

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – March 3, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Page Stiger, Richard Dodds, Tom Mathews, Commissioner Rich

ABSENT: Marc Saluk, Dana Desiderio, Commissioner Van Doren

STAFF PRESENT: Frank Bell, Rebecca Deakin, Carrie Fellows, Katherine Fullerton, Bob Hornby, Kris Melchers, Sue Pena, County Counsel
Via Phone: Patty Leidner, Bill Millette, Derek Swanson

"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 FEBRUARY 3, 2022, MEETING

Motion to approve Richard Dodds, Page Stiger seconded, motion carried.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Commissioner Rich introduced himself to the Planning Board, as it was his first meeting. He didn't have any other comment.

STAFF UPDATES

Farmland: Bob Hornby

Bob reported that there are 15 active preservation applications in eight municipalities: five in the County Planning Incentive Grant Program, four in the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program, and six in the State Direct Easement Program, including several new applications and several that are close to closing. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) released the Fiscal Year 2021 Monitoring Report covering the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Hunterdon contracts with the Hunterdon Soil Conservation District for annual monitoring on 309 farms where Hunterdon holds the development easement. Monitoring was completed on time for all farms. The SADC is in the process of updating and streamlining the electronic reporting process. CADB Staff continues to track various Legislative bills regarding deer fencing grants, Soil Protection Standards on preserved farms, Special Occasion Events on preserved farms, and siting for grid scale solar installations on prime soils. The Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board (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.

Open Space: Bill Millette

Bill reported that last month the County added two properties totaling 175 acres to the County Park system. Hunterdon Land Trust and New Jersey Conservation Foundation provided outside funding for the purchases. Both projects were spearheaded by the nonprofits and then were transferred to the County for ownership and management as part of our park system. Hunterdon Land Trust closed on 100 acres of wooded property in Bethlehem Township across the street from our existing Tower Hill Reserve. New Jersey Conservation Foundation purchased 75 acres along the Rockaway Creek and 523 in Tewksbury Township. This property will make a new passive recreation park called Rockaway Creek Preserve. The next Parks & Open Space Committee will be on March 28th. There is still time and funds available to submit Open Space Acquisition Assistance Grants for consideration at that meeting.

GIS: Rebecca Deakin

Rebecca reported that Hunterdon Harvest has received one additional request to participate since the last meeting, the applicant has not started the survey yet. There will be another Facebook post to encourage new participants. We have made updates to the Hunt History web app based upon feedback from the Cultural & Heritage Commission's Marker Committee. A meeting is scheduled for March 17th to review the web app after these latest changes and determine what remains to complete this first phase for the American Revolution markers. We are continuing work on the new Parcel Viewer and have added some additional layers. We need to finalize the symbology of the layers and finish the instructions for how to use the app before it will be ready for public use. We continue to prepare and transfer our data layers to the new ArcGIS server. We are converting the new steep slopes layer from a raster to a vector layer, which involves merging hundreds of millions of individual polygons into a more manageable dataset. We have had to break the county into multiple sections and there are several steps to each section so it will take some time before this is finished. We are comparing our Open Space layer to what the DEP has. We have some areas that they don't have, they have some areas that we don't have, some of the attributes are missing or different, and the geometry of some locations is different. We continue to update the COVID-19 Dashboard.

Projects: Frank Bell

Frank reported that the HCJAC continues renovations and repairs with the closing of Phase 1, which was the installation of the cooling towers and the starting of Phase 2 that includes interior work with heating and cooling. The Library has bids put out for their renovations in creating a "makers space" and meeting rooms. The project was budgeted for \$1.2 million, but the bids came back lower. We can now we can add extras and still be under with the projected plan. We are going to take advantage of NJ Clean Energy Funding by installing energy efficient LED lighting. We are waiting for the Historic Trust letter for the Historic Courthouse. The Burn Building should be near completion by the end of fall, in March we hope to be starting up again with building. ADA Hearing Loops, which we are applying through grants with DHS, will be installed in the Historic Courthouse, the Commissioners' Room, and the Library.

Planning Issues: Katherine Fullerton

Katherine reported that staff continues to be busy with administration for DRC applications. Kris Melchers, the new Planner Trainee, has been working on old applications to ensure the files are complete. The Highlands Conformance RFP was sent out and the County received four proposals. The subcommittee meet last week to review them. She has also been attending the Hunterdon County Transportation Advisory Committee meetings, as they are doing a study on the efficiency of the LINK. The Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) map is set to expire on July 3, 2022. The existing map needs to be updated. There will be a Breakfast Talk on electric vehicles and the ordinance requiring charging stations on March 11th at 9am. The Municipal Land Use Law was changed, and all municipalities must review site plans for electric vehicle charging stations. The Breakfast Talk and registration is organized through goHunterdon. There are two applications for DRC to review today.

Department Head: Carrie Fellows

Carrie reported that New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) subcontract for 2022 was accepted by the Board of Commissioners at the February 17th meeting. Budget for salary and wage has been submitted to Human Resources. The operating and capital requests will be presented to the Budget Committee today. Mr. Davis has assigned Carrie to lead the County Sustainability Committee. There are a lot of opportunities coming out for municipal and county government to apply for funding for EV (Electric Vehicle) chargers, fast vehicle chargers, and vehicles. Grants range from \$6,000 to \$75,000. We will be reviewing potential projects and opportunities for funding and making a list of recommendations. The recommendations will go beyond EV and include water use, recycling, and purchasing of various sustainable products.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the Committee met, and there will be some changes in the next few weeks. Carrie reported that the remote A & B teams have been extended until April 8th. The Breakfast Talk on Friday March 11 from 9:00-10:30 will be talking about electric vehicles. Please scroll down the email and register so that you can get a ZOOM link to participate. We have set a date for a Farmland Preservation Plan "Lunch" Meeting on June 8th. It will be an outreach session for municipal and ag advisory boards. The last time the Farmland Plan had been updated was in 2008. A public meeting will be held on April 14th.

DRC Committee Report:

Carol reported that there is a DRC meeting today. Katherine replied that there are three applications to review today. Andy and Gabrielle volunteered for today's meeting. Phil Greiner offered to attend the March 17 meeting.

Katherine said she would send an email for volunteers if a March 17th meeting were needed.

Transportation: Tom Mathews

Tom stated that they still have a few bridges still out. They hope to start in Spring with the reconstruction and resurfacing once the weather breaks. Current projects include

- 635 Van Syckles Road to Mine Road
- 517 in Tewksbury from the Cold Brooke Preserve to the Morris County Line
- Rainbow Hill bridge is in for emergency repairs as the decks on both ends of the bridge were demolished after Tropical Storm Ida.
- Van Lieus truss bridge is permanently closed due to an overweight truck causing severe damage. A consultant has been hired to do a design plan.
- W115 on Hamp Road was a stone arch that was completely washed away

Andy asked if Tom had heard anything from the state about the widening of Rt 31 near the hospital. Tom hadn't heard of anything. Carrie replied that it is her understanding that it is on the Transportation Improvement Plan with NJDOT for 2025. Its either in the preliminary or final engineering review. DOT would take it off the Transportation Improvement Plan, then Commissioner Rich, in meetings with DOT, put it back on.

Old Business/New Business:

Page reported for Marc Saluk. The I78/22 Coalition got a grant to do a homebased business ordinance study, which will touch with each of the communities. Hopefully, the product will make a home-based business easier to operate. A traffic study will also be done. Carol asked if utilities will be studied, Page replied that its more for the creation of ordinances. The Passport Program for Hunterdon County Breweries is up and running. If you go to all the breweries, you get a mug. Page wanted to recommend Chris Cree, he owned a wine shop in Bernardsville, 56 Degrees. He is leasing the Perryville Inn on Rt 12. He is a Master of The Wines, there are only 49 in the United States. He's opened a wine shop, store, and a tasting room. They have had events with Metropolitan Seafood and other venues. It is one of the few businesses in Union Township. Richard wanted to know about Rockfall Mitigation. Commissioner Rich replied that it is years out on the NJDOT timetable.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

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

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday April 7, 2022, at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner