



**Public Hearing
September 17, 2025
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 9:30 a.m.
DATE: September 17, 2025
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Vice-Chairman Bruce Stout and Commissioner Phillip Lubitz attended in person. Commissioner Designee Mark Texel, Commissioner John J. Reiser and Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner participated via online platform and teleconference.

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

GUESTS: Teddy Gadeh, Danny Gonclaves, Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch, and Robert von Zumbusch, President, Kingston Historical Society.

Vice-Chairman Stout announced that this was a public hearing of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission and that the scheduling and notification of the hearing had been undertaken pursuant to the provisions of the “Senator Byron Baer Open Public Meetings Act” (OPMA).

Vice-Chairman Stout announced that the public hearing 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 provided those persons present with a brief summary of the purpose of the public hearing. Mr. Stout stated that in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Conservation Restriction and Historic Preservation Restriction Act, N.J.S.A. 13:8B-1 et seq., the Commission received a request from Somerset Properties Realty, LP, for the partial release of a Commission conservation easement as a result of a planned development project located at 91 Cottontail Lane in the Township of Franklin, Somerset County. The conservation easement was granted by Somerset Properties Realty, LP, to the Commission on May 17, 2019, and applied to the property at Block 517.01,

Lot 8.13.

Vice-Chairman Stout stated that the lot was required to be restricted as a condition of Commission's approval of a proposed development of the lot, which was now being altered as a result of a pending project before the Commission (DRCC #23-3604B). As holder of the conservation easement, the Director stated that the Commission was required to conduct a public hearing on the proposed partial release of the easement before making a final determination on the project application. The Director further noted that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:8B-6, the approval of the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection was also required to effectuate the release of the easement.

The Vice-Chairman observed that the public hearing was being conducted prior to the regularly scheduled Commission meeting during which project DRCC #23-3604B would be considered. He noted that the public had been notified of the hearing and was invited to participate or comment either in person, or by means of online platform or teleconference call. The Vice-Chairman asked Executive Director Hutchison if any written comments had been received by the Commission staff. The Director responded that the Commission had not received any written comments.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked if any Commissioners or members of the public had any comments on the proposed easement release. There was no comment from the Commissioners or the public.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked again if there were any comments from the Commissioners or members of the public. Hearing none, he adjourned the hearing at 9:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hutchison", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Hutchison, Secretary