



**December 17, 2025, Minutes of the Meeting  
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.  
DATE: December 17, 2025  
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

**ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:**

Vice-Chairman Bruce Stout attended the meeting in the Commission Office. Commissioner Designee Robin Madden, Commissioner John Reiser, Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner and Commissioner Douglas Palmer participated via online platform and teleconference.

STAFF: Executive Director John Hutchison, Deputy Attorney General Jordan Viana, and Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence attended the meeting in the Commission office. Commission Engineer Joseph Ruggeri, Communications Director Darlene Yuhas and Administrative Assistant Megan Black participated via online platform.

GUESTS: Michael Sellar, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Maggie Mitchell-Strehl, Superintendent, Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Robert von Zumbusch, Kingston Historical Society; Marla Roller; Danny Goncalves; Sarah Bisaha; Lane Miller, Esq.; Jeff Adcock; Teddy Gadeh; Jackie Giordano; Rikki Massand.

Vice-Chairman Stout 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.

Vice-Chairman Stout announced 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, Vice-Chairman Stout directed Executive Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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

Director Hutchison stated at 10:08 a.m. that a quorum was present.

### **Administrative Items**

#### **Confirmation of the January 21, 2026, Meeting Date**

Vice-Chairman Stout stated that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for January 21, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

### **Minutes**

#### **Approval of the Minutes of November 19, 2025, Commission Meeting**

Vice-Chairman Stout inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the minutes of the November 19, 2025, Commission meeting. 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.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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

The motion was approved.

### **Review Zone Actions**

#### **Zone A Projects**

#23-3604B                      91 Cottontail Lane -- Proposed Warehouse (Franklin Township)

Vice-Chairman Stout asked for a motion on the project. Commissioner Designee Madden made a motion to approve the Zone A project; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Vice-Chairman Stout asked for comment on the project from the Commissioners and then from the public. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Stout asked Director Hutchison to call the roll.

Vice-Chairman Stout	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes

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Commissioner Reiser	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Absent

The motion was approved.

#### Zone B Projects

#25-2436MM	311 Pennington-Rocky Hill Road -- Parking Expansion (Hopewell Township)
#25-6310	Alec E. Baker Park -- Renovations (New Brunswick City)

Vice-Chairman Stout asked if any member of the Commission wished to consider either of the Zone B projects separately. Hearing none, he asked for a motion on the projects. Commissioner Palmer made a motion to approve the projects; Commissioner Designee Madden seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Stout asked for comment from the Commission and then from the public. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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

The motion was approved.

#### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hutchison reported on the Commission workload for the period encompassing November 19, 2025, through December 16, 2025. He said that in addition to the 3 projects listed on the agenda, the staff had issued 12 deficient staff reports, 9 jurisdictional determinations, 14 certificates of approval, and 6 general permits.

In addition to these matters, staff organized and conducted 10 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects. As of December 16, 2025, there were 15 projects undergoing review.

Director Hutchison reported that fee collections totaled \$47,700 for the month of November. He said this was a strong monthly collection that follows the Commission's satisfactory collections in September and October. In Fiscal Year 2026, the Commission had collected \$224,400 of its \$500,000 annual anticipated appropriation amount. Or put another way, with 50% of the fiscal year completed, the Commission has collected 45% of the Commission's annual anticipated appropriation amount.

Director Hutchison said he was pleased to report that the promotion of Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence to the position formerly held by Colleen Maloney, and the appointment of Administrative Assistant Megan Black as a full-time employee to hold the position previously held by Ms. Vavrence had been processed by the Civil Service Commission and was now completed. DEP Human Resources

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had helped the Commission to navigate this process, which was resolved relatively quickly when compared to other hiring and promotion actions. The Director expressed gratitude to DEP Director of Human Resources Juliet DeValle and her staff for their assistance.

The Commission's file digitization project continued to roll toward completion, Director Hutchison reported. In November the contents of 11 file boxes were scanned, bringing the 2025 year-to-date total to 166. The Director stated that a total of 379 boxes of files had been digitized, which constituted 72% of the total number of boxes. The Director said that the end of the project was now within grasp and that once completed, the project would represent a significant improvement in the Commission's continuity of operations and continuity of government status. The digitization project marked the first time in the Commission's 51-year history that it had instituted a records retention and storage policy that complied with State regulations and created a permanent electronic library of the Commission's project documents.

Director Hutchison reported that at the request of the Lambertville City Construction Office, the Commission issued a letter advising a South Union Street resident that their new backyard deck was constructed without the requisite Commission approval. Commission staff also issued a comprehensive response letter to a Stockton Borough resident regarding the potential construction of a paver patio without Commission approval, and the purported failure of an applicant to install a pervious pavement driveway that was proposed as part of a single-family residential development project located on Church Street in Zone A that was approved by the Commission in 2023 (DRCC #23-5991). The Director said the Commission would follow up on these actions to ensure compliance with the Commission's regulations.

Vice-Chairman Stout congratulated Ms. Vavrence and Mrs. Black and thanked them both for their ongoing work on behalf of the Commission.

### **Park Superintendent's Report**

Noting that the early weeks of December had been slow, Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that the beehive program at Rockingham State Historic Site in Kingston would be restored in the new year, bringing back sales of honey in the gift shop to benefit the Rockingham Association, which is the friends' group that supports the historic site, which was General George Washington's final Revolutionary War headquarters.

The Superintendent announced that Rockingham historian Lisa Flick would be retiring from State service on January 1, 2026. She said State Park Service colleagues would be working with seasonal staff and the Rockingham Historical Society to address needs related to opening hours and public access.

She said the State Park Service was working the Jersey Off Road Bicycle Association (JORBA) at Six Mile Run Reservoir Site to make improvements to multiuse trail marking and signage. She said it is hoped that the results of their collaboration with JORBA would be in place during the spring of 2026.

Lastly, the Superintendent reported that maintenance crews had been busy tackling cleanup responsibilities in the wake of recent snow events.

**New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report**

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA consultant for the upper embankment reconstruction project from Bulls Island Recreation Area to Prallsville Mills was continuing to work and apply for required State permits. He observed that the reconstruction work was critical at that section of the stone-armored embankment, as it frequently overtops, resulting in erosion that could potentially lead to failure of the embankment.

Mr. Sellar reported that an engineering consultant was finalizing plans and specifications for repairs at the Prallsville culvert pit located at the north side of the Delaware and Raritan Canal between the canal and the multiuse trail, just upstream of the Prallsville Lock near the Prallsville Mills complex. Significant flooding from the extreme rainfall that occurred when Hurricane Ida hit the region in September 2021 heavily damaged the spillway sluice gates and caused one of the stone walls of the culvert pit to collapse. Mr. Sellar said the NJWSA anticipated that the project would go out to bid in the next four weeks and that he was hopeful that work at the site could begin in the spring.

Mr. Sellar stated that the deteriorated former railroad trestle that crosses the canal near N.J. State Highway Route No 29 in the vicinity of the Mercer County Wildlife Center in Hopewell Township, sank farther into the canal, necessitating complete removal of the heavily deteriorated wooden section. The pieces were piled up nearby, and Mr. Sellar said it would be up to the DEP State Historic Preservation Office and the recently contracted consultants to decide on next steps with respect to the detritus. The consultant had been hired to conduct historical documentation of the trestle.

Mr. Sellar said that NJWSA work crews continued to tend to weather-related incidents, and leaf removal from locks, gates and bar racks had been completed. He said that he anticipated that some mowing and trimming of low-hanging branches of trees would be conducted along the canal this winter.

He also reiterated that the NJWSA had closed the Delaware and Raritan Canal Kingston Wastegate and reopened the Ten Mile Wastegate to discharge water into the Raritan system as part of ongoing efforts to manage the size of a hazardous algae bloom in that river.

Mr. Sellar noted that he had been engaged in discussions with the contractor working on repairs at the pedestrian bridge over the canal at the Five Mile Lock Parking Area on Easton Avenue, Franklin Township, and learned that a recently ordered piece of steel needed for the structure was expected to arrive within weeks, and then another four weeks of work would be necessary to complete the project.

**New Business**

None.

**Old Business**

None.

**Public Comment**

Mr. von Zumbusch said that there will be a reenactment of the Battle of Princeton on Sunday, January 4,

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2026, at Princeton Battlefield State Park. He said that there would be a \$10 pre-registration fee for everyone other than veterans and children under the age of 12. A group on horseback would ride up the former Kings Highway to Kingston to the Eno Terra restaurant for a fundraising luncheon hosted by organizers, including Franklin Township and the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition.

Following the luncheon, the “Conference on Horseback” will take place at 2:30 p.m. in Kingston, he said. That free event commemorates General George Washington’s meeting with senior officers to decide their movements following the victory at the Battle of Princeton on January 3, 1777. Afterward, refreshments would be served at the Kingston United Methodist Church.

**Written Public Comments**

None.

**Adjournment**

There being no other business, Vice-Chairman Stout entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Palmer made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Reiser. Vice-Chairman Stout called for a vote on the motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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John Hutchison, Secretary