



**February 18, 2026, Minutes of the Meeting
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
DATE: February 18, 2026
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

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

STAFF: Executive Director John Hutchison and Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence attended the meeting in the Commission office. Deputy Attorney General Jordan Viana, 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); Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Linda Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Sylvia Kobus; Peter Kobus; Robert Ridolfi; Jonathan Santos; Rikki Massand.

Vice-Chairman Bostock 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 Bostock 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 Bostock asked Executive Director Hutchison to call the roll:

February 18, 2026

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Absent
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

Director Hutchison stated that a quorum was present.

Administrative Items

Confirmation of March 18, 2026, Meeting Date

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

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the January 21, 2026, Commission meeting

The Vice-Chairman inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Bostock asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026, Commission meeting as prepared by staff. Commissioner Shoffner made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

At the direction of the Vice-Chairman, Director Hutchison then called the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Yes
Commissioner Lubitz	Yes
Commissioner Palmer	Absent
Commissioner Shoffner	Yes
Commissioner Walsh	Yes

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#26-4009F 204 North Union Street -- Façade Sign (Lambertville City)

#26-6336A 1165 Easton Avenue -- Emergency Standby Generator (Franklin Township)

#26-6349 202 North Union Street -- Second Story Safety Railing (Lambertville City)

In response to a request from Vice-Chairman Bostock, the Director provided a brief description of each of the Zone A projects.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked if any members of the Commission or the public had questions or comments on the projects. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve all three. Commissioner

February 18, 2026

Walsh made a motion to approve the projects; Commissioner Shoffner seconded the motion.

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

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

Executive Director Hutchison noted that Commissioner Palmer had joined the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

Zone B Projects

#25-2097D Hopewell Industrial Manufacturing -- Proposed Warehouse (Hopewell Township)

#25-5794B 13 Prentice Lane -- Pool/Patio (Municipality of Princeton)

#25-6211A Littlebrook Elementary School -- Building Additions (Municipality of Princeton)

In response to a request from Vice-Chairman Bostock, the Director provided a brief description of each of the Zone B projects.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked if any members of the Commission or the public had questions or comments on the projects. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the three projects. Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve the projects; Commissioner Lubitz seconded the motion.

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

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

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison reported on the workload for the period encompassing January 21, 2026, through February 17, 2026. In addition to the 6 projects on the agenda, staff had issued 9 deficient staff reports, 11 jurisdictional determinations, 5 certificates of approval, and 2 general permits. The Director also noted that one staff report had been completed for a project that would be calendared at the March 18, 2026, meeting. As of February 17, 2026, there were 21 projects undergoing staff review.

February 18, 2026

The Director reported that fee collections totaled \$15,400 for the month of December. He observed that this was a decidedly low amount when compared with 2025 (\$25,750), 2024 (\$16,950) and 2023 (\$37,200), but was commensurate with what was collected in 2022 (\$12,184.92). The Director noted that December of 2022 was also an exceptionally cold month with higher-than-average snowfall, according to his review of weather data.

Mr. Hutchison stated that he was inclined, at least in part, to attribute the low fee collections to the unseasonably cold weather during the past month. The Director noted that while one month did not constitute a trend, staff would be keeping a watchful eye on fee collections going forward. He said that the reduced collections justify in retrospect the decision to lower the anticipated appropriation amount and supported the waiver of fringe and indirect fee impositions approved for Fiscal Year 2025. The Director also observed that as of the second quarter of the fiscal year, the Commission retained a reserve balance of \$314,223.

Director Hutchison said that so far in Fiscal Year 2026, the Commission had collected of \$273,050 its \$385,000 anticipated appropriation amount. Thus, with about 66% of the fiscal year completed, the Commission had collected 71% of its annual anticipated appropriation amount.

The Director reported that the Commission's file digitization project had passed another significant milestone, with nine boxes of files scanned by Commission Administrative Assistant Megan Black. A total of 401 boxes out of 526 boxes of project files had been digitized, which constituted 76% of the total.

