

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – April 6, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Page Stiger, Richard Dodds, Tom Mathews, Dana Desiderio – arrived at 0835, Commissioner Rich

ABSENT: Marc Saluk, Commissioner VanDoren

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Millette, Bob Hornby, Carrie Fellows, Katherine Fullerton, Sue Pena, Patty Liedner, Rebecca Deakin- call in, Derek Swanson, Kris Melchers- call in, Frank Bell, County Counsel

"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 MARCH 3, 2022, MEETING

Motion to approve minutes with corrections as discussed, Richard Dodds, Tom Mathews seconded, motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Commissioner Rich reported that the budgets are almost finalized for the County. We hope to be back in-person in May. The State is working on their budgets and school monies that are coming back to County school districts. There is going to be a VoTech expansion – groundbreaking is anticipated towards the end of the year. The county received \$25 million grant from the state for the expansion.

STAFF UPDATES

Farmland: Bob Hornby

There are 15 active preservation applications in 8 municipalities; 5 in the County Planning Incentive Grant Program, 5 in the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program, and 5 in the State Direct Easement Program, including several new applications and several that are close to closing. The Mitchell Farm in Kingwood, 70 acres on Tumble Idell Rd, closed March 25 in the State Direct Easement program. County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) staff continues to track various legislative bills regarding Soil Protection Standards on preserved farms and siting for grid scale solar installations on prime soils. A bill passed and was funded for deer fencing grants on all farms. A bill for Special Occasion Events on preserved farms passed both houses in two very different versions and awaits further action. The Ag community is watching the spread of avian flu and the potential for damage on chicken flocks. The CADB will be hosting a public meeting on April 14 at 8pm in the Route 12 Building 1 Assembly Room to gather public input on the Comprehensive Farmland Development Plan. First adopted in 2008, this plan is required to be updated every 10 years to qualify for continuing SADC preservation funding. Municipal Agriculture Advisory Committees, elected officials, and the public are invited to attend. Commissioner Rich inquired more about the avian flu, Bob replied that the food source won't be affected, you can still eat the eggs, but culling could reduce national flock numbers.

Open Space: Bill Millette

The Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) met last week and discussed future park improvement projects as well as 2022 funding levels for grant programs. Some projects are in the planning stages, but we also reviewed the projects that are currently underway such as prep work for the installation of the bridge over the Prescott Brook to connect the Arboretum to Echo Hill. Prep work is also underway on the restoration of the dam and sluiceway of the pond at Echo Hill. The County is requesting proposals for a consultant to assess and provide a High-Risk Tree Inventory to provide a better understanding of how to prioritize and address hazard tree removals in the parks. The Rangers have completed posting of newly acquired properties as well as those parks slated for renewed posting. Because most of the boundary postings are on trees, we need to periodically redo them to account for tree growth as

well as weathering. The County will be replacing wayfinding and general park signage as broken or missing signs are identified. The end of 2022 will mark the close of our last round of 5-year farm leases of County parkland. Planning, Parks, and Finance staff have been going over the leases, maps, and property details to update those documents for new proposals. The County leases open fields to farmers as a management tool to help maintain habitat and to assist in trail maintenance along the edge of those fields. The County park system has 29 named parks, 15 of which include leased land. Parks & Recreation manages about 9,000 acres, and leases about 1,000 acres to local farmers.

GIS: Patricia Liedner

Hunterdon Harvest has had no additional requests to participate in the app. A few are updating their data. Hopefully there will be more participation as Economic Development visits farmers' markets in the Spring. We have 9 complete entrees on the map. There were 29 that requested data. The ArcGis server is up and running. The transferring of layers is done. The link is on the GIS website. We are working on a new website platform which when complete will have everything migrated over. The web mapping app for Cultural & Heritage is almost ready. We continue to update the COVID-19 Dashboard and any of the web mapping apps and data sets.

Projects: Frank Bell

Frank reported that the Hunterdon County Historic Courthouse bid documents are ready, pending New Jersey Historic Trust's final approval. The Justice Center Phase I repair is completed. Phase 2 includes interior work with heating and cooling and has gone out to bid. The new Polytech construction will start in the summer. The building will now include culinary, electrical, and autobody. The Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC) burn building will have footings poured in the fall and foundation material is being shipped next month. Phase II which will happen this summer will have administration, garage, and storage. There has been discussion about creating a backup Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and dispatch system.

Planning Issues: Katherine Fullerton

Katherine reported that the Commissioners have approved a contract with Heyer, Gruel, and Associates to create the County's Growth Management Plan. The first meeting will be held virtually April 14. The March 11 Virtual Electric Vehicle Ordinance Breakfast Talk cosponsored by the Planning Board and goHunterdon had a good turnout. There will be a follow-up meeting on how to craft these ordinances for a specific municipality. We are working on our 3rd quarter NJTPA report to be submitted April 14. The quarterly report for DRC applications is in the packet. The Fox Hollow site plan application came in, but we don't have jurisdiction to review it. They were granted sewer capacity in Branchburg due to a lawsuit 40 years ago, which will be used for proposed affordable housing units. DRC will need to review the site-specific sewer request and subdivision application when it comes in, determine if the request is in conformance with the County's Master Plan, and then forward it to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration. There was discussion regarding another site-specific amendment to the Wastewater Management Plan, a request to include Block 36 Lot 27 in Readington Township in the sewer service area adjacent to the lot. As the property has a conservation easement and is immediately adjacent to the sewer service area, the Planning Board members agreed that the request was consistent with the Hunterdon County Master Plan. This request will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners.

Development Review Committee (DRC) Report:

Page and Andy volunteered for today's DRC meeting. There is a major subdivision in Holland, a subdivision in Lebanon Township, and a non-county application. We have one application for April 21st to review so far. Katherine said she would send an email for volunteers.

Department Head: Carrie Fellows

Carrie reported on the Sustainability Committee that she was asked to form by Administrator Davis. Frank Bell, Katherine, she and Kris Melchers, who worked on Bergen County's Environmental Impact Statement have started brainstorming ideas. She will present the Committee's recommendations to the Facilities Committee and the Board of County Commissioners as requested.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the Committee did not meet this month. Carol asked Carrie to give an update on masks and any COVID updates for the county. Carrie reported that everything is the same. We ask that everyone maintain 6 feet between them, masking is optional in County buildings. The County Commissioners extended the remote/rotating schedule until May 6, primarily due to the mask requirements lifting in schools and the pending holidays.

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom stated that construction season has begun. Current project

- Rt 635 Milling and paving will start on April 18th

There are 11 Ida projects left remaining that need repairs. He has a meeting with FEMA tomorrow as to how much money we will be getting reimbursed from cost of storm damage.

Old Business/New Business:

No new business to report.

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachau commented on the NJ Forest Task Force run by Senator Bob Smith (D Middlesex/Somerset), Chair of the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee. She expressed concerns about logging and its possible effects on wildlife habitat and future policy.

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Richard Dodds made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Page Stiger seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:15AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday May 5, 2022, at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner