



**August 20, 2025, Minutes of the Meeting
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
DATE: August 20, 2025
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Phillip Lubitz attended the meeting in the Commission Office. Commissioner Designee Robin Madden, Commissioner John Reiser, Commissioner Douglas Palmer, and Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner participated via online platform and teleconference.

STAFF: Executive Director John Hutchison and Colleen Maloney attended the meeting in the Commission office. Commission Engineer Joseph Ruggeri, Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence, Communications Director Darlene Yuhas, and DAG Jill Denyes participated via online platform.

GUESTS: Michael Sellar, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Stephen Gates, NJWSA; Kathy Hale, NJWSA; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Linda Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Robert von Zumbusch, Kingston Historical Society; Ralph Wesner; David Schmidt; Jeffrey R. Chang; Howard Geneslaw; Christopher M. Bednarski, PE; Jeff Richter; Erin Dovel; Tal Steinberg, SELA Realty; Ryan Spreen.

Commissioner Lubitz announced that this was a monthly meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission and that the provisions of the “Senator Byron Baer Open Public Meetings Act” (OPMA) had been complied with in the scheduling of the meeting.

Commissioner Lubitz stated that the meeting was being taped pursuant to the exception set forth at Section C.(1) of DEP Policy & Procedure 2.85 “Prohibition of Recording in the Workplace” Policy adopted on September 18, 2019.

Since some Commission members were participating via telephonic device pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of the Commission Bylaws, Commissioner Lubitz directed Executive Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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Vice-Chairman Stout	Absent
Commissioner Designee Madden	Present
Commissioner Reiser	Present
Commissioner Lubitz	Present
Commissioner Shoffner	Present
Commissioner Palmer	Present

Director Hutchison stated that a quorum was present.

Administrative Items

Confirmation of September 17, 2025, Meeting Date

Commissioner Lubitz stated that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for September 17, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the July 15, 2025, Commission Meeting

Commissioner Lubitz inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the July 15, 2025, Commission meeting minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as prepared by staff. Commissioner Shoffner made a motion to adopt the minutes as proposed, which was seconded by Commissioner Palmer.

Commissioner Lubitz asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Absent
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#25-1724D	New Jersey Public Health, Environmental, and Agriculture Laboratory (NJ PHEAL) Expansion (Ewing Township)
#25-4051A	NJEDA -- Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center (Trenton City)
#24-5357B	14 Lambert Lane -- Proposed Duplex Dwelling (Lambertville City)
#21-5679	16 Butterfoss Avenue -- Proposed Residence (Hopewell Township)

Commissioner Lubitz requested a motion on the Zone A projects. Commissioner Designee Madden made a motion to approve the projects, which was seconded by Commissioner Palmer. Commissioner Lubitz asked for comment on the projects from the Commission and then the public. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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Vice-Chairman Stout	Absent
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes

The motion was approved.

Zone B Projects

#24-2117C	1 Overlook Drive -- Building Addition/Improvements (Monroe Township)
#25-2663D	3401 Princeton Pike -- Bristol Myers Squibb Parking Expansion (Lawrence Township)
#24-6128	16 Deerpark Drive -- Residential Development Parking Alterations (South Brunswick Township)
#24-6144	131 Jersey Avenue -- Proposed Warehouse (New Brunswick City)
#25-6161A	862 Georgetown-Franklin Turnpike -- Ambulatory Surgery Center (Montgomery Township)

Commissioner Lubitz requested a motion on the Zone B projects. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to approve the projects, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Commissioner Lubitz asked for comment on the projects from the Commission and then the public. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Absent
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes

The motion was approved.

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison reported on the Commission workload for the period encompassing July 16, 2025, to August 19, 2025. He reported that in addition to the 9 projects listed on the August meeting agenda, staff completed 17 deficient staff reports and 13 jurisdictional determinations, issued 13 certificates of approval, and issued 10 general permits. In addition to those matters, staff organized and conducted 13 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects, and, as of August 19, 2025, there were 20 projects undergoing staff review and one project calendared for the September meeting agenda.

Director Hutchison reported that fee collections totaled \$30,962.50 for the month of August, which he noted was lower than expected; however, he observed that one applicant owed the Commission \$7,000 for an application received this month and had yet to submit their fee check. So far in Fiscal Year 2026, the Commission had collected \$64,862.50 of its \$500,000 anticipated appropriation amount.

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Director Hutchison stated that despite some mechanical difficulties with the large document scanner that staff was working with Ricoh to resolve, the file digitization project continued to make steady progress. During the previous month, the contents of 8 boxes were scanned, bringing the 2025 year-to-date total to 116. A total of 335 boxes of files had been digitized, which constituted 64% of the total number of boxes.

Director Hutchison reported that Commission staff held a pre-application meeting with the Somerset County Engineering Office on their project to install a crosswalk and pedestrian-activated crossing beacons at the point where the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park multiuse trail crosses the Manville Causeway in Franklin Township, Somerset County. He stated that Commission staff was ready to assist the county in any way possible to bring the project, which would promote pedestrian and cyclist safety for park users, to a successful conclusion.

Director Hutchison stated that he and Erica Vavrence were working with the DEP Bureau of Geographic Information Systems (BGIS) to put the finishing touches on the new Commission project database. Among the many improvements adopted to the GIS-based system would be the inclusion of up-to-date Nearmap® aerial imagery for the years 2021 through 2024 to the basemap gallery of information available. He stated that, thanks to colleagues at the NJWSA, the Commission has added the location of canal infalls and outfalls, as well as the canal engineering station numbers as a searchable GIS layer.

Director Hutchison stated that the infall/outfall information would be especially helpful to the Commission engineers when determining whether a project drains to the canal and if enhanced water quality standards should be imposed. The Director stated that the canal station numbers were developed as part of the photogrammetric and topographic mapping of the Delaware and Raritan Canal by the DEP Division of Water Facility Operations in 1979. They are used to locate engineering features or particular points of interest along the canal. Director Hutchison expressed his gratitude to Keith Lindabury in the DEP BGIS for his help with the project.

Director Hutchison reported that the second installment of the Commission's "On the Level" series of videotaped oral histories with key canal leaders has been edited and would soon be uploaded to the Commission YouTube channel. The second interview features transportation historian, preservationist, and author William J. "Captain Bill" McKelvey.

Finally, Director Hutchison stated he was pleased to report that on August 12 the firm of Clark Caton Hintz was awarded the amount of \$460,980 and was notified by the Department of the Treasury that they could proceed with the project to update and revise the Commission Master Plan. While much work remained to be done, Director Hutchison observed, the award of a contract to a consultant was a major milestone in the effort to create a 21st century master plan for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park that includes a historic structures survey. He noted that Commission staff was grateful to the Department of the Treasury Division of Property Management and Construction for their successful organization and administration of the RFP process and managing the consultant selection committee. Director Hutchison also expressed gratitude to Mr. White of the DEP Office of Resource Development for his technical expertise and advice. Director Hutchison stated that he would like to extend the Commission's thanks to Judy Murphy at the N.J. Historic Trust for her guidance in the grant process.

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He also stated that he wished to thank Darlene Yuhas for her work as lead Commission staffer on the vital project.

Park Superintendent's Report

Commissioner Designee Madden provided Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl's report. She stated that the State Park Service staff at the Bulls Island Recreation Area recently welcomed participants of the DEP Youth Inclusion Initiative. The group learned about plants and insects by the river's edge as well as the history of the island and previous residents.

Commissioner Designee Madden reported that seasonal staff hosted a discovery night at Bulls Island Recreation Area, which drew more than 50 participants. Two separate moth traps were available to view many of the native species nighttime insects.

Commissioner Designee Madden reported an increase in park visitation during August from the previous two months.

Commissioner Designee Madden reported Director Hutchison's report of a complaint about dirt bike use on the multiuse path was referred to the New Jersey State Park Police, which indicated that they would step up patrols.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA's consultants were in the process of obtaining permits for the Bulls Island to Prallsville embankment repair project (DRCC #22-3255C).

Mr. Sellar reported that NJWSA was reviewing plans and specifications for the Prallsville Culvert/Spillway Rehabilitation project (DRCC #24-3212Q).

Mr. Sellar reported that the invasive aquatic plant species Hydrilla was detected by NJWSA in the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and that treatment options would be explored for initiating next year. He indicated that monitoring of the canal would be continued.

Mr. Sellar reported that NJWSA was evaluating fee proposals to address the potential removal of the deteriorated former railroad trestle that crosses the canal in the vicinity of the Mercer County Wildlife Center.

Mr. Sellar reported that NJWSA staff were conducting general maintenance activities along the Delaware and Raritan Canal, including mowing grass and removing fallen trees and branches. He encouraged the public to contact both the NJWSA and the State Park Service in the event fallen trees are observed in and around the canal.

Mr. Sellar reported that the canal water level had been lowered near Landing Lane to allow caulking of joints and repairs of the spillway located near N.J. State Highway Route No. 18 in the City of New Brunswick.

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA had continued its practice from the previous two seasons to release excess water to the Millstone River from the Kingston Wastegate, rather than the standard location at the

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Ten Mile Wastegate. The use of the Kingston Wastegate increases flow in the Millstone River for a longer reach, starting closer to Carnegie Lake, which is a source for harmful algal blooms (HABs) entering the lower reaches of the Millstone. This increased flow in turn helps to combat conditions that contribute to the formation and proliferation of HABs within the waterway.

Commissioner Lubitz stated that the Commission would address new business, old business, and public comment agenda items before breaking for executive session.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Public Comment

Ms. Barth stated that Canal Watch would host its “Canal House Challenge” event on Sunday, September 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Participants would be challenged to visit the East Millstone, Blackwells Mills, Griggstown, Lawrence, and Kingston canal houses. She said that more than 100 individuals participated last year, and that she looked forward to even more participation this year.

Ms. Barth stated she and Mr. Barth would be attending the World Canals Conference 2025 in Buffalo, New York, slated for September 21 through 25.

Mr. von Zumbusch stated he understood that Franklin Township would be closing a part of Canal Road on September 24 or 30, and that he sought clarification of the date from the township as the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition had proposed closing Canal Road on September 24 to celebrate the “Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route,” a 680-mile series of roads used by the Continental Army and the French Army during their march from Newport, Rhode Island, to Yorktown, Virginia. He clarified to Commissioner Designee Madden that the road would be closed, not the park multiuse trail, and that he hoped to provide further information after the meeting.

Written Public Comments

None.

Executive Session

Commissioner Lubitz stated the Commission would enter into executive session to discuss terms and conditions of employment for Commission staff within the meaning of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(8). Director Hutchison noted that the Commissioners had an opportunity to review Commission Resolution No. 2025-02, which provided notice of the executive session and that the resolution would become effective upon a vote of the Commission. Commissioner Lubitz stated that he did not anticipate the Commission would take any action other than adjournment once the Commission concluded the executive session.

Commissioner Lubitz then requested a motion to authorize the Commission to enter into executive session. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to convene in executive session, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Each Commissioner voted in the affirmative to enter into executive session.

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The Commission convened in executive session at 10:30 a.m.

Post-Executive Session

At 10:35, the Commission returned to public session.

Adjournment

There being no other business, Commissioner Lubitz entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Reiser made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Commissioner Lubitz called for a vote on the motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

John Hutchison, Secretary