

PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED AT HIGHLANDS  
COUNCIL MEETING ON OCTOBER 19, 2017

My name is Hank Klumpp. I own 150 acres in the Highlands Preservation Area.

The Public Comments time at the monthly Highlands Council meetings is really a joke. Members say they are respectfully limiting comments to three minutes to allow all to speak. What can you possibly say in three minutes. It would take a landowner who has had land values taken away, with no compensation at least an hour to explain what the loss has done over 13 years. So, maybe the council could respectfully limit comments to six minutes. Six minutes —

once a month - that is not asking  
for much. Also, please get your  
timer checked - it is not always  
accurate!

Hank Klumpp  
24 Longview Road  
Lebanon, NJ 08833

P.S. My phone number is 908-832-7634

just in case you find anything  
I ever say is - as the council

says - Feasible - and the  
council wants to contact me.

Thank you - Judge Dressler!

You are the only one who has ever  
contacted me in 13 years.

x  
① My name is Hank Klumpp and I own 150+ acres in the Highlands Preservation area. Lucky me

In the Courier News, an article was written on October 6<sup>th</sup>. It is titled "Too quiet on the Highlands front." It claims that the environmentalists smell a rat. If they only smell one rat, they are lucky. Since 2004, when Mc Greevey signed the Highlands Act, robbed landowners have smelled packs of rats. At functions many should serve cheese! Environmentalists are worrying about the state's management of the Highlands region. So are the many property owners within the

2

Highlands area who were promised compensation <sup>by state officials</sup> for the loss of their property values. These promises have never been met. A water tax has been suggested to generate revenue - that has flopped - while golf courses continue to be watered with the water that was so needed for millions of residents to drink - water that I am paying for.

If it is true that an effort is underway to amend the master plan for the first time since it was put into place, Thank You! Thank You!

③

The article is right when it says amending the master plan is more than reasonable. The original master plan did not strike a perfect balance and hopefully the master plan can be amended — and fixed. There has to be a balance of competing interests — a balance between what is fair and what is very, very over the top unfair to property owners who have lost all value in the property that, to some, was their life savings. The value is gone and so is the equity. For those who

④

may have forgotten — it has been  
13 years.

Hank Klumpp

24 Longview Road  
Lebanon, New Jersey 08833



Thom  
Hollis  
Paul C

## Our View

# Too quiet on the Highlands front

Environmentalists continue to worry about the state's management of the Highlands region, the protected area of nearly 900,000 acres in northwest New Jersey that provides drinking water for millions of residents.

The Highlands Act restricting development in the region was adopted under former Gov. Jim McGreevey, and a master plan for the affected area was implemented in 2008. That all happened before Gov. Chris Christie arrived in office, however, and since then the emphasis has turned toward finding ways to allow more development in the region. Christie has tried shaping membership of the Highlands Council with that in mind, and now an effort is underway to amend the master plan for the first time since the original implementation.

Not surprisingly, environmentalists smell a rat. They believe the council is intentionally limiting public input while conducting business through backroom maneuvering. Council members scoff at such criticism, offering standard explanations about the proper place and time for public comment.

The truth, as so often happens, may lie somewhere in the middle, but we can't blame anyone for some healthy skepticism about council motives and methods, especially with new gubernatorial leadership looming.

Amending the master plan is more than reasonable. It would be silly to imagine the original attempt struck upon such a perfect balance of considerations and anticipation of a decade's worth of activity and future demands that it could or should be left to stand indefinitely.

It is also fair to acknowledge that many property owners within the Highlands region have not been treated well. State officials promised compension in some fashion for the loss in property values due to restricting development potential, but they've never come through. Attempts to spark interest in new revenue-generating streams, such as a water tax, haven't gone far.

But the answer can't be an irresponsible loosening of development restrictions. That, however, is the policy direction to which the Highlands Council seems pointed under Christie. An attempt earlier this year to increase septic density that allowing for more intensive development is just one example.

Critics of the master plan discussions said a 30-day period for public comment on amendments is too short — they're right — and they also complain that the public should be allowed input at committee meetings where changes are considered and prepared for the full council.

The council responded with predictable dodges, arguing that only full council meetings where final decisions are made are appropriate for public comment. That just means members don't want to be inconvenienced. If they want to develop the best plan possible, with public support, there's little reason to be so rigid. The council also said it would be open to extending the public-comment period at its discretion, which hardly sounds promising.

Managing the Highlands is a delicate process of balancing competing interests. That effort can only be damaged by a lack of transparency. The council should strive to be as open as it can be, not settle for only being as open as it needs to be.