



**April 15, 2026, Minutes of the Meeting
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
DATE: April 15, 2026
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Vice-Chairman Robert Bostock, Commissioner Designee Mark Texel, Commissioner Phillip Lubitz, and Commissioner Matthew Walsh attended the meeting in the Commission Office. Commissioner Douglas Palmer, Commissioner Randy Jones, and Commissioner Caryl “Chris” Shoffner 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 Damian Friebel, Communications Director Darlene Yuhas and Administrative Assistant Megan Black participated via online platform.

GUESTS: Stephen Gates, Chief Engineer, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Michael Sellar, Facilities Manager, NJWSA; Maggie Mitchell-Strehl, Superintendent, Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; John Mikusa; Hannah Duarte; John Novak; Kathy Hale; and Mitchell Summitt.

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:

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Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Texel	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 May 20, 2026, Meeting Date

Vice-Chairman Bostock announced that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for May 20, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the March 18, 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 March 18, 2026 Commission meeting as prepared by staff. Commissioner Shoffner made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Lubitz.

Commissioner Palmer joined the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

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

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

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#26-2634C 47 Bridge Street -- Ductless Heat Pump Installation (Lambertville City)

In response to a request from Vice-Chairman Bostock, the Director provided a brief description of the project.

The Vice-Chairman inquired if any Commissioners or members of the public wished to offer comments on the project. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the project. Commissioner Lubitz made

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a motion to approve the project, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

The Vice-Chairman asked 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 Walsh	Yes

#25-3000B NJDOT Structure No. 3000-163 -- Griggstown Causeway Bridge over Delaware and Raritan Canal Replacement (Franklin Township)

As requested by Vice-Chairman Bostock, Director Hutchison provided a brief description of the project.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked if any members of the Commission or the public had questions or comments on the project.

John Mikusa, team leader for the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Central region, referenced his conversations about the project with Director Hutchison, and reiterated that NJDOT supported proposed mitigation for the impact to the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park from the proposed widening of the bridge. He also assured the Commissioners that the NJDOT would ensure that the new bridge would be compliant with all required safety standards.

Mr. Barth commented that he thought the mitigation recommendations for the project proposed by Commission staff were excellent. However, he continued to have concerns about the loss of canal-related archaeology and history. He recommended that a “beam structure” or ghost structure at the demolished mill site nearby, such as the one constructed in Philadelphia to represent Benjamin Franklin’s house, should be considered as mitigation for the bridge project.

The Vice-Chairman asked for a motion to approve the project. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to approve the project, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

He then asked 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 Walsh	Yes

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Zone B Projects

#23-2654F 230 Davidson Avenue -- Proposed Warehouse (Franklin Township)

In response to a request from Vice-Chairman Bostock, the Director provided a brief description of the project.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked if any members of the Commission or the public had questions or comments on the project. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the project. Commissioner Designee Texel made a motion to approve the project, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

The Vice-Chairman asked 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 Walsh	Yes

#25-3122A 2 Home News Row -- Industrial Building (New Brunswick City)

Pursuant to Vice-Chairman Bostock's request, the Director provided a brief description of the project.

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

The Vice-Chairman asked 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 Walsh	Yes

#26-6262A 444 Route 31 -- Automobile Service Building (West Amwell Township)

In response to a request from Vice-Chairman Bostock, the Director provided a brief description of the project.

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

The Vice-Chairman asked 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 Walsh	Yes

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison reported on the workload for the period encompassing March 19, 2026, through April 14, 2026. In addition to the 5 projects listed on the agenda, the staff completed 24 deficient staff reports, 12 jurisdictional determinations, 3 certificates of approval, and 5 general permits.

In addition to these matters, the Director said staff organized and conducted 10 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects and conducted 1 site visit related to a potential application. As of March 17, 2026, there were 28 projects undergoing review.

Director Hutchison said that fee collections totaled \$26,575 for the month. This amount was an improvement on the \$20,650 collected in April 2025 and much better than the \$9,800 collected in April 2024. He also noted that due to a filing error, Mercer County owed the Commission an additional \$5,000 for a project application.

So far in Fiscal Year 2026, the Director indicated that the Commission had collected \$343,375 of its \$385,000 anticipated appropriation amount. Thus, with about 83% of the fiscal year completed, the Commission had collected 89% of its annual anticipated appropriation amount.

Director Hutchison reported that the Commission's project file digitization project achieved another milestone this month. Administrative Assistant Megan Black scanned another 14 boxes of files, bringing the year-to-date total to 49. Of the total 526 boxes of project files, 428 boxes have been digitized, which constitutes 81% of the total. The Director said he was very pleased that fewer than 100 boxes of files remained to be scanned.

Director Hutchison reported that on April 7, along with staff from other DEP programs and the National Park Service, he attended another meeting convened by the NJDOT and Dewberry Engineering on the Route 29 Rockfall Mitigation Project, which is proposed to be conducted on DEP-owned land at the Goat Hill Overlook site in the City of Lambertville and West Amwell Township between mileposts 17.1 to 18.25. The meeting involved the review of a series of alternatives for implementing the project, the Director said. He reiterated that he had noted during previous meetings the NJDOT convened on this

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project, the proposed rockfall mitigation strategies would result in substantial impacts to the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District and would also have stormwater and potential stream corridor impacts.

With respect to the Commission Master Plan revision project, Director said there was a bit of breaking news this month. The Commission was poised to transmit to local government officials in each of the 5 counties and 34 municipalities in the Review Zone, a comprehensive questionnaire that would enable them to share their perspectives, recommendations and information on a host of issues that directly affect their work as it relates to the Delaware and Raritan Canal and the State park. Those issues include the Commission's regulatory process, stormwater runoff and water quality, stream corridors, flooding and climate risk, access and recreation, and historic resources, among others. The Director noted that the information from the municipal and county government questionnaire would be essential in shaping productive public engagement sessions, which are planned for the summer.

Commission staff had also met with its consultant, Clarke Caton Hintz, to review details about the excellent feedback received from the survey sent last month to two dozen key stakeholders -- those who are particularly knowledgeable about the canal State park, Director Hutchison said. This detailed information would also help focus discussions with participants during the public engagement sessions. The Commission was also in the process of confirming dates and locations for the public engagement sessions, and a visually interesting and informative electronic postcard had been created so interested participants could "save the date," he reported.

Also, Director Hutchison thanked the State Park Service for their hard work in filling potholes in the driveway at Prallsville Mills, where the Commission office is located.

Park Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl reported that State Park Service maintenance staff had repaired the canoe and kayak dock near the Turning Basin bridge in the Municipality of Princeton.

The Superintendent reported that park maintenance crews continued with tree removal work, and that spring mowing had started in the State Park.

Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl also reported that the AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program administered by DEP held a cleanup during mid-March near the multiuse trail in Bordentown. She said 12 volunteers collected 38 bags of trash. The program utilizes individual AmeriCorps members, who are assigned to each of New Jersey's 20 watershed management areas to serve as "ambassadors" to their watershed communities.

Commissioner Lubitz mentioned that he observed a small sinkhole on the park multiuse trail in the vicinity of Delevan Street in Lambertville. Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl confirmed that State Park Service was aware of the situation, and that it was being monitored.

In response to Vice-Chairman Bostock's request for any comments from the public, Mr. Barth thanked Superintendent Mitchell-Strehl and the State Park Service for repairing the canoe and kayak dock. He said a canoe race at that dock would be held May 2 at 10 a.m.

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New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Regarding repairs at the Prallsville Mills culvert pit and the wastegate modification, Mr. Sellar reported that a contract for the work was awaiting the contractor's signature, and a notice to proceed on the project was expected later in April or in early May.

Mr. Sellar said it was anticipated that some preliminary site work would begin shortly on a project to replace the inoperable rear sluice gate at the back race at the Lambertville Lock and return it to proper functioning condition.

The NJWSA approved a contractor for the treatment of Hydrilla in the canal, Mr. Sellar said. Hydrilla is a highly invasive aquatic plant from Asia that, if not controlled, could impede water flow in the canal. The first injection is not expected to occur until July, he said, adding that a meeting for all interested parties would be held before treatment begins.

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA was reviewing a schematic design report for handling the remains of the now-collapsed former railroad trestle that crossed the canal near N.J. State Highway Route 29 (Route 29) near the Mercer County Wildlife Center in Hopewell Township. Once the design has been approved, the NJWSA will seek the required permits from the appropriate agencies having jurisdiction over the project.

Proposals were due April 15 for consulting services for the rehabilitation of the Swan Creek aqueduct and culvert in Lambertville, and the NJWSA would review them shortly, he said.

Mr. Sellar said that no harmful algal blooms had been reported or observed anywhere in the canal.

Also, he said that the Island Farm Weir fish ladder, at the confluence of the Millstone and Raritan rivers in Bound Brook, had been opened on April 1.

NJWSA crews were working on the removal of downed trees in the canal, and that mowing season had begun, Mr. Sellar said.

Commissioner Designee Texel expressed concern about the large number of dead Ash trees along the Route 29 side of the canal embankment from Lambertville south through Titusville in Hopewell Township. He inquired whether the NJWSA could remove the standing dead and dying trees. He observed that Ash trees throughout New Jersey have been devastated by the Emerald Ash Borer. Mr. Texel noted that in addition to the potential danger posed by falling trees, their poor appearance was also a matter of concern, since Route 29 was part of the Delaware River Scenic Byway, a State-designated and National Scenic Byway. Commissioner Shoffner agreed that the appearance of the dead trees was also a concern along the main portion of the canal between the two Interstate Highway Route No. 287 bridges in Somerset County.

Mr. Sellar said that the NJWSA addresses only those dead trees which fall into the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

Hannah Duarte from NJDOT volunteered to consult with her colleagues to determine if the standing

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dead and dying trees were located within the Route 29 right-of-way.

Vice-Chairman Bostock recommended that responsible agencies likely involved in tree maintenance consult with one another, and then report back to the Commission within the next couple months to discuss potential solutions.

Executive Session

None.

New Business

Pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 13:13A-11i., the Commission considered approval of the draft annual report for its activities for the calendar year ending December 31, 2025.

On behalf of the Commission, the Vice-Chairman commended Communications Director Darlene Yuhas for her work on the 2025 Annual Report. He said it is a first-class report that featured a great deal of useful information.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked for a motion to approve the annual report. Commissioner Lubitz made a motion to approve; Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

Vice-Chairman Bostock asked 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 Walsh	Yes

Old Business

None.

Public Comment

In addition to the May 2 canoe race, Mr. Barth announced that D&R Canal Watch had scheduled a canal hike on April 18 at 10 a.m. which would depart from DeMott, and invited everyone to participate.

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 several Commissioners.

Vice-Chairman Bostock called for a vote on the motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved by

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voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 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