

## HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

### Minutes – June 1, 2023

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Dana Desiderio, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Page Stiger, Richard Dodds, Tom Mathews
- ABSENT:** Marc Saluk, Commissioner Deputy Director Jeff Kuhl, Commissioner Director Rich, Commissioner Van Doren
- STAFF PRESENT:** Bill Millette, Bob Hornby, Frank Bell, Katherine Fullerton, Sue Pena, Rebecca Deakin, Natalie Zaman, Aaron Culton- County Counsel

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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 January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 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 MAY 4, 2023 MEETING

Motion to approve minutes with corrections, Richard Dodds, Andy Borkin seconded. All in Favor.

### COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE

There were no Commissioners present to give report.

### STAFF UPDATES

Farmland: Bob Hornby

There are 23 active preservation applications in 12 municipalities: 4 in the County Planning Incentive Grant Program, 4 in the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program, and 15 in the State Direct Easement Program. A County application in East Amwell rejected a preservation offer as being too low. A State application in Holland closed on May 15, the 3<sup>rd</sup> closing of 2023. Soil Protection Standards for Preserved Farms continue to be debated by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) and interested parties. The SADC has a new member, Tiffany Bohlin, a blueberry farmer from Ocean County to replace Jim Waltman, Executive Director of The Watershed Institute. Special Occasion Events on Preserved Farms guidance documents have been prepared by the SADC, information is being distributed to a variety of stakeholders. One webinar has been recorded, a second is scheduled for June 5 at 7pm, and there will be a live event on June 14 at 4pm in Somerset County. Preserved farms that can show a minimum of \$10,000 in agricultural income can host up to 26 non-agricultural events annually. The CADB has drafted an application to be reviewed at the June 8 meeting. The registration process is with the easement holder, enforcement is through the SADC. There is an appraisal formula bill that passed the Assembly. It could add an additional method to the way preservation values are calculated. The current appraisal process is based on real estate values and not agricultural. The formula would include agricultural, environmental, and economic factors in the preservation offer. Board members discussed the proposed changes to the appraisal process and the Special Occasion Events process. Bob explained that the CADB is trying to make the process as simple as possible and there are no county fees.

Open Space: Bill Millette

Deer Path Parks upgrades continue: Bathroom upgrades and the new permeable paver parking lot have been completed. The Commissioners held a groundbreaking for the all-inclusive playground this past month and construction is well underway. We're looking at late June for completion. Hunterdon Land Trust is working with Raritan Township to preserve and add a 4-acre lot to the open space surrounding and protecting the Plum Brook. POSAC approved an open space assistance grant for 50% funding at their last meeting. An

application by High Bridge to use their municipal grant funding for open space debt service was approved. High Bridge typically uses their grant balance to pay down the debt incurred by the purchase of the Lake Solitude property. Both of these applications will be before the Commissioners at their meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup>. POSAC is looking at facilitating discussions with local environmental commissions and/or open space committees to coordinate efforts and provide a leaning environment for all involved. POSAC's next meeting will be on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

GIS: Rebecca Deakin

There has been some slight progress with the Hunterdon Harvest web mapping application. A farm that requested the survey in 2021 completed the survey and are now on the map; that brings our total to 20 farm/business locations on the map and at the end of May, we received another request to participate. GIS had the opportunity to work with some of the staff from Parks & Recreation to collect a new trail with our GPS unit, we should have the new trail joined with the rest of our trail data next month. We are also working with Parks to determine resident addresses for CivicRec, which they may be rolling out in June. Progress on the Sign Management solution continues, and we plan to try the import again the first week of June. Our data layers are still being updated some of the updated data was provided to NJTPA. We hope to have a new GIS Specialist 2 start in July.

Planning Issues: Katherine Fullerton

Katherine reported that the Highlands Conformance Growth Management Plan subcommittee met yesterday for a status update with the new consultant from Heyer Gruel. We are expecting a lot more material in July for Board members to review. We have received an award letter from the Highlands Council for the Historic Preservation Plan, and the RFP will go out for a consultant for the project. GIS will also get funding through this for the parcel update. The breakfast talk on May 16<sup>th</sup>, the Emergency Preparedness Series, went well with Brayden from OEM. The next session is on June 20<sup>th</sup>, with the DEP talking about flooding. In the fall we will be returning for Cyber Security and Preparedness with BPU. NJTPA FY2024 will start in July. We have finalized the pre award documentation. On May 16 the Commissioner Board approved an opportunity from NJTPA to create a "Local Safety Action Plan". The Federal Government is aiming for a zero-death initiative. NJTPA will consult out and hire someone to do all the work associated with this plan. This Plan will help the County's municipalities qualify for future Federal grants, at no cost to them. Application reviews have been quiet through mid-May. We had 2 site plans, 2 minor subdivisions, and 1 return. The site plan applications were given conditional approval not to construct, until we get the GIS file. At the May 4 DRC meeting, we had a reconsideration of an application from September of 2022. It ended up with no action taken as the applicant will work with Tom. Today we have seven applications for our meeting.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the Executive Committee met on Tuesday, and they reviewed the Local Safety Action Plan. They discussed a possible second plan with NJTPA for connecting trails and open space. We are hoping that Marc Saluk from Economic Development comes next month to give a report, as we are finding some overlap and crossovers from what he is doing.

Carol asked if the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting would be a problem for anyone for attendance? It appears with a show of hands we will have a quorum for that date.

DRC Committee Report:

Carol said that she and Gabrielle would attend today's meeting. The next meeting is on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Andy and Phil volunteered for the next meeting.

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom reported:

- The restoration project on the covered bridge will start in Delaware Township. The bridge will be open until June 20<sup>th</sup>, after that a detour will be in place. Hopefully the bridge will reopen in Mid-September
- B24 on County Route 635 between Mine Road and Rounseville Road will have drainage improvements starting this month with detours.
- County Route 620, R48 and R49– Readington Road, the County is replacing two culverts. Starting June 8<sup>th</sup>, the detour will change as now they will start on R49.

Tom said that the Engineers Office continues to work on the design for the restoration of the Deer Path Park Pond. The pond will be dredged, and a new dam will be built. Engineering is working with a consultant for the Echo Hill Pond, which needs new outlets and dam as its leaking. This project is slated for this year.

Historic Preservation/Cultural & Heritage: Natalie Zaman

Natalie reported that they have 3 new Commissioners on the Board, which brings the roster up to 7. If anyone knows any candidates, please let Natalie know. There are 2 more openings.

In April the Commission applied for a grant with the NJ Council of Humanities to assist us with content creation for HuntHistory.org. It is an application that maps out historic markers that are peppered throughout the County. The grant will review and update these markers for accuracy and accessibility. We are partnering with Economic Development; we will soon be incorporating HuntHistory.org into its website. We are revamping content markers to have them done by 2026. The website will map out the markers with extended content, which will include revolution war and historic sites.

We are doing something similar with the arts. We will start with venues that have regular open hours. We hope that when people come here, they will have a nice package of sites to explore. In addition, we are working with the Parks Department, we partially funded "Music Under the Stars" program with them and to translate their brochures to Spanish. We are also working with senior services, veteran's services, and facility services. We have been funding arts programs, in October we will be funding a Murder Mystery Theatre and working towards the Teen Arts Show which is on view at the Senior Center. We will also be bringing Front Line Arts to the County in July. This is a program by veterans for veterans. We are also partially funding the library's music program. All these programs are grant funded. These grants are applied for from the State. We are also doing an initiative with Roxy Ballet partnering with Economic Development, Old York Cellars, and the Hunterdon Art Tour this fall. They will be starting a pilot program called "Dancing on the Green". Hoping to start a future partnership with them for events on preserved farms.

Hunterdon County has not been represented in a teen arts festival in over a decade. We are back with the NJ Teen Arts Festival in a gallery. We worked with Polytech, Delaware Township School, and Studio Rt.29 to bring this gallery there. In 2024 we will be looking at hosting the next Teen Arts Gallery. Natalie thanked Theresa Diaz from Polytech, Angie Mikula from Delaware Township and Catherine Henderson from Studio Rt 29 who helped support this program. There was a question about QR codes being on the markers, and they will be.

Old Business/New Business:

Carol asked Katherine if there were any updates to the Growth Management Plan. Katherine replied that most of what was distributed in May were the Recommendations and Existing Conditions. If Board members have any comments, they can respond to Katherine.

Richard reported on the Rock Fall Mitigation on Route 29 There has been no information lately on this project.

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachau (Raritan Township); comment topics included:

- Saving nature and wildlife
- The Federal Government has changed their definition of wetlands to be not as broad.

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Richard made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Andy seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50AM.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** Thursday July 6, 2023, at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner