

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – June 3, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Richard Dodds, Dana Desiderio, Tom Mathews, Commissioner Van Doren

ABSENT: Commissioner Holt, Marc Saluk, Page Stiger

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Millette, Bob Hornby, Carrie Fellows, Frank Bell, Katherine Fullerton, Patricia Leidner, Susan Pena, 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 telephonically. Dial in number: 720-399-1558 or 877-658-5107 Passcode: 444103

MINUTES OF THE May 6, 2020 MEETING:

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

COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE:

Commissioner Van Doren reported that the Board of Commissioners and several land preservation groups oppose bills A-4843, A-4844 and A-4845, under consideration in the State Assembly mandating unfunded forestry plans. This legislation would require local governments to prepare forest stewardship plans, which are typically created for bringing timber to market and have little to no consideration of other elements and land stewardship. Mr. Dodds asked where did this initiate from? Commissioner Van Doren replied that it just came up.

STAFF UPDATES:

Farmland Update: Bob Hornby

County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) will be meeting in person June 10. The Kappus Farm in Alexandria closed May 28, 29 acres, third farmland closing of the year and #457 overall, coming up on 35,000 acres of preserved farmland in Hunterdon County. There are a number of other projects in process, and we foresee a couple more closings in 2021. He is working with PSE&G and famers along the easement Right of Way (ROW) across several preserved farms from Three Bridges to Lambertville, as the towers are being replaced with monopole structures. Bob is preparing to update the Farmland Preservation Plan (2008); 10-year updates are required by State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC). SADC draft Soil Protection Standards are out for review; comments are due by June 18. The CADB will set a date at the June 10 meeting for further testimony on the Beneduce Right to Farm hearing. There is a new Right to Farm issue in Clinton that is under review.

Open Space: Bill Millette

The Station Manor parcel closed last month, now the focus is closing the Denton property in Lebanon Township. The sellers did not want to wait for Green Acres funding, so we will use County funding and receive the Green Acres portion as a reimbursement. Bill met with New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the owners of the historic Anderson Tavern in West Amwell to explore preservation options. This property is adjacent to County parkland and notable for its role in the Revolutionary War. The May Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) meeting was held last week; the Committee approved a few memorial plaques and plantings for the Arboretum. An application for preservation of the Eden Holdings property by Hunterdon Land Trust was considered and approved. This is a 48-acre property on CR523 just south of the Mine Street Circle that Raritan has been hoping to preserve; there is development pressure with an approved 19-lot subdivision for the property. It is wooded and contains headwaters for the Neshanic River. Mr. Dodds thanked Bill again for helping expedite the Martin 105-acre closing in Kingwood.

GIS: Patty Leidner

The Cicada Tracing Survey app is up and working for the Health Department. The app for the East Amwell farm project is in its final stages. GIS created three apps for Human Services: Mental Health, Prescription Drug and Addiction Services. Patty is still working on data software review and cleanup, moving away from the Approach database. Staff are still mapping the fireboxes in the county. We have posted the GIS Specialist 3 position, as Friday, June 4 is Daniel's last day in GIS; he has accepted another position out of state.

Projects: Frank Bell

Historic Courthouse: Frank reported that the construction documents and the contractor prequalification package for the renovation are under review for a hearing in June. The County received a \$1.5M New Jersey Historic Trust grant with an equal County match, for a 2-phase project on the Historic Courthouse. Burn Building and Training Center: we are constructing a burn building and related structures in Clinton Township to help our firefighters to train, this is a 3.6-million-dollar project, plans are in review: hopefully a start in the next 2 to 3 months on construction. Chief of Staff Brad Myhre found additional grant funding to help with the construction of an administration office in that complex. HazMat Building: We have additional funding for the Hazmat Building, which we may expand. Justice Center: the cooling towers are 25 years old; we are in the first phase of the replacing the towers at about \$50K. The second phase, the interior cooling units, is running about \$2M. In-house staff are preparing a study on how we can better adaptively reuse the Justice Center jail, instead of tearing it down for \$1M.

Planning: Katherine Fullerton

DRC has had no new applications although there have been a lot of application follow-ups; the DRC meeting today is cancelled. She has been following the cannabis ordinances; each municipality has to prepare their own ordinance indicating if they will permit cannabis-related businesses or not. A few municipalities have prohibited the use rather than permit, until the rules become clearer. Mr. Dodds replied that it is easier to prohibit now and permit the use later, than to permit now and make it more restrictive later.

Department Head: Carrie Fellows

Carrie reported that the Highlands Conformance petition hearing was on May 20 at 4pm. Cmr. Matt Holt, Economic Development Director Marc Saluk and Highlands Council Planning Manager Maryjude Haddock-Weiler made our presentation. Several members of the public and Council spoke in support of our petition. We are the first county in NJ to petition for County Conformance; we are considered the model for NJ. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) FY2022 preliminary grant package is now under review. The grant provides \$70K of salary support and up to \$15K in technology software/equipment for transportation planning work. Operations: Staff will be phasing back into 5-day onsite work schedules by July 12, and County boards are beginning to schedule onsite meetings in the auditorium. We will meet in the auditorium for the July Planning Board Meeting, we will be posting a change of location. Board members may still call into the meeting. Carrie said that the Highlands Hearing minutes from February will need to be held over for further review/corrections, the transcript received from the vendor has some inaccuracies.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the committee will meet next week telephonically.

DRC Committee Report:

Carol said we have no DRC today. Dana volunteered for the June 17 meeting, if needed. We received 6 site plan applications, 3 returns, 3 subdivisions, and 1 subdivision that didn't impact County roads or structures in May. Of the 4 applications heard at the DRC meetings:

- Union Township – Gas station approved
- 4 lots that need to be tweaked together, disapproved due to engineering issues
- Raritan Township – Minor subdivision that needs a ROW easement. Granted Conditional Approval.
- Raritan Township – 75,000 Square Foot warehouse that has engineering and parking issues. Disapproved.

Stormwater Ordinances for Approval: – Katherine Fullerton

- Bloomsbury Borough, Ordinance #103-2021
- East Amwell Township, Ordinance #21-08

- Lambertville, Ordinance #08-2021
- Lebanon Township, Ordinance #2021-04
- All 4 received Full Approval: Moved: Richard Dodds; Seconded: Andy Borkin. All in Favor.
- Readington Township, Ordinance 02-2021
- Stockton Borough, Ordinance 21-01
- These 2 were disapproved and sent back for revisions: Moved: Andy Borkin Seconded: Richard Dodds. All in Favor

Andy asked who polices the municipalities that are out of conformance? Katherine replied you can be out of conformance with the DEP, but we have no action to police it.

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom reported: There are 2 new projects starting in June

- G63 – Pony Bridge in Glen Gardner, sidewalk and joint reinforcement on the bridge. Expected start date of June 7.
- C32 Bridge - Clinton Township is a truss bridge that is being replaced with a concrete bridge. Expected closure to start in June 16.

Tom also said that any road or bridge issues can be found on the County website and social media. There was discussion about guidelines for traffic around schools when parents pick up their children. Tom stated that unless the County is asked for assistance, generally it's dealt with at the municipal level.

Old Business/New Business:

Richard reported that they are still waiting to hear the outcome from the Supreme Court in regard to the PennEast Pipeline project.

Public Comments:

No public comment at this time.

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

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday July 1, 2021 at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner