

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – February 3, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Page Stiger, Richard Dodds, Dana Desiderio-arrived at 8:44am, Tom Mathews, Commissioner Van Doren

ABSENT: Marc Saluk, Frank Bell, County Counsel, Commissioner Rich

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Millette, Bob Hornby, Carrie Fellows, Katherine Fullerton, Sue Pena, Patty Liedner, Rebecca Deakin, Derek Swanson, Kris Melchers

This meeting was held via ZOOM, online meeting platform:

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided by prominently posting copies of this notice on the first and second floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street, Building #1, Flemington, New Jersey, and filed in the Office of the County Clerk on or about January 7, 2022. This notice was faxed/emailed to the following newspapers or about January 7, 2022: The Hunterdon Democrat, The Star Ledger, Trenton Times, Courier News and Express Times, newspapers designated to receive such notices. It was also posted online at the Hunterdon County News and on the Hunterdon County website."

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 6, 2022, MEETING

Motion to approve minutes Richard Dodds, Phil Greiner seconded, motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Commissioner Van Doren reported that the new COVID testing center is up and running in the Staples shopping center in town. No appointment is necessary. The State is covering the cost as we partner with Vault Medical for their services. The vaccine clinic and drive-through test kit availability continue at the Route 12 County Complex.

STAFF UPDATES

Farmland: Bob Hornby

The County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) held their reorganization meeting on January 13. Dave Bond will continue as Chair and Bob Hoffman will be Vice Chair. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) notified the County of an additional \$2 million in base grant funding for farmland preservation. There are 11 active preservation applications. Work has begun on the revision of the Farmland Preservation Plan; the current plan was adopted in 2008. The update is required for continued State funding. The CADB has established a subcommittee to work with The Land Conservancy of NJ on the project. The State Department of Agriculture has established a grant program for deer fencing on all farms, the existing SADC program is limited to preserved farms. Funding has not been announced. At the February meeting the CADB will be considering a house replacement on a preserved farm in Bethlehem and a Right to Farm Hearing for the Serrani Farm in Clinton Township regarding equine sales.

Open Space: Bill Millette

Bill reported that the County is moving forward with due diligence on several prospective open space acquisitions. We also have two properties that our nonprofit partners are going to close on within days that will be given to the County upon closing. These two properties will add about 170 acres to the park system, 100 acres in Bethlehem and 70 acres in Tewksbury. The January Parks and Open Space Committee (POSAC) meeting was cancelled but we look forward to our March 28th meeting. The Open Space Grant program has over \$1.9 million available for applicants. On the Parks side of things, we have brought on a consultant to oversee the remediation of the dam and sluiceway of the Echo Hill pond. The pond is man-made and fed from a sluiceway that takes water from the Prescott Brook. The dam has been leaking for some time. There may be more work as the analysis determines the extent of the work involved to shore up that dam and prevent future leaks. Our work continues with identified hazard tree removals around the County.

Planning Issues: Katherine Fullerton

Katherine thanked Frank for being the “other AICP planner” that can sign off on plats. There were 3 applications that needed plats to be signed on days when the rotation schedule fell on Katherine’s remote days. Frank was able to sign the plats, keeping the applications moving. Our new Planner Trainee, Kris Melchers, started on January 10th. Today we have a few Development Review Committee applications to review with Phil and Richard as volunteers. There is Quakertown Solar in Union Township, an addition to the Marriot in Clinton, and a revision to a well filtration system in Alexandria Township. There is a site-specific amendment on a sewer line. The DRC meeting on February 17th could potentially have one application to review. The County received a few proposals for the Growth Management Plan (GMP) as part of the Highlands Conformance process. We are interested in setting a sub-committee with 2 or 3 people to review them. Commissioner Van Doren, Carol Hoffmann and Andy Borkin volunteered. Katherine said that Kris and she have been involved in the Hunterdon County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC is conducting a study on the effectiveness of the LINK. NJDEP has stated that the Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) map is set to expire on July 3, 2022, Katherine and Patty still need to discuss an update to the existing map. The DEP stated that there will be no consequences if mapping is not complete in that time frame.

GIS: Patty Leidner

Patty reported that they continue to review and update the new data server that has been put in place. We are coordinating with Green Acres, doing their data, and naming in the mapping layers. The GIS Division continues to do the Soils data updating into one layer. We now have a 2-foot DEM contour in the whole County. We have been requesting more applications for the Hunterdon Harvest app. Currently we have 28, with nine completed and mapped. The GIS Division has been working with the Cultural & Heritage Commission’s Marker Committee to web map sites. Staff has been creating a Facebook page for Spring updating of websites with two new categories for agriculture. We are also updating the COVID site.

Projects: Frank Bell

Carrie reported for Frank as he was unavailable today. He had been directed to put all other projects on hold, to get the new COVID clinic testing center up and running.

Department Head: Carrie Fellows

Parks is in the process of repairing trailhead parking lots damaged by Tropical Storm Ida. We have been scheduling funding using Open Space Capital and American Rescue Plan funds to complete the repairs; POSAC is being kept informed. Culture & Heritage is updating the language and accuracy of its older historical markers, starting with those about the Revolutionary War as the 250th anniversary is coming up. There are four grants that require a lot of administrative work: NJTPA, State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Historical Commission, as well as the new Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the Committee met in January. They are in collaboration with Tara Shepherd, Director of goHunterdon to do a breakfast talk on Friday March 11 from 9:00-10:30 talking about Electric Vehicles. Governor Murphy signed into law a “Designated Permanent Use Sites” for electric charging vehicles. We will have speakers designated to help municipalities with their ordinances for this law as this is now mandatory. There are BPU grants available for County and State for electric vehicle purchases.

DRC Committee Report:

Carol reported that there is a DRC meeting today. Katherine replied that there are three applications to review today. Phil and Richard volunteered for today’s meeting. Dana and Page volunteered for February 17th.

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom stated that they still have nine structures that are still closed due to Tropical Storm Ida. Four others are open while being repaired and five are closed.

- F-582 in Franklin Township repairs will begin soon and anticipated to reopen this spring.
- W115 in West Amwell, finishing up on a design.
- Repairs to E228 in East Amwell will begin this spring, the anticipation is to reopen it before school begins in late August.

Tom reported that the 2021 Capital Budget consisted of:

- 52 Miles of roadway restriped
- 4 bridges have been painted
- 18 miles of roadway resurfaced
- Bridge C32 replacement

Old Business/New Business:

None to report currently

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachau (Raritan Township); comment topics included:

- Concerns that electric cars are not fully up to speed with technology
- Concerns about fires in connection with electric cars

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Page Stiger made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Richard Dodds seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:06AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday March 3, 2022, at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner