



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

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
DATE: October 15, 2025
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Phillip Lubitz attended the meeting in the Commission Office. Vice-Chairman Bruce Stout, Commissioner Designee Robin Madden, Commissioner John Reiser, and Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner participated via online platform and teleconference.

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

GUESTS: Michael Sellar, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Maggie Mitchell-Strehl, Superintendent, D&R Canal State Park; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Robert von Zumbusch, Kingston Historical Society; Christopher H. DeGrezia, Emily R. Goldman; Daniel Tarabokija; Carly M. Clinton; Jeffrey R. Chang; Kathy Hale; Sarino Tropeano; Arthur Kuyan; Steven Varneckas; Amer Hamad; Michael Ford; Anthony Genchi; Erinsson Colon; Rikki Massand; Ian Burton; Ralph Petrella; Kate Coffey; and Paul Christopher.

Vice-Chairman Stout 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.

Vice-Chairman Stout 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.

Since some Commission members were participating via telephonic device pursuant to Article III,

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Section 4 of the Commission Bylaws, Vice-Chairman Stout 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 November 19, 2025, Meeting Date

Vice-Chairman Stout stated that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for November 19, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the September 17, 2025, Commission Public Hearing

Vice-Chairman Stout inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the minutes of the September 17, 2025, Commission Public Hearing. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as prepared by staff. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to adopt the minutes as proposed, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner.

Vice-Chairman Stout 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

The motion was approved.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 17, 2025, Commission meeting

Vice-Chairman Stout inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the minutes of the September 17, 2025, Commission meeting. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as prepared by staff. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to adopt the minutes as proposed, which was seconded by Commissioner Reiser.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes

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Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Absent

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#25-6223A 48 Elm Street -- Demolition/Proposed Residence (Franklin Township)

Vice-Chairman Stout asked for a motion on the project. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to approve the Zone A project; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Lubitz. Vice-Chairman Stout asked for comment on the project from the Commissioners and then from the public. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Stout 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

The motion was approved.

Zone B Projects

#25-2441NNN Princeton University -- Washington Road Pedestrian/Roadway Improvement (Municipality of Princeton)

#24-3012H Seminary Drive -- Mixed-Use Development (Plainsboro Township/South Brunswick Township)

#24-5565B 230 Belmont Avenue -- Major Modification (Franklin Township)

#25-5720A 3740 Route 27 -- Water Main Relocation Major Modification (South Brunswick Township)

#21-5767 530 Route 33 -- Warehouse Development (Millstone Township)

#23-5961 Country Classics at Montgomery -- Residential Development (Montgomery Township)

#24-6208 QuickChek -- Ewing (Ewing Township)

#24-6210 2393 Pennington Road -- Self Storage Facility (Hopewell Township)

#24-6151 3131 Princeton Pike -- Mixed-Use Development (Lawrence Township)

Vice-Chairman Stout 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; Commissioner Lubitz seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Stout asked

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for comment from the Commission and then from the public. 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	Absent

The motion was approved.

Executive Director’s Report

Director Hutchison reported on the Commission workload for the period encompassing September 16, 2025, to October 14, 2025. He said that in addition to the 10 projects listed on the agenda, the staff had issued 11 deficient staff reports, 11 jurisdictional determinations, 5 certificates of approval, and 5 general permits. He also said that one staff report had been prepared for a project that would be calendared for consideration at the November 19 Commission meeting.

In addition to these matters, Director Hutchison noted that staff organized and conducted 9 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects, and that as of October 14, 2025, there were 20 projects undergoing staff review.

The Director reported that fee collections totaled \$37,387.50 for the month of October. Also, he said that the Commission received a \$6,000 purchase order from the City of New Brunswick for the Alec E. Baker Park renovation project application (DRCC #25-6310). Added together, the amount put the Commission in a satisfactory position in terms of its monthly fee collections. He observed that in Fiscal Year 2026, the Commission had collected \$131,250 of its \$500,000 anticipated appropriation amount. Thus, with 33% of the fiscal year completed, the Commission collected 26.25% of its annual anticipated appropriation amount.

The Director observed that the file digitization project continued to make impressive progress. In the prior month, the contents of 8 boxes were scanned, bringing the 2025 year-to-date total to 133. A total of 352 boxes of files had been digitized, which constituted 67% of the total number of boxes. The Director said two-thirds of the project files had been scanned and that the project remained on track.

With regard to the Master Plan revision and update project, the Director stated that Commission staff had recently met with the project consultant, Clarke Caton Hintz, to share ideas and detailed information on work to be done in the coming months. Hunter Research, the subconsultant for the work related to the creation of a new historic structures survey, was expected to go into the field soon to begin the assessment and documentation of the condition of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park’s historic resources. Director Hutchison said that ensuring Hunter’s access to various properties was critical, and he thanked the State Park Service in advance for their cooperation on this matter.

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Park Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that the D&R Canal Watch's annual "Canal House Challenge," held in September, drew more than 60 participants. In this annual event, five historic homes along the canal are opened to the public, and participants are challenged to visit all the homes in a single day. While visiting each site, participants can learn about the history of the home and New Jersey's canal heritage.

