



**January 21, 2026, Minutes of the Meeting
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
DATE: January 21, 2026
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Vice-Chairman Bruce Stout, Commissioner Robert Bostock, Commissioner Randy Jones, Commissioner Matthew Walsh, and Commissioner Designee Mark Texel attended the meeting in the Commission Office. Commissioner Douglas Palmer, Commissioner Phillip Lubitz, and Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner participated via online platform and teleconference.

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

GUESTS: Michael Sellar, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Stephen Gates, Chief Engineer, NJWSA; Maggie Mitchell-Strehl, Superintendent, D&R Canal State Park; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Linda Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Ethel Chan, Christopher H. DeGrezia, Shane Soranno, Mark Cifelli, Emily R. Goldman.

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 asked Executive Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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Vice-Chairman Stout	Present
Commissioner Designee Texel	Present
Commissioner Bostock	Present
Commissioner Jones	Present
Commissioner Lubitz	Present
Commissioner Palmer	Present
Commissioner Shoffner	Present
Commissioner Walsh	Present

Director Hutchison stated that a quorum was present.

Vice-Chairman Stout congratulated and welcomed the newest members of the Commission who had recently received the advice and consent of the Senate. Vice-Chairman Stout then announced that the first order of business would be to swear in the newly appointed Commissioners.

Administrative Items

Swearing In of Commissioner Members

Vice-Chairman Stout invited Commissioners Bostock, Jones, Walsh to come forward to take and subscribe the oath of office as members of the Commission pursuant to Article I, Section 5 of the Commission Bylaws. Vice-Chairman Stout then administered the prescribed oath of office to the new Commissioners.

Annual Election of Commissioner Officers

Vice-Chairman Stout stated that pursuant to the provisions of the “Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Law of 1974” and consistent with the Article II, Section 3, paragraph c. of the Commission Bylaws, it was customary at the annual reorganization meeting to undertake the election of officers. Vice-Chairman Stout then announced his intention to decline to serve as Vice-Chairman for 2026 and then called for nominations for the offices of Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. He also noted that it would be appropriate for Commissioners to self-nominate if they were inclined to serve.

Commissioner Bostock offered his name in nomination for Vice-Chairman. He noted that he had previously served as Chairman, was willing to serve, and that he was familiar with the responsibilities and procedures attendant with the office. Commissioner Lubitz seconded the nomination.

Vice-Chairman Stout asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll on the nomination to appoint Commissioner Bostock as Vice-Chairman for the calendar year 2026:

Vice-Chairman Stout	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes

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Commissioner Walsh Yes

Commissioner Bostock assumed the office of Vice-Chairman. He then called for nominations to the office of Treasurer. Commissioner Stout made a motion to nominate Commissioner Lubitz to be Treasurer. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll on the nomination of Commissioner Lubitz as Treasurer for calendar year 2026.

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

Confirmation of February 18, 2026, Meeting Date

Vice-Chairman Bostock announced that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for February 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Proposed Approval of Lease Agreement (LE26-011) for land consisting of approximately 69.73 acres designated as Block 57.01, Lot 32.02, Block 85, Lot 32.02 and Block 85, Lot 63.02 in Franklin Township, Somerset County, for agricultural production purposes.

Director Hutchison stated that the Commission was called upon periodically to approve leases involving the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, consistent with its statutory mandate to approve any physical development to the park. The Director briefly noted how the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site in the vicinity of Griggstown in Franklin Township, Somerset County, had become part of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Director Hutchison noted that after the site was deemed unsuitable for use as a reservoir, the former farmlands were leased to individual farmers, and that the area in question had been leased for farming since at least 1979. The lease proposed for approval would extend the farm lease for an additional 5 years at an annual rental of \$1,296. The Director noted that the lease had already been approved by the DEP Office of Transactions and the Public Lands Administration (OTPLA).

Commissioner Stout made a motion to approve the lease agreement submitted by DEP OTPLA; Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion. The Vice-Chairman asked the Commissioners, and then the public, if anyone had questions or comments on the lease agreement. Hearing none, he asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes

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Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the December 17, 2025, Commission meeting

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2025, Commissioner meeting as prepared by staff. Commissioner Stout made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner.

The Vice-Chairman inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the minutes. Commissioner Designee Texel, who acknowledged that he was not present for the December Commission meeting, said he wished to clarify that the January 4, 2026, Battle of Princeton reenactment was not the first time participants had been charged a \$10 fee, and that this was inaccurately represented at the December meeting. Director Hutchison proposed that the minutes be edited to reflect Commissioner Designee Texel’s clarification.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Stout made a motion to approve the minutes with the proviso that they be edited to reflect Mr. Texel’s clarification, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. At the direction of the Vice-Chairman, Director Hutchison then called the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Abstain
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Abstain
Commissioner Lubitz	Abstain
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Abstain

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#25-2441PPP Princeton University -- Washington Road and Delaware and Raritan Canal Bridge Pathway Improvements (Municipality of Princeton)

At Vice-Chairman Bostock’s request, the Director explained that the proposed project would take an area historically used as an unofficial gravel parking lot for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park

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and create a widened multi-use path for cyclists and pedestrians and include lighted bollards.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked for a motion on the project. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to approve the project, which was seconded by Commissioner Shoffner. Vice-Chairman Bostock asked for any comment on the project from the Commissioners and the public. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Bostock directed Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

The motion was approved.

Zone B Projects

#25-3481E Friendship Road -- Major Modification (South Brunswick Township)

In response to Vice-Chairman Bostock's request for a brief explanation, the Director noted that the application was a scattered site project consisting of several lots located on either side of Friendship Road in South Brunswick Township, Middlesex County. Since the time that the Commission had issued its approval, the applicant met with South Brunswick Township officials, who prevailed upon the applicant to make additional changes, which included road widening, additional sidewalk improvements, improved emergency vehicle access, a additional sewerage pump station and more landscaping. Because those changes impacted the overall stormwater management design, the project was submitted to the Commission as a major modification. The Director noted that the Commission's scope of review was confined to only the proposed changes, and not the underlying project approval.

Vice-Chairman asked the Commissioners and then the public if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he entertained a motion to approve the project, which was made by Commissioner Designee Texel and seconded by Commissioner Stout. Director Hutchison was then directed to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

The motion was approved.

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#25-6112A Terhune Road -- Mt. Lucas Road to North Harrison Street Pedestrian
Improvements (Municipality of Princeton)

In response to the Vice-Chairman’s request for a brief description of the project, Director Hutchison explained that Terhune Road was a municipal street that runs from the building that is now Princeton Fire and Rescue Squad to North Harrison Street in the vicinity of Princeton Shopping Center. The project presented for Commission approval proposed to make right-of-way improvements to the street, consisting of 3,169 feet of sidewalk and curb repairs, driveway apron repairs and the installation of ADA-compliant ramps on both sides of Terhune Road.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked for questions or comments from the Commissioners, and then from the public. He then asked for a motion to approve the project. Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve the project, which was seconded by Commissioner Jones. Director Hutchison was then directed to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

The motion was approved.

#25-6307 4315 U.S. Route No. 1 -- Residential Development (South Brunswick Township)

Director Hutchison noted that the project proposed the demolition of all existing improvements on the site and the subsequent construction of a six-story, 132,050 square-foot, residential apartment building with 304 dwelling units. The project also proposed the construction of site amenities such as parking areas, internal roads, sidewalks, landscaping, stormwater management system and associated amenities.

The Vice-Chairman asked the Commissioners and then the public if they had any questions or comments. Hearing none, he asked the Director to call the roll on the motion by Commissioner Stout and seconded by Commissioner Walsh, Vice-Chairman Bostock asked the Director to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Yes
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes

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Commissioner Stout	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

The motion was approved.

Executive Director’s Report

Director Hutchison reported on the workload for the period encompassing December 17, 2025, through January 20, 2026. In addition to the 4 projects on the agenda, staff had issued 16 deficient staff reports, 3 jurisdictional determinations, 2 certificates of approval, and 1 general permit. The Director also noted that one staff report had been completed for a project that would be calendared at the February 18, 2026, meeting. In addition to these matters, staff organized and conducted 6 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects.

The Director reported that fee collections totaled \$33,150 for the month of December. He characterized that as a “fair” monthly collection amount, but not as strong as collections in September and October. His surmise was that the fee collection total was at least partly impacted by the recent cold weather. He observed that project applications typically slow during the winter months, and that a review of previous years indicated that \$23,150 was collected in January 2025, and \$37,700 for the same time period in 2024. The Director noted that thus far in Fiscal Year 2026, the Commission collected of \$257,550 its \$385,000 anticipated appropriation amount.

Director Hutchison reported that the Commission project file digitization project continued to make impressive progress. Thirteen boxes of files were scanned by Administrative Assistant Megan Black last month. A total of 392 boxes out of 526 boxes of project files had been digitized, which constituted 75% of the total.

The Director said he was pleased to report that the residents of South Union Street in Lambertville who had constructed a new backyard deck without the Commission approval, had filed an application in response to a recent letter reminding them of their responsibility to abide by the Commission’s regulations.

Director Hutchison said he received a telephone call from a member of the Stockton Borough Planning Board who asked him to make a presentation regarding the Commission’s land use program and how it interacts with local land use regulations. The long-time borough zoning officer recently retired, the Director said, and the board wanted to ensure that developments requiring Commission approvals are properly obtained.

On January 13, the Director reported that he attended a DEP Permit Coordination meeting on a proposal by Mercer County and the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to use the Moores Station Quarry site in Hopewell Township as a water storage facility. The quarry site is approximately 166 acres and is located at the northwest end of Baldpate Mountain, adjacent to N.J. State Highway Route No. 29 and Pleasant Valley Road, operated by Trap Rock Industries from the mid-19th century until 1935. In 1982, Trap Rock Industries restarted quarrying operations at the site for diabase and argillite rock. Quarrying at the site ceased in 2020, and the land was acquired by Mercer County in 1998 and conveyed after decommissioning in 2023.

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Director Hutchison said Mercer County and the DRBC had begun what could best be described as an exploratory effort to examine the possibility of using the former quarry, which is naturally refilling with water, as a storage facility that could take its own water and water pumped from the river, store it, and then provide to the Delaware River and possibly the Delaware and Raritan Canal during periods of low flow. He said such a project would have implications for several DEP programs and would certainly impact lands within the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. The Director said he advised the county and DRBC that they should engage the NJWSA as soon as possible to discuss the water supply implications of the proposal, as well as potential impacts to the prism of the canal. Director Hutchison said he would keep the Commissioners apprised of this project as more information became available.

The Director reported that progress was made on the Commission's Master Plan revision project, the major feature of which is an updated comprehensive historic structures survey. Staff was meeting regularly with the project consultant, Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH), and Project Advisory Team (PAC) members to provide guidance and recommendations throughout the process. Director Hutchison noted that the master plan update is a challenging, long-awaited initiative made possible through a \$550,000 grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust. The new historic structures survey would replace the last one conducted in 1982 and would focus on documenting the canal park's historic resources, determining their condition, and making long-term recommendations for their preservation.

Mr. Hutchison also noted that Hunter Research, Inc., the subconsultant for the historic structures survey, had completed their field survey of the feeder portion of the canal, and work on the main canal would begin this week. Also, an assessment has been done on the Wilburtha bridgetender's house in Ewing Township, and that documentation is being reviewed by CCH's architectural team.

The Director said the PAC members also are working with CCH and mcfa, the subconsultant for public engagement, on strategies to develop and implement a plan to bring select stakeholders into the master-planning process to share their knowledge about the canal park and its Review Zones and their perspectives on the future of the park and its resources. Director Hutchison said he would have more details to report at the Commission meeting in February.

In the coming weeks, the Director noted that staff would be working on the Commission's 2025 Annual Report, the preparation of which is required by the Commission's enabling statute. Staff would be requesting biographical information and photographs from the Commissioners and the engineering staff. Director Hutchison thanked the Commissioners and engineering colleagues in advance for responding to those requests as quickly as possible.

Director Hutchison reported that the Commission received a copy of the technical report prepared by Hunter Research, Inc. that examined the options to preserve and interpret elements of swing-span bridge machinery at Main Street Bridge over the canal in the Borough of South Bound Brook, Somerset County, and the Landing Lane Bridge over the canal in New Brunswick. The report was still under review, and the Director said he had been in contact with DEP colleagues regarding the report's conclusions, which generally recommend that given the extensive deterioration of the bridge machinery, select machinery parts be retained for static indoor display and not incorporated into the proposed replacement bridge designs.

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The Director also noted that the Commission has posted on its YouTube channel another installment of the “One the Level” series, a videotaped oral history project that showcases key leaders and their unique knowledge of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission, the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, and the canal’s history. He said that the latest episode is an interview with Robert Von Zumbusch, President of the Kingston Historical Society, who offered his insights into how the Commission’s visual, historic and natural quality impact review standards were devised in 1977. The interview was videotaped at the historic Kingston Locktender’s House.

Further, Director Hutchison said he had informed Commissioner John Reiser that his term in office with the Commission had concluded. The Director wanted to personally thank him for his exemplary service and said Commissioner Reiser’s perfect five-year attendance record, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, was greatly appreciated by the staff.

Park Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that recent windy conditions had resulted in many downed trees in the park, and that maintenance staff had been working diligently to remove them from the multiuse trail.

Maintenance staff, using Bomford mowing equipment, had also been clearing the multiuse trail from Titusville through Hermitage Avenue in Trenton, and maintenance was repairing signage at the Point Pleasant access area.

In addition, the Superintendent said, State Park Service maintenance staff was focused on snow removal, and that additional clearing work was expected in the coming days.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA had applied to the DEP for land use permits for the upper embankment reconstruction project from Bulls Island Recreation Area to Prallsville Mills. That section of the stone-armored embankment frequently overtops, which results in erosion that could potentially lead to failure of the embankment; therefore, the impending reconstruction work is critical.

Advertisements for bids were issued on January 5, 2026, 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, immediately upstream of the Prallsville Lock near the Prallsville Mills complex. Extreme rainfall from Hurricane Ida in September 2021 caused significant flooding, which resulted in heavy damage to spillway sluice gates and the collapse of one of the stone walls of the culvert pit. Mr. Sellar said the bids were due back by February 10, and it was hoped that work could begin in April or May.

Mr. Sellar reported that progress was being made on the NJWSA’s plans to replace the rear sluice gate at the back race at the Lambertville Lock. The goal is to return the sluice gate to proper functioning condition in the wake of complaints last summer that the inoperable sluice gate had caused the back race to become stagnant and mosquito-ridden.

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The NJWSA on January 15 publicly issued a request for proposals for qualifications for treatment of Hydrilla, the highly invasive aquatic plant from Asia known as the "the perfect weed" for its ability to grow quickly and form thick mats that, if not controlled, could impede water flow in the canal, Mr. Sellar said. The proposals were due back on January 27, he said, and they would be evaluated at that time.

Mr. Sellar said that NJWSA work crews, like State Park colleagues, continued to manage any issues that arose from winter weather conditions.

Executive Session

None.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Before opening the floor to public comment, Vice-Chairman Bostock said he wished to express his appreciation to Governor Murphy and the State Senate for his nomination and confirmation to the Commission. Noting that he had previously served for four years, the Vice-Chairman said that in the succeeding eight years since his last term of service, he noticed that the Commission offices had considerably improved. He also noted that neither Director Hutchison nor Commission Engineer Joseph Ruggieri looked a day older. He said he was pleased to be back with fellow Commissioners Lubitz and Palmer and assured the incoming Commissioners that they would find their service both rewarding and satisfying. Vice-Chairman Bostock thanked all Commissioners for their service and said he looked forward to a productive year ahead.

Public Comment

Mrs. Barth reported difficulty with the meeting audio transmission. She asked for introductions to the new Commissioners along with brief information about their background. Commissioners Jones and Walsh and Vice-Chairman Bostock each offered information on their professional backgrounds and their interest in serving on the Commission.

Mr. Barth welcomed the new Commissioners to the Commission, and said his organization, D&R Canal Watch, was looking forward to working with them. Referencing the size of the quorum and the addition of three new Commissioners, he said that appreciated hearing eight individuals vote during the meeting.

Mr. Barth said that the D&R Canal Watch had on January 3, as its first event of the year, a cleanup in the Borough of South Bound Brook. He said six people worked together to collect many bags of trash. Mr. Barth thanked Commissioner Shoffner, mayor of South Bound Brook, for her assistance in having the borough's Department of Public Works assist with the disposal of the trash-filled bags.

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Further, Mr. Barth observed that a “new age” had begun at the Commission, pointing to the work now underway to update the Commission’s Master Plan for the park and the newly appointed group of Commissioners. He said that the D&R Canal Watch would contribute to future success in any way possible.

Written Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 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