With respect to the Commission's Master Plan revision project, Director Hutchison reported that last week Commission staff met with consultant, Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH), and the members of the Project Advisory Team (PAC) to finalize a comprehensive survey to be completed via email by a group of key stakeholders with extensive knowledge about the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and the Commission's Review Zones.

He said the survey was expected to yield valuable information that would serve as the foundation for a broader effort to engage elected officials and the public in the Master Plan process. The information collected would be reflected in the plan's strategic recommendations. Also, to ensure that public engagement was as robust as possible, the Commission planned to bring stakeholders together in the coming weeks for roundtable discussions to explore in depth various topics, concerns or geographic areas.

More detailed work on public engagement would be undertaken by one of several Technical Advisory Committees (TACs). The other TACs will also focus on the areas of History and Archaeology, Environment Policy and Land Use, Water Supply, Recreation and Open Space, and Legislative/Regulatory Policy and Governance issues. The PAC was meeting twice a month, and the work of the TACs would commence soon.

Hunter Research, the subconsultant conducting the next Commission Historic Structures Survey, continued their critical background and field work last month. Despite the recent weather conditions, Hunter's professionals were in the field surveying several buildings in the vicinity of Griggstown,

February 18, 2026

Franklin Township. At this point, 33 of 62 extant buildings in the canal park -- around 50% -- had been surveyed. Also, Hunter has surveyed 165 of the 615 parcels of land (27%) which constitute the park. When expressed as mileage, it corresponded to 23 miles completed, and 45 miles remaining, or approximately 30% of the linear distance of the canal park.

The Director reported that Communications Director Darlene Yuhas was working on the Commission's 2025 Annual Report, the preparation of which is required by the Commission's enabling statute. She would be reaching out to Commissioners who have not yet submitted their biographical information to ensure that the project remains on track.

Referring to Director Hutchison's report on fee collections, Commissioner Lubitz asked about the process to discuss revenue collection with the DEP as the conclusion of the third quarter of the fiscal year was approaching.

Director Hutchison said the Commission maintains a close, collaborative relationship with colleagues in the DEP's Office of Management and Budget (DEP/OMB). He praised the Commission's budget OMB liaison, Vanessa Montalto, for staying on top of the Commission's finances and for contacting him immediately with any questions. Director Hutchison also credited Brian LaPolla with the State Park Service with helping Commission staff to understand the computer program that reflects real-time accounting.

Vice-Chairman Bostock inquired about a media report of a park user falling through the ice on the canal in the Princeton area. He asked if there was guidance issued to the public regarding skating on the canal. Director Hutchison said State Park Service regulations prohibit ice skating and that was the strong message to be conveyed to anyone who would contact the Commission to ask about skating.

Commissioner Designee Madden commented that the State Park Service had recently posted a message on social media advising the public to stay off the canal when it is iced over.

Park Superintendent's Report

Delivering the report for Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl, Commissioner Designee Madden said that maintenance crews had been tackling work related to snow and ice removal as a result of significant winter weather events.

She said that the State Park Service was accepting seasonal applications and seeking to fill summer positions at the Bulls Island Recreation Area in Delaware Township. Anyone who would like to apply was advised to contact the park Bulls Island office at (609) 397-2949.

Also, the Superintendent's report noted that many bald eagles had been observed along the Delaware River in the vicinity of Bulls Island throughout the month.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar reported that it had been a relatively quiet month for the NJWSA. He said bids were due to be received 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

February 18, 2026

Prallsville Mills complex. Spillway sluice gates sustained heavy damage, and a stone wall of the culvert pit collapsed, as a result of extreme rainfall from Hurricane Ida in September 2021. The bids would be evaluated, Mr. Sellar said, and he was hopeful that repair work could begin in the spring.

The NJWSA also was evaluating proposals 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.

Further, Mr. Sellar said that NJWSA work crews were addressing the challenges created by the unseasonably cold weather, breaking up ice wherever possible to ensure that the water in the canal continued to flow.

Executive Session

None.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Written Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

There being no other business, Vice-Chairman Bostock entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Shoffner made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by multiple Commissioners.

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 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John Hutchison, Secretary