

STAFF REPORT

PLEASE REFER TO DRCC # WHEN SUBMITTING
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS



DRCC #: 23-2035B

DATE: April 25, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

Latest Submission Received: April 23, 2025

Applicant:

Millstone Valley Fire Department
2365 Amwell Road
Somerset, NJ 08873
jgiorgianni@station28.net

Engineer:

F. Mitchel Ardman, P.E.
The Reynolds Group, Inc.
575 Route 28, Suite 110
Raritan, NJ 08869
mardman@reynoldsgroup.com

Project Location:

Road	Municipality	County	Block(s)	Lot(s)
2365 Amwell Road (Somerset County Route No. 514)	Franklin Township	Somerset	512	5.04

Jurisdictional Determination:

Zone A	Major	Governmental

Subject to Review for:

Drainage	Visual	Traffic	Stream Corridors
X	X		

**THIS STAFF REPORT IS ISSUED AS A GUIDE TO APPLICANTS IN
COMPLYING WITH DRCC REGULATIONS. IT IS NOT AN APPROVAL. NO**

PO BOX 539

STOCKTON, NJ 08559

609-397-2000

www.nj.gov/dep/drcc/

DATE: April 25, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

CONSTRUCTION SHALL BEGIN UNTIL A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL HAS BEEN ISSUED.

Documents Received: Site Plans (7 sheets) dated September 7, 2023, last revised April 15, 2024; Stormwater Management Report dated September 2023, last revised April 2024; prepared by The Reynolds Group, Inc.

.....
Staff comments continued below.

The application is complete and shall be presented to the Commission for their action with a staff recommendation of approval at the May 21, 2025, meeting based upon the following analysis:

Existing Conditions: The project area is an 87,117 square-foot (2.0 acre) lot located on the northerly side of Amwell Road in the East Millstone neighborhood of Franklin Township, approximately 275 feet east of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and within Commission Review Zone A.

The project area is bounded by a former bus depot/vehicle maintenance business (the so-called "Onka Property"), which is also the site of the former Franklin Inn (an important historic structure which dates to the Colonial Period) to the west, preserved open space and lands in agricultural use to the east and north, and residential development on the southerly side of Amwell Road to the south. A small portion of the northwestern corner of the site lies within the boundaries of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District.



In the existing condition, the project area is the location of the Millstone Valley Fire Department, and also the Franklin Township Sewer Authority (FTSA) East Millstone River Pumping Station at the rear of the property. These structures and associated

DATE: April 25, 2025**PROJECT NAME:** Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

infrastructure total 41,006 square feet (0.94 acre) of impervious surface coverage in the existing condition.

The lot was the subject of Commission certificates of approval issued in 1993 and 2020. The 1993 approval authorized the construction at the present one- and one-half story brick Millstone Valley Fire Department building that was initially constructed in 1979 and associated improvements (DRCC #92-2035), while the 2020 approval authorized the replacement and rehabilitation of FTSA pumping station equipment (DRCC #20-2035A).

Proposed Project: The applicant proposes to construct a two-story, 2,884 square-foot building, along with access drive, parking area, stormwater management system, and associated infrastructure on a vacant portion of the site east of the fire department building. The project would result in the creation of 6,098 square feet (0.14 acre) of new impervious surface coverage and the disturbance of 15,038 square feet (0.345 acre) of land.

Stream Corridor: There are no streams or mapped watercourses on the site, the nearest being the Millstone River, which lies approximately 838 feet to the west, and beyond the opposite bank of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. A review of available FEMA mapping indicates that the 100-year floodplain limit of the river is not located within 100 linear feet of the site. Therefore, the project is not subject to a stream corridor impact review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-9.1(a).

Stormwater Outfall: The project plans to discharge stormwater generated from the site toward a proposed outfall structure along the northern portion of the property. Based on the topography of the site, the discharge from this outfall structure is tributary to the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Therefore, the applicant is subject to the specific requirements for an outfall at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.3. This includes, but is not limited to, prohibiting new sources of stormwater that tie into the drainage systems discharging into the canal and providing 95% total suspended solids (TSS) removal for the water quality design storm as set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7.

The applicant has submitted a detailed description of compliance with the specific outfall standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.3. Therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

Stormwater Runoff Quantity: The subject property generally slopes toward the northwest. Presently, there are no surface attenuation stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) located on the site.

Discharges have been analyzed at one point-of-analysis. The drainage area of 2.0 acres includes an even split of open space and impervious surface coverage. The submitted application proposes to control stormwater runoff flow and volume in this drainage area using porous pavement and a small-scale subsurface infiltration basin. The applicant has provided engineering calculations verifying that, for stormwater leaving the site within both drainage areas, the post-construction peak runoff rates for the 2-, 10- and 100-year

DATE: April 25, 2025**PROJECT NAME:** Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

storm events will be no greater than 50, 75 and 80 percent (%), respectively, of the pre-construction peak runoff rates.

The submitted calculations utilized the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Release No. 55 (TR-55) hydrologic methodology, NOAA Region C unit hydrograph rainfall distribution, standard peak rate factor and current New Jersey 24-hour rainfall frequency data for Somerset County to compute peak runoff flow rates and volumes. The post-developed peak flows were calculated by creating separate pervious and impervious hydrographs for post-developed conditions and combining to develop total post-developed hydrographs. In addition, the post-development design will not increase the volume of stormwater discharged to the Delaware and Raritan Canal. As a result, this project will not result in any new sources of stormwater discharging into the canal. Therefore, Commission staff has determined this stormwater management design is compliant with the specific runoff quantity standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.3 and 8.6, respectively.

Water Quality: The Commission requires that all proposed pavement parking and access drives meet water quality standards in accordance with Commission regulations at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7. This includes reduction of the post-construction load of TSS in stormwater runoff generated from the water quality design storm tributary to the Delaware and Raritan Canal by a rate of 95% of the anticipated load from the developed site, expressed as an annual average.

Based upon the submitted application, approximately 0.063 acre of new parking and driveway pavement areas are being proposed onsite. The submitted stormwater design proposes to treat water quality through permeable pavers. The proposed permeable pavers are located south of the proposed building. The permeable paver system will be designed with 2.0 inches of No. 8 stone, on top of 4.0 inches of No. 57 stone, and 6.0 inches of an additional layer of clean stone. This system is designed to infiltrate the entire volume generated by the water quality design storm. Therefore, Commission staff has determined the project has been designed to meet the specific water quality standards, for motor vehicle surface areas tributary to the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

Groundwater Recharge: The Commission regulations require that stormwater management measures maintain 100% of the average annual pre-construction groundwater recharge volume for the site, or that any increase of stormwater runoff volume from pre-construction to post-construction for the two-year storm is infiltrated.

A groundwater recharge analysis calculation (NJDEP GSR-32 spreadsheet) has been submitted, which demonstrates that the annual groundwater recharge deficit for the entire site is 7,283 cubic feet. To infiltrate the post-development recharge deficit, a permeable paver system and subsurface infiltration basin will be installed. According to the spreadsheet, the proposed BMPs will recharge a larger amount of water than the deficit resulting from the proposed development. Therefore, Commission staff has determined this application is compliant with the groundwater recharge requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.5.

DATE: April 25, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

Non-Structural Methods: To assist in determining that sufficient non-structural stormwater management strategies have been incorporated into the project site design “to the maximum extent practical,” the Nonstructural Strategies Point System (NSPS) spreadsheet has been completed for this project. The results indicate that the ratio of proposed to existing site points (104%) exceeds the required site points ratio (93%). Therefore, the project’s proposed non-structural measures are adequate, and the project is designed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.4.

Visual, Historic & Natural Quality Impact: The proposed project is located in a “Rural” canal environment as described in the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Master Plan (Master Plan). The Rural canal environment is characterized at N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.2(a) as an area in which natural conditions dominate, but unobtrusive signs of human impact exist.

