

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – November 4, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Andy Borkin, Page Stiger, Phil Greiner, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Richard Dodds, Dana Desiderio-call in, Tom Mathews- call in

ABSENT: Commissioner Holt, Commissioner Van Doren, Marc Saluk

STAFF PRESENT: Bob Hornby, Carrie Fellows, Frank Bell, Katherine Fullerton, William Millette, Patricia Leidner, Susan Pena, Rebecca Deakin, Derek Swanson, Aaron Culton - County Counsel

Chair, Carol Hoffmann read the Open Public Meetings Act notice and called the meeting to order at 8:15

"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 7, 2021 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."

This meeting was held via ZOOM, an online meeting platform.

MINUTES OF THE October 7, 2021 MEETING:

Motion to approve minutes, Richard Dodds, Dana Desiderio seconded, Andy Borkin and Page Stiger abstained, motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE:

County Commissioners were not available to provide an update.

STAFF UPDATES:

Farmland Update: Bob Hornby

There are 19 active applications in process and 3 new applications. An offer has been made on the Beam farm (Bethlehem). The Division is reviewing 2 proposals for updating the Farmland Plan. Updating the Plan is required every 10 years for grant funding eligibility from the State. The contract will be awarded by the end of December. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) announced an updated version of the Soil Protection Standards for agricultural development on preserved farms. Up to 12% (first version was 8%) or 4 acres (down from 6 acres), whichever is larger, can be permanently altered for agricultural use. Rowan University will be mapping all the preserved farms in NJ as a baseline, those maps must be confirmed on the ground by the easement holder. Hunterdon has 318 easements. Right to Farm: Beneduce (Alexandria) will have a Memorialization of the Board opinion on November 10 (a Wednesday). The Serrani (Clinton Twp.) hearing is on hold. Three new applications from East Amwell, West Amwell, and Readington are being processed and hopefully mediated. Bob was appointed to Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Steering Committee to represent Hunterdon County. This committee coordinates stakeholder interests including non-profits, local government agencies, and the National Park Service.

Open Space: Bill Millette

Staff continues to schedule and track hazard tree removal. This will continue for the foreseeable future. Staff is also requesting proposals for a consultant to perform a hazard tree assessment to prioritize future removals. Staff is also working on a request for proposals for a dam inventory and assessment for all the man-made ponds on County parkland. This is required for dam safety. Appraisals are underway for 3 potential County park acquisitions and staff is working on a contract for a fourth. Preliminary discussions are also underway for a few other preservation opportunities. The next POSAC meeting is on November 22. The Committee will be tackling the topic of the use of e-bikes and potential regulations for their use in County parks.

GIS: Patty Leidner

Staff have started to move and update their ArcGIS desktop to new software. The Tropical Storm Ida damage survey is now closed to new entries. The survey was created to take damage assessments and send them to

FEMA for a disaster declaration. Staff is working with OEM on impacted streams from Ida and reporting them to DEP. The Hunterdon Harvest app has gone live; we have 20 participant requests so far. Hopefully we will put Christmas Tree farms on the app for the holiday. Staff continues to update the COVID and road closure sites for the County.

Projects: Frank Bell

Jail Study: We will be meeting with the sheriff and prosecutors and looking to see what we can possibly do with that building rather than tear it down.

Justice Center: The Phase I project of replacing the cooling tower and the air handler is scheduled for a December start if the replacement parts can be obtained. We are using some American Rescue Plan funds for this upgrade.

Historic Courthouse: The Bidding documents have gone out to the qualified contractors for the first phase.

Rt. 12 Library: Bidding will go out on renovations on the lower area within the library, making a “makers space”. More conference room spaces will be added.

Burn Building: We had the groundbreaking of the new building and began moving soil so that construction can start. Panels and product have started to arrive on site.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: The County is considering locations for vehicle charging stations at select buildings. No determination of the sites has been made.

Planning: Katherine Fullerton

Staff is still working on the RFP for the Growth Management Plan. Staff has been busy with North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA); the 2023 Grant packet was due on October 15. The first quarter of FY22 has been submitted, although we are still waiting for a few financial documents to be signed off. There is one application to review for today’s DRC meeting. The wastewater meetings will resume next week to discuss regulations.

Department Head: Carrie Fellows

Staff continues to work through Tropical Storm Ida, we are now navigating the cost tracking stage. We met last week with County Officials and FEMA updating various items. The Parks infrastructure, repairs including the boardwalk at the Arboretum, and bridges need emergency repair. Last night at the Commissioners’ meeting an ordinance was passed setting aside emergency funding for repairs.

NJTPA – The FY23 grant proposal was submitted. The \$88,765.50 is a solid source of salary and wage income for Planning, GIS, and Economic Development. This grant also provides for \$15,000 in technology purchases to offset expenses such as new computers and software.

Cultural & Heritage: The Local Art Program (LAP) grant has 10 applicants this year, the funding increased to \$125,000, and the County History Partnership Program (CHPP) grant has 4 applicants this year, funding also increased for that grant to \$30,000. Outside review panels will make funding recommendations for review by Commissioners.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the Executive Committee met via ZOOM and discussed the possibility of having live meetings again. It was determined that it would be nice to be back in person, but if the 6-foot social distancing is still required for in-person meetings, it’s not feasible.

DRC Committee Report:

The Planning Board members who agreed to attend today’s meeting are Carol and Andy. Phil and Dana volunteered to attend the November 18 meeting.

Katherine reported that we had 6 applications for the October DRC meetings. 2 were returns, 2 were Non-County, 1 was a denial for East Amwell Township and 1 was a Conditional Approval for Bloomsbury. The housing unit application in East Amwell needs a traffic study and the Bloomsbury application needs a permit from NJDOT.

Today’s DRC meeting: Flemington –100 housing units in two 3-story buildings

Stormwater: Katherine reported that at the April Planning Board meeting Delaware Township was granted a conditional approval for their Stormwater Control Ordinance due to a lack of a penalty section. The DEP would like all conditional approvals to be full approvals. It was noted that DEP would get involved if there are violations, since

Delaware doesn't want to penalize violators. The ordinance has been reviewed by staff and meets the statute and regulations. Planning Board members discussed the ordinance and decided to approve it.

Stormwater Ordinances for Approval: – Katherine Fullerton

- Delaware Township, Ordinance - Full Approval: Moved: Phil Greiner; Seconded Richard Dodds. All in Favor

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom reported that there are some road resurfacing projects that have begun or will begin this month:

- Bridge C-32 on Payne Road should be completed by the end of the month, or early next month.
- County Route 517 from Oldwick, north to the Morris County line
- County Route 635 from Mine Road to Van Sickles, will start mill and paving around 11/15 if the weather permits
- Bridge RT-16 is going into its 2nd year of a 3-year reconstruction

There were 8 bridges that remain closed and potentially will not open until 2022 due to Tropical Storm Ida that are generally in the South County area.

Old Business/New Business:

Richard Dodds reported that the PennEast Pipeline project is over, they have decided to not go through Hunterdon County.

Bob said this may eventually allow properties that are within the pipeline corridor to apply for preservation, the SADC is waiting for the Attorney General to comment on pending litigation. PennEast owns some properties in fee, has some easements under agreement, and could potentially sell them as part of the dissolution of PennEast.

Page Stiger wanted to give Bob Hornby a "Thank you" for helping Union Township revise its Farmland Preservation Plan. It goes to the Planning Board tonight for final approval.

Richard Dodds reported that Kingwood Township is working on funding from the NJ Historic Trust for renovations on the "Lindsey White House". Instead of tearing it down, they are looking to restore it.

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachau introduced herself. Her comment is on Open Space – She believes farming is not Open Space. It should be trees and such, not corn fields. Bill Millette, Open Space Administrator explained that the County leases to farmers as a management tool. The public still has the use of the area.

Carol reminded everyone that the next meeting is on December 2.

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

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday December 2, 2021 at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner