



**August 19, 2026, Minutes of the Meeting
Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission**

TIME: 10:00 a.m.
DATE: August 19, 2026
PLACE: Prallsville Mills, Stockton, New Jersey

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Phillip Lubitz, Commissioner Matthew Walsh, and Commissioner Designee Mark Texel 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, Commission Engineer Joseph Ruggeri and Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence attended the meeting in the Commission office. Communications Director Darlene Yuhas and Administrative Assistant Megan Black participated via online platform.

GUESTS: Michael Sellar, Facilities Manager, New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA); Maggie Mitchell, Superintendent, D&R Canal State Park; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Linda Barth, D&R Canal Watch; James Ward; Tyler Tourville; Dean Oliver; Amanda Slimak; Alina Moldoveanu; Carel Abboud; John Ryder; Orion Joyner; Frank J. Petrino; Camila Turini; Remi Farnan; Anthony R. Todaro; Dave Schmidt; Cady Piarulli; and Mike Conti.

Pursuant to Article II, Section 3. of the Commission Bylaws, Commissioner Lubitz assumed the chair in the absence of Vice-Chairman Bostock. 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 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, Commissioner Lubitz asked Executive Director Hutchison to call

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the roll:

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

Director Hutchison stated that a quorum was present.

Administrative Items

Confirmation of September 16, 2026, Meeting Date

Commissioner Lubitz announced that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for September 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the July 15, 2026, Commission meeting

Commissioner Lubitz inquired if any of the Commissioners wished to propose edits or corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2026, Commission meeting as prepared by the staff. Commissioner Shoffner made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

At the request of Commissioner Lubitz, Director Hutchison then called the roll:

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

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#25-6338 351 South Main Street -- Standby Generator (Lambertville City)

Commissioner Lubitz asked if any Commissioners or members of the public had questions or comments about the Zone A 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 Designee Texel.

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Commissioner Lubitz asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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

Zone B Projects

#24-1625A	752 Hamilton Street -- Mixed-Use Development (Franklin Township)
#26-3869A	PSE&G Bennetts Lane Substation Improvements (Franklin Township)
#26-4960D	Montgomery Middle School Upper Campus -- Walkways (Montgomery Township)
#20-5570	The Haven at Princeton -- Residential Development (Montgomery Township)
#26-5720B	3 Hoppes Court -- Proposed Residence (South Brunswick Township)
#25-6294A	800 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard -- Senior Housing Development (Trenton City)
#26-6394	237 Mountainview Road -- Renovations/Improvements (Montgomery Township)
#26-6406	824 N.J. State Highway Route No. 33 -- Warehouse (Monroe Township)

Commissioner Lubitz asked if any Commissioners wished to comment or recuse themselves from any of the eight Zone B projects. Commissioner Shoffner stated that she would recuse herself from the Commission's deliberations on project DRCC #26-6406, 824 N.J. State Highway Route No. 33 Warehouse, Monroe Township, and requested that it be considered separately from the other Zone B projects. She indicated that a letter memorializing the request was filed with the Commission staff.

Commissioner Lubitz indicated his agreement with Commissioner Shoffner's request and asked if the public had any comments on the projects, exclusive of project DRCC #26-6406. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the seven other Zone B projects on the agenda. Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve the project, which was seconded by Commissioner Palmer.

Commissioner Lubitz asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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

Commissioner Jones joined the meeting via the online platform at 10:14 a.m.

Commissioner Lubitz asked if any Commissioners or members of the public had questions or comments

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regarding project #26-6406, 824 N.J. State Highway Route No. 33 Warehouse, Monroe Township.

Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Designee Texel made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

Commissioner Lubitz asked for any discussion on the motion. Hearing none, he asked the Director to call the roll:

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

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison reported on the workload for the period encompassing July 16, 2026, through August 18, 2026. In addition to the 9 projects listed on the agenda, staff had issued 20 deficient staff reports, 9 jurisdictional determinations, 13 certificates of approval, and 6 general permits.

