bid. Both trails will be resurfaced from one end to the other.
- The B24 culvert that will be replaced on County Route 635 in Bethlehem Township is out to bid.
- The A45 Bridge will be replaced on 619 between Frenchtown and Milford.
- The ED262 Bridge on Dunkard Church Road will be replaced.
- The County will resurface County Route 579 in Delaware and Raritan Townships from 523 to Ringoes
- The County will resurface County Route 601 from South Hunterdon High School to County Route 518.
- The County will chip seal the entire County Route 639.
- The County will chip seal County Route 605 from Mount Airy to 523.
- The County will mill and pave 519 in Mt. Pleasant, then add a leveling layer on 519 from Mt. Pleasant to Everittstown.
- The County will mill and pave County Route 579 through Bloomsbury.

Tom also attended the Rockfall Mitigation meeting for Kingwood Township. He thought it was a very informative session but thought they could have done a better job informing the public concerning the need for the project.

Old Business/New Business:

Richard followed up from what Tom had mentioned with the Rockfall Mitigation meeting. Richard explained it was a very different meeting, typically it's a show and tell with DOT. This time it was a bit more discussion. It appears they want to listen a bit more.

Dana inquired about the Right to Farm jurisdiction in general. County Counsel replied that it's not always black and white. They take in different criteria.

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachau (Raritan Township); comment topics included:

- Concerned that still no one can hear the meeting in the audience even repositioning the meeting seating.
- The County has no planning for the wildlife in the County. Wildlife live here too and we are selfish.
- A farm is not beneficial to wildlife.

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Page made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Phil seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:18AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday March 2, 2023, at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner