

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – September 3, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Hoffmann, Phil Greiner, Andy Borkin, Richard Dodds, Tom Mathews,
ABSENT: Freeholder Van Doren, Freeholder Lanza, Gabrielle Bolarakis, Dana Desiderio, Page Stiger
STAFF PRESENT: Ken Bogen, Bill Millette, Adam Bradford, Marc Saluk, Carrie Fellows
Aaron Culton - County Counsel

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

"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 December 17th, 2019 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 on-line in the Hunterdon County News"

MINUTES OF THE JULY 1, 2020 MEETING:

Motion to approve minutes, Richard Dodds, Andy Borkin seconded, motion carried. Richard Dodds Abstained

FREEHOLDER UPDATE:

No Freeholders were present to report currently.

STAFF UPDATES:

Economic Development:

Marc reported that they are rolling out via Skype the Hunterdon Mainstreet Project. The 579 Trail website was launched two months ago, informed the locals and put a spotlight on our farms stands and agritourism. The Main Street launch is like the 579 Trail plan as it highlights the businesses on Main Street Flemington and surrounding towns. This will be linked to their sites and surrounding towns. This is mainly for the locals at this point to remind everyone that these businesses are here. We approved our 6th grant at the Freeholder meeting last night. East Amwell Township was approved to revisit their town website. They are currently working with us to develop a full Farm Ecosystem. Raritan Township did a full zoning and ordinance update. Franklin Township is also about to wrap up beefing up their home office ordinances. Holland and Milford Township seem to be on track to do the same as studies seem to be in the works. Flemington is also moving forward on a grant from NJ Economic Development. Economic Development on a municipal level is moving as everyone strives to move forward. Andy asked about the Cust Project, Marc replied that he has no details as he is not really involved with it.

Farmland Update:

Adam reported that there are 33 active farmland preservation applications, 8 are Direct Easements, 15 are County PIGS and 10 are Muni PIGS. PSE&G is installing approximately twenty miles of monopole tower high wire electricity lines in Hunterdon County starting at Roseland to Lambertville and then ending at Pleasant Valley. They are switching out the current H frame structures that are 100 years old with 102 new monopole towers that stand 110 to 200 feet tall. A request was made by PSE&G to the NJ State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) for access across portions of the County Agriculture Development Area and three preserved farms. PSE&G is working with the SADC for additional access to the three preserved farms using existing farm lanes and are on the SADC agenda for September. The Special Occasion Winery Pilot Program has not been renewed as it has expired on May 31st. A Bill is making its way through the state legislature to make portions of the pilot program permanent. RTF issues – Beneduce comes back on September 10th for a hearing.

Planning Board and County Agriculture Development Board staff recognized that one of our current CADB members passed away, John Van Nuys. John served the public in many arenas. He was a huge contributor in the preservation of farmland across Hunterdon County. Throughout his tenure, John sat on and was part of a number of boards, committees and agencies including, the Farm & Family Committee, Agriculture Development Board and Soil Conservation Service, to name a few.

Open Space:

Bill said that we have been busy trying to coordinate with our grant recipients to make sure that they have the needed

documents to receive their funding. We are working with NJCF to wrap up the Higgins Acquisition, about 250 acres in East Amwell Township. Raritan Township, we are trying to wrap up the Brownstein Acquisition. The Freeholders just approved the acquisition of the property we call Stanton Manor, a 40-acre piece that lies at the corner of 31 and Stanton Road directly across from the arboretum. We have received the environmental report for the Milford acquisition, it has some areas of concern due to potential contamination from the historic railway use. We are now doing a Phase 2 investigation, soil testing to be sure. If there is a concern, we can generally cap it and have a solution. The Freeholders approved 4 Historic Preservation Grant applications. Hunterdon Land Trust for their Bank Barn. Hunterdon County Historical Society for the Doric House restoration, Kingwood Township with the White House and the Delaware River Mill Society with the John Prall House.

Department Head:

Carrie reported that at the August 18 meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, she provided a summary of what the Division of Parks & Recreation has been doing to control overuse and unauthorized activities in the parks; issues have been primarily in the waterfront areas. We have had a lot of complaints from the locals about littering, ground fires, swimming. We have had to set up message boards notifying public of the rules, and have diminished parking areas and put in “no parking” signs to limit capacity. We have stationed Rangers in “hot “areas with additional shifts on weekend days. Lots of complaints, but we received a nice letter from a patron who complimented a park ranger for going above and beyond, pulling 4 bags of trash from a particular area. Parks, Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) and the Health Department Vector Control Division’s Tadhg Rainey are working to educate the people on the Spotted Lantern Fly which is an invasive insect affecting county tree fruit growers and grape growers. Cultural & Heritage 2020 Special Project Grants were approved by the Board of Chosen Freeholders on August 18. \$22,500 in total was awarded in grants to the Hunterdon Art Museum, Roxey Ballet, Raritan River Music, and one history project, Carla Cielo for research on small domestic outbuildings. It was nice to see them flip their projects to deal with COVID restrictions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

Carol reported that the committee met virtually yesterday to discuss the fall breakfast talk which has been postponed for various reasons including the lack of a County video conferencing platform and a shortage of staff resources. Ken explained that we will not have enough staff resources available to hold a breakfast talk due to his retirement on October 30th. He will also reach out to Rebecca Lunger and have her put things on hold for now.

In response to Carol’s request, Adam gave an update on the timeline for the Land Development Standards update. He said the majority of his time updating the document has been spent on formatting and editing and making final corrections to all of the sections. He is still working on formatting the CADD drawings in section 400 for consistency. County Counsel has also been reviewing the draft. Adam will be reviewing the final major changes with the LDS subcommittee after the DRC meeting. The timeline right now is to review the final draft at the October Planning Board meeting followed by a public meeting and then submit the LDS to the Freeholders for approval as early as November. Adam said the public meeting would be held virtually. The draft LDS would be posted to the County website before the public meeting.

DRC Committee Report:

Carol said that she and Andy will be participating at today’s DRC meeting. Phil and Carol volunteered to participate at the September 17th meeting. There were no questions by the Board concerning the applications that were reviewed since the July 1st board meeting. Today’s application is a lot line adjustment in West Amwell

Supervisors Report:

There were no questions or comments regarding the July& August staff activity report. Ken summarized the status of the County Highlands Plan Conformance project and the importance of the Highlands Plan element. This plan outlines the framework for the County’s conformance with the Highlands’s Regional Master Plan and recommends potential action items for future implementation such as a TDR program, working with Municipalities to identify redevelopment areas and updates to the County Transportation Plan. We just received comments back from the Highlands Council concerning the Plan. Ken will send the draft Plan out to Board members for their review. There will be a public meeting on September 29th to discuss the Plan. The meeting is being hosted by our project consultant, Heyer-Gruel. We do not have a set schedule for adoption of the Plan as of yet.

Transportation:

Tom said that CR513 from Everittstown to Pittstown is being resurfaced as well as the entire length of CR628 from Route 31 up to CR513 at Voorhees High School. CR513 is still closed due to the reconstruction of bridge L6 but is scheduled to reopen in about 2 weeks. Bridge R167 on Barley Sheaf road in Readington is closed and is being replaced. Bridge RT16 off of Route 78 on CR523 is under construction. This 3-year project is being done in phases to keep the traffic flowing. The line stripping contracts are out. They are starting today. The bridge painting contracts are starting next week as well. The annual resurfacing contract is out to bid and work should start in October. CR616 resurfacing from Quakertown to Cherryville is out to bid and will

also start in October. Carol asked about the Mount Pleasant Bridge project. Tom replied that the bridge cannot be demolished until the overhead utilities are removed/relocated. We are on hold now until all the power is restored from the last major storm. Adam had no transportation issues to report at this time. He mentioned that he submitted his annual group quarters report to the State Data Center in July and it appears that no corrections are needed.

Old Business/New Business:

Richard reported that the pipeline news remains quiet. The comment period just ended on the new bifurcated pipeline. PennEast is currently seeking approval for the Pennsylvania side of the proposed pipeline. PennEast recently met with the DRBC and told them they were not required to submit anything to them. It appears that support for the pipeline is dwindling as the price of natural gas keeps going down.

Public Comments:

Richard introduced David Frank who has been a resident of Kingwood Township for 35 years. Mr. Frank's property is upstream from the Muddy Run Road Bridge. The bridge was rebuilt in 1995. Mr. Frank said that the bridge deck was raised over a foot and there was reduced flow capacity due to the reconstruction. He is concerned about the flooding that occurred recently on his property from a major rain event and is asking the County how the flooding can be mitigated. The water has flowed onto his property before but this time the water level came within a few inches of flooding his basement. Tom Mathews said that he would want to know what has changed in the last 25 years that would cause the recent flooding events. Perhaps it is not due to the bridge but additional impervious coverage due to development upstream from Mr. Frank's property. Tom said he will discuss Mr. Frank's concerns with him directly. Mr. Frank said he will send Tom a video of the recent flooding on his property.

Barbara Sauchau from Raritan Township requested the meeting reports be more readily available for the public to view. Her other concern was the PSE&G transmission lines that could cause fires as they have in California. She asked if the County has looked into this issue. Carol addressed the reports question - once the meeting minutes are approved they are posted on the website for public viewing.

There was no further business to be brought before the Board. Richard made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting, Andy seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday October 1st, 2020 at 8:15 AM

Susan Pena for Secretary, Phil Greiner