



## New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Municipalities Recommended for Pinelands Excellence Program** *Consultant sought to help create livable communities*

NEW LISBON, NJ - The Pinelands Commission's Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) Policy and Implementation Committee today recommended the selection of two municipalities to participate in the *Pinelands Excellence Program*, a project to assist Pinelands Regional Growth Area communities with addressing planning and development challenges. Based on an evaluation prepared by a selection committee, the CMP Policy and Implementation Committee is recommending to the full Pinelands Commission that Winslow Township in Camden County and Hamilton Township in Atlantic County be selected to participate in the program. The Commission plans to vote on the recommendation at its June 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

Funded by a \$187,000 grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the *Pinelands Excellence Program* is a pilot program to develop prototypical approaches that can enable Pinelands Regional Growth Area communities to effectively absorb growth while maintaining and enhancing a high quality of life. Each community will develop a strategic vision for its future and prepare specific recommendations for zoning, subdivision, site planning and/or infrastructure improvements for achieving a "livable" community. Prototypes will set specific recommendations that address issues such as village centers, neighborhood character, affordable housing, open space and recreation, protection of important natural and scenic features, improved circulation, non-motorized transportation, storm water management and historic and cultural resources.

"We are very grateful to the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation for making this important planning initiative possible," said Annette M. Barbaccia, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. "It affords an opportunity for the towns, the Commission and other state and county agencies to step back and take a big-picture view of the issues facing these communities and develop comprehensive and innovative solutions for the long term."

The two municipalities were selected from proposals submitted by four of the ten municipalities that were eligible to apply. Proposals were reviewed by an evaluation committee comprised of:

- Hon. Robert Hagaman, Mayor, Mullica Township;
- Hon. William Pikolycky, Mayor, Woodbine Borough;
- Carlos Rodrigues, Acting Director, NJ Office of Smart Growth;
- Annette Barbaccia, Executive Director, Pinelands Commission;
- Larry Liggett, Manager of Planning, Pinelands Commission; and
- Kimberly Beidler, Resource Planner, Pinelands Commission.

## **Pinelands Excellence Program**

### **Page 2**

Mayors Hagaman and Pikolycky represent the Pinelands Municipal Council, an organization comprised of mayors and designees from the 53 Pinelands Area municipalities. The Council, which reviews and advises the Commission on rulemaking and implementation of the Pinelands CMP, has been instrumental in guiding the development of the *Pinelands Excellence Program*.

In recommending the selection of Winslow and Hamilton Townships, the members of the CMP Policy and Implementation Committee requested that the Commission identify ways to involve the other two applicant municipalities, Galloway Township and Stafford Township in the *Pinelands Excellence Program*. Executive Director Barbaccia indicated that she has already begun and will continue to identify additional potential funding sources that would enable the Commission to assist Galloway and Stafford in addressing growth-related planning issues.

As *Pinelands Excellence Program* Communities, Winslow and Hamilton will play a key role in the selection of a professional consulting firm to lead the community visioning, planning and design process under the program. On May 22, the Pinelands Commission issued a "Request for Proposal" (RFP) for a planning consultant to provide technical assistance. The municipalities will take part in a June 19 pre-bid conference and participate in the evaluation of consultant proposals. The consultant team selected for this project must have expertise in a range of community planning and design areas, such as visioning, geographic information systems, zoning, architecture, storm water management, affordable housing, transportation and other community infrastructure, and open space and historic resource preservation.

The RFP can be viewed at the Pinelands Commission's website at [www.nj.gov/pinelands](http://www.nj.gov/pinelands).

The CMP Policy and Implementation Committee unanimously supported the recommendation of Hamilton and Winslow, and forwarded it to the Full Pinelands Commission for final approval at its June 14 meeting. The Commission hopes to have a professional consulting firm approved at the August meeting.

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