



State of New Jersey

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MEMORANDUM

To: RMP Amendment Committee
From: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director
Subject: RMP Amendment Committee Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2024
Date: January 31, 2024

The RMP Amendment Committee met on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 10am at the Highlands Council office in Chester. This meeting was publicly noticed and open to the public.

RMP Amendment Committee Members present: Council Chair Richko, Committee Chair Alstede, Members Sebetich, Vohden and Van Abs.

Highlands Council Staff Members present: Gabrielle Gallagher, Neda Hartman, James Humphries, Corey Piasecki, Jocelyn van den Akker, Carole Ann Dicton, Kelley Curran, Owen Selles, and Karen Castanhas.

Public present: George Cassa, Susan Weber, Linda Lee, Rich Kelsky, and Elmer Platz.

Committee Chair Alstede called the meeting to order at 10:02am.

A roll call was taken.

Committee Chair Alstede presented a summary of the agenda items for the meeting, which centered on two (2) proposed amendments to the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP).

- Standards for Warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands Region
- Land Use Capability Zone Map and Technical Report Update

Amendment Process

At this time, Mr. Piasecki, Principal Planner, gave a brief description of the RMP Amendment process.

Policy Statements on Climate Change and Environmental Justice

At this time, Mr. Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS, gave a background of the policy statements on climate change and environmental justice.

Standards for Warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands Region

During this time, Mr. Humphries gave a detailed presentation of the standards for warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands region.

Committee Chair Alstede asked if the committee members had any comments.

Committee Member Sebetich asked why isn't there a reference to surface/ground water.

Mr. Humphries replied that existing RMP policies referred to in the document are in place to protect water resources.

Committee Member Vohden asked about siting of warehouses outside of redevelopment zones.

Mr. Humphries responded that disturbance of Highlands environmental resources needs to be avoided and any appropriate site will need the ability to connect to infrastructure including access to highways.

Committee Chair Alstede asked about the micro warehouse facilities references to electric vehicles.

Ms. Gallagher, Senior Counsel, said that the use of electric vehicles for local deliveries is encouraged, but not required.

At this time there was a discussion about technology and electric vehicles.

Land Use Capability Zone Map and Technical Report Update

At this time, Ms. Van den Akker, GIS Manager, gave a detailed presentation on the land use capability zone map update.

Committee Member Van Abs asked if the Highlands staff have the actual acreage of changes to the map.

Ms. Van den Akker replied yes. Although the specific parcel changes are not listed in the memo, they will be visible on the Council's interactive map.

Committee Member Van Abs suggested the property owners should be notified of any and all future changes to the map.

At this time there was a discussion on how to notify property owners of changes to the map.

Mr. Humphries stated that the original report relied upon draft 2020 map data that was subsequently finalized by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). He suggested

removing the 2nd added paragraph from page 1 of the Land Use Capability Zone Map Technical Report: 2024 Update Proposed RMP Amendment.

Committee Member Vohden asked why the metric system is being used for Vernal Pool buffers.

Mr. Humphries responded that the Highlands staff wanted to keep the information consistent with the source data from the NJDEP.

Committee Chair Alstede asked for a motion to forward the Standards for Warehousing in New Jersey Highlands Region as amended to the full Council for consideration to have Council staff release the document for six public hearings and 60-day comment period.

Committee Member Van Abs made a motion to forward the Standards for Warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands Region as amended to the Council for consideration to have Council staff release the document for six public hearings and 60-day comment period. Committee Member Sebetich seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Committee Chair Alstede asked for a motion to forward the Land Use Capability Zone Map and Technical Report Update as amended to the full Council for consideration to have Council staff release the document for six public hearings and 60-day comment period.

Committee Member Van Abs made a motion to forward the Land Use Capability Zone Map and Technical Report Update as amended to the Council for consideration to have Council staff release the document for six public hearings and 60-day comment period. Committee Member Sebetich seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Council Chair Richko asked for an update on the locations for the upcoming public hearings.

Mr. Piasecki responded that the Highlands staff is in the process of securing all the locations for the public hearings.

Committee Chair Alstede and Committee Members Vohden and Sebetich asked for a copy of the draft RMP Forestry BMP document that was sent to NJDEP.

Ms. Gallagher stated the Highlands staff is no longer releasing the RMP Forestry BMP, however she will send Council Members the confidential draft RMP Forestry document.

Next Steps

Highlands staff will present the two (2) proposed amendments to the Highlands Council during the January 18, 2024, Highlands Council meeting.

The Highlands Council will ask for the release of the public comment and hearings at the Highlands Council meeting on January 18, 2024.

The RMP Amendment Committee adjourned at 10:43am.