



State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
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Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Plan Conformance Committee
FROM: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director
SUBJECT: Committee Meeting Minutes – April 11, 2023
DATE: April 19, 2023

A Plan Conformance Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 3:00pm via Zoom teleconference.

Committee Members present: Council Chair Richko and Committee Members Van Abs and Vohden.

Staff Members present: Ben Spinelli, Gabrielle Gallagher, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Judy Thornton, Corey Piasecki, Carole Ann Diction and Annette Tagliareni.

Also present was Thomas F. Holl, Associate Counsel of the Governor's Authorities Unit

The meeting commenced at 3:10pm.

There were three (3) items to discuss:

Policy Standards for Warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands Region

Judy Thornton, Principal Planner, updated the committee on the revisions made to the Highlands Warehouse Policy Standards to incorporate Committee comments from last month's meeting. Ms. Thornton thanked Committee Member Van Abs for his input. Ms. Thornton explained that the document had been restructured to frame the material as a statement of Highlands Council policy rooted in the goals, policies, and objectives of the RMP. The standards supplement statewide policy guidance on warehousing, providing information specific to the Highlands Region. After some discussion, Mr. Humphries reported that the document was ready for a vote by the full Council to release it to the public.

Committee Member Vohden made a motion to move the Policy Standards for Warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands Region to the full Council to release to the public and Committee Member Van Abs seconded it. All were in favor.

Alpha Borough, Warren County – Amended Petition for Plan Conformance with Highlands Center Designation

Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Planning Manager, reported that based on feedback from the Committee at last month's meeting, revisions were made to the conditions included in the Consistency Review and Recommendation Report. Council staff met with Alpha Borough's mayor, attorney, and developer of the proposed development to address the Council's concerns regarding the development of the property and the potential loss of farmland soils. The Borough explained their overall plans for the Highlands Center. Council staff outlined the proposed conditions to offset the potential loss of farmland in the Center and the Borough's mayor, attorney and developer's representative offered their collective support of an agreement to address these issues. An agreement between the Highlands, Alpha Borough, and the developer would be memorialized should the Council approve the proposed amended Center designation. The agreement would include how mitigation would be achieved:

- 1) Developer, through the Borough, purchases farmland for preservation in the southwest section of Alpha Borough;
- 2) Developer purchases Highlands Development Credits (HDCs) based on the value of farmland in the immediate area of Warren County and the area of farmland to be disturbed.

The preferred option is for the preservation of farmland in the Borough. This would allow the Council to facilitate the preservation of farmland in the Planning Area.

Chief Counsel Gabrielle Gallagher added that the mayor has a good relationship with the developer and is very open to our suggestions. The mayor and Borough Council plan to attend the Council meeting on April 20.

Committee Member Van Abs was comfortable with moving forward, however expressed concerns that the loss of farmland cannot be mitigated in the same way the loss of wetlands can as it is a finite resource that cannot be replaced.

Committee Member Van Abs made a motion to move Alpha Borough's Amended Petition for Center Designation to the full Council and Committee Member Vohden seconded it. All were in favor.

Chester Township, Morris County – Map Adjustment, Block 26.06, Lot 7

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, reported that after a 30-day comment period, there were no comments on the Map Adjustment Review and Recommendations Report. The requested map adjustment seeks to modify part of an existing area of Protection Zone to Existing Community Zone for an affordable housing project.

Committee Member Vohden made a motion to move the Map Adjustment Review and Recommendations Report to the full Council and Committee Member Van Abs seconded it. All were in favor.

It was noted that this project would be considered at Council's May meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:37pm.