The Director noted that in addition to those matters, staff conducted or participated in 18 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects. As of August 18, 2026, 31 projects undergoing review the Director said, noting that the staff remained very busy.

The Director reported that fee collections for the month totaled \$53,362.50, which was higher than the \$30,962.50 collected in 2025, and the \$42,750 collected in 2024. In Fiscal Year 2027, which was two months old, the Commission collected \$89,725.00. The Director noted that viewed another way, with 17% of the fiscal year now transpired, the Commission had collected 23% of its anticipated \$385,000 annual appropriation.

Director Hutchison said that following the July meeting, Commissioner Lubitz suggested that Commission staff consider expanding outreach for public comments on the Master Plan revision and update project by posting signs with a QR code (Quick Response code) that linked to the survey form on the Commission website. This could provide the Commission with an additional tool to directly reach cyclists, hikers, runners, and other park patrons who might not regularly visit Commission website or subscribe to DEP social media accounts.

The Director stated that the Commission staff embraced this suggestion and had 35 laminated signs featuring the QR code made at a cost of \$99. Commission staff then placed them at strategic locations -- mostly at gate posts and message center kiosks -- along the entire length of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park multiuse trail from Bridge Street in Frenchtown Borough to Landing Lane in the City of New Brunswick.

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Director Hutchison said that the project yielded immediate and positive results. The Commission's public engagement subconsultant, M.C. Fuhrman & Associates (mcfa), which has been capturing all QR code feedback in a database, reported that the number of comments had nearly doubled in the course of a week, and the number of respondents was close to 100. Commission staff had reviewed the respondents' comments collected by mcfa, which were both thoughtful and productive.

The Director reported that Commission staff had similarly positive experiences gathering feedback on the Master Plan revision and update project during the second, third and fourth of five scheduled public engagement sessions. On July 20 Commission staff and consultant and subconsultant representatives met at the Phillip L. Pittore Justice Center (i.e., the ACME building) in the City of Lambertville, and on July 29 at the Senior and Community Center in Franklin Township. At these meetings, there were near-capacity crowds, and the participants' enthusiasm was palpable. The Director noted that those attending were eager to view more than a dozen presentation boards set up around the meeting room and offer their perspectives on various issues by placing stickers on those boards. The Director said that he enjoyed the opportunity to talk with participants in both municipalities and answer their questions about the planning process and about the Commission's activities in general.

Further, Director Hutchison thanked Commissioner Jones for attending the Franklin Township meeting, and Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources John Cecil for attending the Lambertville event.

He said the fourth public engagement session was held August 11 in the City of Trenton, at the DEP Building Public Hearing Room. The Director said attendance was fair, but he observed that the quality of the participation was excellent. He said Commission staff, consultant and subconsultant representatives and other project team members were able to hear first-hand from people and groups who do not typically attend Commission meetings, including Trenton-based cycling club members who rode as a group into Trenton to demonstrate their affinity for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and their interest and ideas in enhancing and improving the park's facilities.

Mr. Hutchison indicated that the fifth and final public engagement session would be held on September 8 at the Mercer County Library Lawrence Headquarters Branch in Lawrence Township. The Director said he expected to see participants from Mercer County municipalities who were unable to take advantage of the Trenton session, but that no matter where a person lives or works, everyone was welcomed to attend and participate. He said the Lawrence Township session would mark the end of this particular component of the public engagement outreach. The Technical Advisory Committees, which comprise the project subject matter experts, would then begin meeting to compose the first draft of the revised and updated Master Plan.

Director Hutchison reported that the Commission project file digitization project continued to move toward its conclusion. Administrative Assistant Megan Black scanned 14 boxes of files over the prior month, bringing the year-to-date total to 102. A total of 481 boxes out of 526 boxes of project files had

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been digitized, which constituted 91% of the total. Mr. Hutchison noted that the end of this important continuity of government/continuity of operations project was now clearly in sight.

Commissioner Lubitz asked the Director if recommendations on revisions to regulations would be made as part of the Master Plan update. Director Hutchison responded, stating that regulatory revisions would absolutely be recommended, as well as amendments to the “Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Act of 1974.” This issue was already under discussion with Clarke Caton Hintz, the project’s lead consultant. Director Hutchison stated there were several provisions in the Commission’s enabling statute that were no longer applicable, and that there was also a need to promulgate new and amended regulations to implement the recommendations that would invariably be part of the new Master Plan.

Park Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Mitchell reported that State Park Service Staff was engaged in their regular seasonal maintenance responsibilities.

The Superintendent reported that the recent “Moth Night” program hosted at Bulls Island Recreation Area to celebrate National Moth Week was a success. Approximately 60 people attended to learn about the many species of moths that live in the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, and she expressed the hope that the educational celebration would become an annual park event.

The Superintendent also noted that State Park Service staff had been leading informative walks on both the feeder and main portions of the park. Superintendent Mitchell recommended that members of the public check the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Facebook page to learn more about the programs offered, as well as dates and times for future events.

Commissioner Lubitz asked the Superintendent if she had any information on the apparent closure of the Quarry Road bridge leading into the entrance at the Bulls Island Recreation Area. Superintendent Mitchell said she was not immediately aware of the closure but would check with staff to determine if it was related to New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) plans to effectuate repairs to the bridge. Director Hutchison confirmed that the Commission staff issued a General Permit No. 1 to NJDOT for in-kind repairs to the bridge (DRCC #26-3262L).

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar reported that the contractor retained by the NJWSA to undertake the Prallsville Mills culvert pit and the wastegate modification project had delayed commencement of the work from mid-August to a date to be determined after the Labor Day holiday. Mr. Sellar stated that it was not immediately known whether the delay was attributable to a supply chain issue or for another reason.

Mr. Sellar indicated that the application of herbicide treatment in the Delaware and Raritan Canal to address Hydrilla was ongoing to prevent the highly invasive aquatic plant from spreading and ultimately impeding the flow of water in the canal transmission complex.

Mr. Sellar said that the NJWSA had submitted applications to the relevant State permitting agencies to demolish and remove the remnants of the partially collapsed former railroad trestle that crossed the Delaware and Raritan Canal at Station 523+80 immediately west of N.J. State Highway Route 29 in the

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vicinity of the Mercer County Wildlife Center in Hopewell Township. The bridge is in an advanced state of deterioration, with support beams having largely settled into the waterway. If a full collapse were to occur, it could result in a blockage of canal flow and an associated disruption in water supply operations.

Mr. Sellar stated that no harmful algal blooms had been reported in the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

Finally, Mr. Sellar reported that NJWSA maintenance crews continued their considerable challenging summer duties, which included mowing and the removal of fallen trees and other debris from the canal.

Executive Session

None.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Public Comment

Mr. Barth said that D&R Canal Watch would host the 2026 “Canal House Challenge” on Sunday, September 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He noted that visitors were invited to tour the canal houses at East Millstone, Blackwells Mills, Griggstown, Kingston, and Port Mercer. Visitors would also be able to obtain a “passport” at the start of their tour, which could then be stamped as they visit each house. Those who get their passport stamped at all of the houses would receive a small prize.

Mrs. Barth announced the publication of her second book in the “Bridgetender’s Boy” series, titled Bridgetender’s Boy: The Adventure Continues on the Morris Canal. Mrs. Barth also said there would be the release of an improved version of her book Splash the Steamboat, the story of the vessel that for many years plied the Delaware River as a floating classroom.

Mr. Barth noted that the book launch would be held on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Lambertville Free Public Library.

Written Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

There being no other business, Commissioner Lubitz entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Designee Texel made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

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.

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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