



State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
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MEMORANDUM

To: Plan Conformance Committee
From: Lisa J. Plevin, Executive Director
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2021
Date: May 13, 2021

A Plan Conformance Committee meeting was held on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 2:30pm via Zoom teleconference.

Committee Members present were: Council Chair Richko, and Committee Members Van Abs and Vohden. Committee Chair Dressler was absent.

Staff Members present: Lisa J. Plevin, Christine LaRocca, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, and Annette Tagliareni

The meeting began at 2:31pm.

Ms. Plevin opened the meeting by noting that Committee Chair Dressler was unable to attend the meeting but advised to have the meeting without him. Ms. Plevin noted that Chair Richko would fill in as the committee chair for today's meeting and also added that she would call Committee Chair Dressler to fill him in on any issues.

Chair Richko turned the meeting over to Planning Manager, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler to give an overview on Hunterdon County's Petition for Plan Conformance.

Hunterdon County – Petition for Plan Conformance

Ms. Haddock-Weiler gave a brief history on the Council's relationship with Hunterdon County which interestingly began with Hunterdon and Warren Counties suing the Highlands Council. Ms. Haddock-Weiler added that over time the relationship between the Council and Hunterdon County grew and improved. In 2017, Highlands Council approved a grant to fund a Tourism Study for Hunterdon County. Highlands Council staff has also participated in the County's 78/22 Corridor Coalition.

In 2019, the Highlands Council adopted new Plan Conformance Procedures for counties and municipalities. For counties, the Procedures are geared towards streamlining the Plan Conformance process and focusing on activities/roles that the county is best suited to. Such a partnership will allow the county to take a leadership role while advancing Highlands goals.

In February 2021, Hunterdon County submitted their Petition for Plan Conformation for the Planning and Preservation Areas. Hunterdon County is the first county to petition in the Planning Area. The Petition included:

- Resolution to Petition for Plan Conformance
- Self-Assessment Report – looks at Highlands documents and where they align with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.
- Implementation Agenda – County priorities and perspectives
- County Highlands Master Plan element – this is not required as part of the Petition, but is the first task in Plan Conformance implementation.

Hunterdon County intends to update their Hunterdon County Master Plan, also referred to as the Growth Management Plan. Tourism is one of Hunterdon County's economic engines and the County will be doing additional work to expand the tourism economy.

Council staff reviewed all materials and found the Petition to be complete. As part of Plan Conformance approval, the County will be required to do a Stormwater Management Plan and a Water Use and Conservation Management Plan (WUCMP).

The final Consistency Review and Recommendations Report was provided to the County and the County advised Council staff that they were satisfied and wanted to move forward with the Petition.

Member Comments

Committee Member Vohden asked what impacts will there be on municipalities in the County who have not conformed for both, given that the County is conforming for both the Preservation and Planning Areas.

Ms. Haddock-Weiler responded that the majority of municipalities in the Hunterdon Highlands are already conforming. All Hunterdon Highlands municipalities, except Milford Borough, have been working with the Highlands Council, and in most cases the entirety of the towns have conformed. County conformance would be focused on county planning activities, such as management of the county road system and associated stormwater management. County plan conformance in the Planning Area would not change a municipality's plan conformance status if they have not opted into the Planning Area.

Committee Member Van Abs had a few questions/comments:

1) Regarding WUCMP, how would prior Water Allocation Approvals integrate with County's same issues? Ms. Haddock-Weiler responded that working on a county-wide WUCMP would facilitate water conservation planning in localities where no WUCMP is currently being developed.

2) Regarding towns like Califon Borough who have sewer issues, is Hunterdon County still the lead agency for Wastewater Management Plans (WMP)? Ms. Haddock-Weiler responded that Hunterdon

County is still the lead agency for WMPs. Ms. Haddock-Weiler added that Council staff has tried to work with Califon on wastewater alternative solutions, as well as participated in meetings with NJDEP about this as there are also other towns in the region with similar issues. Committee Member Van Abs noted that County could be a leader for USDA funding for sewer issues, as well as other programs.

3) Lastly on page 19 of the Consistency Review and Recommendations Report, mapping of Steep Slope Protection Areas shows no steep slopes in Hunterdon County. Committee Member Van Abs checked the interactive map and it said the same. Mr. Humphries thanked Member Van Abs for noticing and responded that maps will be fixed.

Lastly, Ms. Plevin highlighted that Maryjude has been instrumental in bringing Hunterdon County's Petition to this point. Ms. Plevin also noted as an agency the decision to provide funding to Hunterdon and Warren Counties was a policy decision. It has been a slower process with both Counties; however, the mindset has paid off. This action will help leverage municipalities and other counties, such as Warren, to conform.

Council Chair Richko asked for a motion to move Hunterdon County's Petition for Plan Conformance to the full Council for consideration. Committee Member Van Abas made a motion, and Committee Member Vohden seconded it. A roll call vote was taken. All members voted to move Hunterdon County's Petition for Plan Conformance for Council consideration.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53pm.