The Superintendent stated that the State Park Service had received grant funding from the federal Recreational Trails Program to purchase equipment and to assist with multiuse trail maintenance, as well as the resurfacing a section of the trail from Kingston to Millstone.

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that building restoration work at the Rockingham Historic Site has been completed, and the installation of the new ADA-compliant path had commenced.

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl also noted that D&R Canal Watch would hold its second annual "Tour de Towpath" on October 25, and following that event, a "Fall Festival" would be held at the Bulls Island Recreation Area from 3:00 to 7:30 p.m. The festivities would feature live music, fall crafts, a costume contest, a bat program, and a lantern walk.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked if anyone had questions for Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl. Commissioner Lubitz said he observed that "No Parking" signs remain posted at the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Fairview parking lot in Kingwood Township, and he inquired as to whether parking was still not permitted, or if there was a plan to remove the signage.

Commissioner Designee Madden said she believed the agreement between the Delaware River tubing concession holder and the DEP Office of Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration provided that the lot closure would be in effect until mid-October; however, she indicated that she would confirm this information and report back. If the deadline for closure had passed, she stated that the State Park Service would remove the signs that prohibited parking by the public at the lot.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar provided an update on the condition of the deteriorated former railroad trestle that crosses the canal near N.J State Highway Route No. 29 in the vicinity of the Mercer County Wildlife Center in Hopewell Township. Mr. Sellar noted that the bridge was deteriorating rapidly and was likely to collapse into the canal during the next significant storm event. He observed that in the event of such a collapse, the bridge would need to be promptly removed, since it would impede the flow of water in the canal. He noted that the NJWSA was evaluating proposals from consultants to mitigate for the adverse historic impacts associated with any removal project.

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA had been informed that the New Jersey Department of Transportation contractor would mobilize to begin work on the pedestrian bridge over the canal at the Five Mile Lock public access area in Franklin Township, Somerset County, within the next two weeks. However, Mr. Sellar noted that he had heard such assurances on this matter for "quite a while."

Mr. Sellar reported that there had been no indication of any harmful algal bloom (HAB) in the Delaware

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and Raritan Canal.

He said that NJWSA crews were working to clean up fallen trees and any other vegetation affected by the weekend nor'easter that pushed through New Jersey. He said that this portion of the State had been fortunate in that rainfall amounts and wind speeds were not as bad as initially forecasted. Mr. Sellar also noted that the NJWSA was completing its mowing season, and that crews would be out working on the weekends to remove leaves and any other debris from around the canal locks and bridges.

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA continued to discharge 22 million gallons of water daily into the Millstone River from the Delaware and Raritan Canal Kingston Wastegate in an effort to manage the size of a HAB in the river.

Mr. Sellar related that the NJWSA was working cooperatively with the consultant on Somerset County's placement of pedestrian-activated crossing beacons at the Manville Causeway and had tentatively approved the location of the beacons. However, he said that there would be a site meeting prior to construction to observe the actual location of the poles to ensure that NJWSA and State Park Service maintenance vehicles had ability to access the multiuse trail.

Vice-Chairman Stout inquired if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Barth said that during a recent visit to the Borough of Stockton he observed that long-awaited improvements to the Delaware River canal embankment were well done. However, he noted that the gate to the multiuse trail remained locked. He inquired as to when public access to the park would be restored along the riverside embankment.

Mr. Sellar said he believed that the decision to reopen access would be made by the State Park Service, and referred the question to Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl, who in turn stated that she would consult with Commissioner Designee Madden as to when, and if, the trail would reopen. She said that after consulting with Commissioner Designee Madden, she would report back to the Commission.

Executive Session

At 10:15 a.m., Vice-Chairman Stout announced that Commission Resolution No. 2025-04, had been distributed to the members of the Commission. The resolution authorized the Commission to enter into executive session to discuss terms and conditions of employment for Commission staff within the meaning of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(8). He then asked for a motion on the resolution. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to enter into executive session, and Commissioner Reiser seconded the motion.

The Vice-Chairman 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

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The motion was approved.

The Vice-Chairman then recessed the open session and asked attendees to return in approximately 10 minutes.

At 10:25 a.m. the Commission returned to open session, whereupon Vice-Chairman Stout stated that there were two resolutions for the Commission's consideration. He then asked for a motion on Resolution No. 2025-06. Commissioner Shoffner moved to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Commission Reiser.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked the Director to call the roll:

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

The motion was approved.

Vice-Chairman Stout then asked for a motion on Resolution No. 2025-05. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Commission Reiser.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked the Director to call the roll:

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

The motion was approved.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

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Public Comment

Mr. Barth thanked Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl for promoting the “Tour de Towpath” in her report. He said he and others were excited about the annual major fundraising event and looking forward to it. Mr. Barth also said that during the past weekend, the Somerset County “Journey through the Past” event was held. As part of the event, the East Millstone Bridgetender’s House was opened to the public, and visitation was enthusiastic. Mr. Barth said many visitors had questions about the historic structure, expressed their long-held interest in seeing the interior, and appreciated the opportunity to access to the building.

Written Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 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