



**January 15, 2025, Minutes of the Meeting
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:05 a.m.
DATE: January 15, 2025
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Vice-Chairman Bruce Stout, Commissioner Phillip Lubitz, Commissioner Designee Robin Madden, Commissioner John Reiser, Commissioner Douglas Palmer, and Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner participated via online platform and teleconference.

STAFF: Executive Director John Hutchison, Deputy Attorney General Jordan Viana, and Colleen Maloney attended the meeting in the Commission office. Commission Engineer Joseph Ruggeri, Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence, and Communications Director Darlene Yuhas participated via online platform.

GUESTS: Maggie Mitchell-Strehl, Acting Superintendent, Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park; Michael Sellar, Facility Manager, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Robert von Zumbusch, Kingston Historical Society; Michael Ford; Rikki Massand; Thomas A. Zukofski; Thomas J. Muller; Richard Martoglio; Christian Cueto.

Director Hutchison announced that this was a monthly meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission and that the provisions of the “Senator Byron Baer Open Public Meetings Act” (OPMA) had been complied with in the scheduling of the meeting.

Director Hutchison announced that the meeting was being taped pursuant to the exception set forth at Section C.(1) of DEP Policy & Procedure 2.85 “Prohibition of Recording in the Workplace” Policy adopted on September 18, 2019.

Vice-Chairman Stout indicated that the audio feature of the online platform was not functioning correctly, although he was capable of hearing the proceedings and indicating his support or opposition to any particular motion. In accordance with Article II, Section 3, paragraph b. of the Commission Bylaws, Commissioner Lubitz then assumed the chair.

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Since Commission members were participating via telephonic device pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of the Commission Bylaws, Commissioner Lubitz directed Executive Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Present
Commissioner Designee Madden	Present
Commissioner Reiser	Present
Commissioner Lubitz	Present
Commissioner Shoffner	Present
Commissioner Palmer	Absent

Director Hutchison stated that a quorum was present.

Administrative Items

Confirmation of February 19, 2025, Meeting Date

Commissioner Lubitz stated that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for February 19, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the December 18, 2024, Commission Meeting

Commissioner Lubitz inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the December 18, 2024, Commission meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as prepared by staff. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to adopt the minutes as proposed, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner.

Commissioner Lubitz asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Absent

Commissioner Palmer joined the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Commissioner Lubitz stated that the annual election of Commission officers would move forward. He asked for nominations for the Vice-Chairman position. Commissioner Lubitz nominated Vice-Chairman Stout and Commissioner Reiser seconded the motion. Commissioner Lubitz asked for further nominations, and hearing none, asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Abstain
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes

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Commissioner Palmer Yes

The motion was approved.

Commissioner Lubitz asked for nominations for the position of Treasurer. Vice-Chairman Stout nominated Commissioner Lubitz, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Commissioner Lubitz asked for further nominations, and hearing none, asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

None.

Zone B Projects

#22-1278A	216 Route 206 -- Industrial Complex Expansion (Hillsborough Township)
#24-1454D	15 Cranbury Road -- Major Modification (West Windsor Township)
#24-5339A	2495 Brunswick Pike -- Residential Development (Lawrence Township)
#23-5737A	2 Hawthorne Drive -- Proposed Apartment Building (Franklin Township)

Commissioner Lubitz asked if any member of the Commission wished to consider any of the Zone B projects separately. Hearing none, he asked for a motion on the projects. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to approve the projects, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Commissioner Lubitz asked for comment on the projects from the Commissioners. Hearing none, he asked if the public had any questions or comments. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes

The motion was approved.

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison reported on the Commission workload for the period encompassing December 18, 2024, to January 14, 2025. He stated that in addition to the 4 projects listed on the January meeting notice, staff issued 15 deficient staff reports, 6 jurisdictional determinations, 7 certificates of approval, and 3 general permits. In addition, he reported that staff organized and conducted 8 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects, and that 21 projects were undergoing staff review.

Director Hutchison reported that fee collections totaled \$23,150 for the month, which amount he stated was an improvement over the \$16,950 collected in January 2023. He noted that so far in Fiscal Year 2025, the Commission had collected \$272,275 of the \$500,000 anticipated annual appropriation amount. He stated that with 58% of the fiscal year completed, the Commission had collected 54% of its anticipated appropriation amount.

Director Hutchison reported that the Deputy Director of the Division of Property Management and Construction (DPMC) in the Department of the Treasury signed the completed Scope of Work for the Request for Proposal (RFP) to update and revise the Commission Master Plan on January 13. He noted that this represented the final step before the document goes to the DPMC procurement group. He noted that Bill White of the DEP Office of Resource Development (ORD) had spoken with DPMC to have the next step be the "major selection process," whereby DPMC could publicly solicit the interest of prequalified firms to provide professional services. The Director noted that assuming this request was granted, the next step would be for procurement to "put it on the street," which would be the first notification to prospective consultants that the project exists.

Director Hutchison reported that one of the long-standing infrastructure problems at the Commission office is about to be addressed. He stated that the static-laden and unreliable traditional hard wired telephone system will be replaced tomorrow by "Teams Voice," which is a cloud-based phone Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system that will be added to the existing Microsoft Teams application. He noted that Teams Voice allows users to make and receive external phone calls in a similar way that staff currently calls DEP colleagues using Teams. As a result, the Commission telephone number will "travel" with each staff member and be accessible on any internet-connected device logged into Teams. Audio comes from the computer or device's onboard microphone and speaker or through headsets that connect to the computer or device. For the time being, the Commission will also have traditional desk handsets installed in the office. Director Hutchison noted his many thanks to Jeff Riccardi and Dishant Patel at the DEP Telecommunications Unit for their assistance, and to Colleen Maloney for getting the project advanced.

Director Hutchison noted that at the request of Commissioner Palmer, he met with Bill White of DEP ORD on January 8 to examine the condition of the former railroad trestle that carries the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park multiuse trail over U.S. Highway Route No. 1 in the City of Trenton. The bridge, which was painted black with the park logo, was painted last in 2009-2010. It is now covered in a considerable amount of graffiti. Mr. White would confer with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to determine what it would cost to repaint the bridge. The Director noted he would report additional details on this as they become available.

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Commissioner Palmer stated his gratitude that Director Hutchison had promptly followed up on his request to explore options to restore the paint on the former railroad trestle. Director Hutchison stated that he appreciated Mr. White's prompt agreement to meet at the bridge site on what was a very cold day to conduct a site visit to discuss the matter.

Director Hutchison reported that the Commission project file digitization project continued to make progress. He noted that, despite the large document scanner being down for two weeks for repairs, last month 13 file boxes were scanned, bringing the completed file box total to 193 of 526 boxes, or 37% of the total.

Director Hutchison reported that the Commission YouTube channel had a new -- or rather new old -- bit of content, specifically the 1974 New Jersey Network documentary, titled The D&R Canal narrated by humorist and radio and television personality Jean Shepherd. The Director noted that Shepherd was probably best remembered for the film A Christmas Story (1983), which he narrated and co-scripted, and was based on his own semi-autobiographical stories. He noted that a film copy of the documentary was among the items stored in the Executive Director's office and that staff was able to get the film restored and copied to a flash drive, which was in turn uploaded to YouTube. He stated the quality of the video was good when compared to other copies that he had seen and, given the age of the film, he found the audio to be of good quality.

Park Superintendent's Report

Acting Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl indicated that the installation of new wall heaters in the Kingston Locktender's House had begun.

Acting Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that the State Park Service would install "you are here" signs at several locations in the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park including the Route 1 parking lot in Lawrence Township; the Trenton Battle Monument; South Bound Brook; Five-Mile Lock, Six Mile Run at Jacques Lane, and the Rocky Hill public access area lot. She stated the signs also include maps of the areas as well as emergency contact information for visitors.

The Acting Superintendent reported that at the request of park friends' groups, the State Park Service reached out to Somerset County officials regarding the installation of a stop sign at the T-intersection of Canal Road and the Griggstown Causeway, which has seen an increase in errant tractor trailer traffic. She stated that Somerset County reported back that a traffic study would be performed to consider the efficacy of installing a three-way stop at the location.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar reported that a NJWSA consultant continued to develop plans and specifications related to the planned restoration of the upper embankment of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Feeder from the Bulls Island Recreation Area in Delaware Township down canal to Prallsville Mills in Stockton Borough.

Mr. Sellar reported that new handrails were being fabricated and would be installed at the Lambertville Lock. The new handrails would replace the approximately 100 linear feet of chain link fence located along the easterly side of the lock wall and would resemble the so-called "hairpin" rails used by the Pennsylvania Railroad that are presently located on the westerly side of the lock. He noted that the proposed railings had been approved by both the Commission (DRCC #24-4118B) and the DEP State

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Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Sellar noted that NJWSA issued an RFP to address the former railroad swing bridge which formerly crossed the canal in the vicinity of the Mercer County Wildlife Center in Hopewell Township, Mercer County. The so-called “workhouse bridge” once provided a rail spur to the quarry at the Mercer County Jail. The bridge is in an advanced state of deterioration and in danger of collapsing into the canal, creating an impediment to flow and a collection point for debris. He stated it was unclear whether the bridge could be rehabilitated or would need to be demolished and removed.

Mr. Sellar reported that typical maintenance activities were being conducted along the Delaware and Raritan Canal, including the clearing of vegetative debris and the collection of leaves in the canal and around bridges and locks. He reported that ice damming was an issue this year at some of the water company intakes along the canal. He noted that deicing was required in a debris removal area at Southard Street known as “the racks” in the City of Trenton, which is located near the bridge discussed by Director Hutchison earlier in the meeting.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Written Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

There being no other business, Commissioner Lubitz entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Stout. Commissioner Lubitz called for a vote on the motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hutchison", written in a cursive style.

John Hutchison, Secretary