The Master Plan at Pages 27-28 calls for restoration of the canal houses at East Millstone, Zarephath, and Weston; for path improvement; sanitary facilities; portages between the canal and the river; seating; bank stabilization; and an enhanced access area at Weston. All of these improvements would be continuations of the present uses. Commission staff observes that nothing with respect to the proposed project is incompatible with the present or proposed uses of the canal park as noted in the Master Plan.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.3(a), which discourage projects in those portions of Review Zone A that comprise the Rural canal environment, are inapplicable to the proposed project. Staff recommends that the provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.3(b), which authorize the Commission to require specific compensatory measures to mitigate the potential for harmful impact of a minor project in the Rural canal environment of Review Zone A, not be imposed for the proposed project, which is entirely screened from the view of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and, therefore, proposes no harmful impact.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(a) directs that projects in Review Zone A shall be set back from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park sufficiently far so that the winter visual and natural quality of the park are not adversely affected. In the Rural canal environment, all structures shall be located 250 feet or more from the park. The proposed project area is approximately 275 feet from the nearest boundary of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(b) directs that projects in Review Zone A shall maintain a reasonable height and scale relationship to nearby structures or vegetation. For the Rural canal environment, structures shall be limited to a height of 40 feet above existing grade where existing vegetation does not provide adequate winter screening. The applicant’s submission indicates that the height of the new building will be 23 feet, 11 inches. Therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(c) directs that for projects in Review Zone A, the exterior appearances of a project shall be in keeping with the character of the park’s individual environments. Specifically, colors used shall harmonize with the man-made or natural

DATE: April 25, 2025**PROJECT NAME:** Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

surroundings of the project and shall be typical of colors found in the park environment, and building materials and texture shall harmonize with the surrounding man-made and natural materials. The applicant's submission indicates that the proposed building would be a two-toned color scheme with a slate grey upper portion and a 4.0-inch charcoal gray strip along the bottom portion of the building. The proposed slate/charcoal color of the building harmonizes with the surrounding buildings, and the neutral color scheme would blend into the existing building, which is primarily red brick with light grey siding, as well as surrounding buildings. With respect to materials, the building would be clad in metal siding that is similar to the vinyl siding on the existing fire house building. Therefore, Commission staff determines that the project is in compliance with this requirement.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)1., which regulate electric, telephone, cable television, and other such lines and equipment, are inapplicable to the proposed project.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)2. directs that exposed storage areas, out-buildings, exposed machinery service areas, parking lots, loading areas, utility buildings, and similar ancillary areas and structures shall either be completely concealed from view from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park or designed to minimize their visual impact on the park. Commission staff notes that the proposed building would be concealed from view of the park by the existing fire department building. Therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)3., and 4., respectively, which regulate the dimensions and location of commercial signage and advertising structures, are inapplicable to the proposed project.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)5., direct the preservation wherever possible, of natural terrains, soils, stones, and vegetation, and the use of native vegetation, stones, and soils, are inapplicable to the proposed project. The applicant proposes to plant a single Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) in conjunction with the project. The Red Maple is listed on the Commission List of Native Trees; therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)6 directs that projects that are located in any officially designated Federal, State or local historic district or site shall be assessed for their impact upon that district or site. Recommendations to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the impacts of a project on a listed property shall be made in consultation with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and based upon the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

The project area is located beyond the boundaries of the East Millstone Historic District, which terminates at the eastern boundary of the so-called "Onka" Property. As noted hereinabove, a triangular area at the northern end of the project area falls within the boundaries of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District, which encompasses the centerline of the canal and all structures within 300 feet of the centerline of the canal.

DATE: April 25, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

However, as indicated by the aerial image below taken from the NJ-Geoweb online mapping tool, the proposed building would not be located within the boundaries of the historic district.



The Millstone Valley Fire Department occupied a circa 1860 building located at 11 Market Street (now the U.S. Post Office East Millstone Branch) from 1943 until 1979, when it moved to the present building location. The present 1979 Millstone Valley Fire Department building (See images below) was reviewed for eligibility for the State Register of Historic Places as part of the 1982 Delaware and Raritan Historic Structures Survey. The survey notes that the building does not possess any architectural or historic importance, and that it was not recommended for inclusion on the Register of Historic Places.



Given the foregoing, consultation with the SHPO is not warranted in this case, and the project is in compliance with this requirement.

DRCC#: 23-2035B

8

DATE: April 25, 2025

PROJECT NAME: Millstone Valley Fire Department -- Pole Building

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hutchison", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Hutchison
Executive Director

- c. Somerset County Planning Board
Franklin Township Planning Board
Peter Lanfrit, Esq. (lanfrit@centraljerseylaw.com) (erin@landuseconsultants.net)