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

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

ATTENDING COMMISSIONERS:

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

STAFF: Executive Director John Hutchison attended the meeting in the Commission office. Deputy Attorney General Jordan Viana, Commission Engineer Damian Friebel, 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; Eliot Nagele, Superintendent, Bulls Island Recreation Area and D&R Canal State Park; Bob Barth, D&R Canal Watch; Michael Ford; Michael Burns; Robert Marron; Vinay Y; Alec Urbano; Khaled Hussari; and Daniel Tarabokija.

Vice-Chairman Robert Bostock, who attended remotely, asked Commissioner Lubitz to preside over the meeting.

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.

The Vice-Chairman 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 the roll:

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

Director Hutchison stated that a quorum was present.

Administrative Items

Confirmation of the November 18, 2026, Meeting Date

Commissioner Lubitz announced that the next meeting of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission was scheduled for November 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

The Director noted that Commissioner Walsh joined the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the September 16, 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 September 16, 2026, Commission meeting as prepared by staff. Commissioner Shoffner made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Palmer.

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

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

The motion was approved.

Review Zone Actions

Zone A Projects

#26-1858I Washington Crossing State Park -- George Washington Memorial Arboretum Restoration (Hopewell Township)

#25-2429D 1950 Easton Avenue -- Proposed Warehouse (Franklin Township)

#26-5534A 5 North Union Street -- Façade Sign (Lambertville City)
#26-6040A 39 North Union Street -- Additions (Lambertville City)

Commissioner Lubitz asked if any Commissioners wished to consider any of the projects individually, or if they or any members of the public had questions or comments about the Zone A projects. Hearing none, he requested a motion to approve the four Zone A projects. Vice-Chairman Bostock made a motion to approve the projects, which was seconded by Commissioner Walsh.

Commissioner Lubitz asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

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

Zone B Projects
#26-2501A 30 Abeel Road -- Access Drive/Parking (Monroe Township)
#25-4512A 2400 U.S. Route 130 -- Aurolife Pharma Building Addition (South Brunswick Township)
#26-4748C 22 Scarborough Road -- Senior Living Facility (Montgomery Township)
#19-5496 Hightstown-Cranbury Station Road -- Flex Warehouses (Cranbury Township)
#24-5512A 241 Woods Road -- Residential Development (Hillsborough Township)
#26-5609A Lawrence Hopewell Trail -- Pretty Brook Segment (Lawrence Township)
#26-6357 Spruce Street/Arctic Parkway -- Roundabout (Ewing Township)
#26-6362 824 Parkway Avenue -- Car Wash Facility (Ewing Township)

Commissioner Lubitz asked if any Commissioners wished to consider any of the projects individually, or if they or any members of the public had questions or comments about the Zone B projects. Hearing none, he requested a motion to approve the eight Zone B projects. Commissioner Palmer made a motion to approve the projects, which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bostock.

Commissioner Lubitz asked Director Hutchison to call the roll:

Vice-Chairman Bostock	Yes
Commissioner Designee Madden	Yes
Commissioner Jones	Absent
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 September 16, 2026, through October 20, 2026. In addition to the 12 projects listed on the agenda, Commission staff issued 20 deficient staff reports, 9 jurisdictional determinations, 5 certificates of approval, 11 general permits, and 1 minor modification. The Director also noted that one staff report had been completed for a project that would be calendared for the November 18, 2026, meeting. In addition to those matters, staff conducted or participated in 12 pre-application meetings related to proposed and pending projects. As of October 20, 2026, there were 31 projects undergoing review, he said.

The Director reported fee collections totaled $43,700 for the month, which was better than the $29,000 collected in 2025, and the $25,500 reported in September of 2024. With five months of Fiscal Year 2027 completed, the Commission had collected $170,175. Phrased another way, with 42% of the fiscal year concluded, the Commission had collected 43% of its anticipated $400,000 annual appropriation.

Director Hutchison said that on October 6, he met with Commissioner Ed Potosnak, and his aide Isabel DeVita at the DEP offices in Trenton. He thanked the Commissioner for that courtesy, which was much appreciated. The Director said that he and Commissioner Potosnak had an excellent and wide-ranging conversation that covered several topics, including how the Commissioner's Office could assist with efforts to modernize and improve the Commission's permitting program. Commissioner Potosnak was particularly pleased that the Commission was digitizing its project files, Director Hutchison said.

Director Hutchison reported that he gave the Commissioner an update on the status of the Master Plan update and revision process, and it was evident that the Commissioner was keenly interested in the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and the Commission's efforts to chart a new path for the park, and how the new plan would intersect with ongoing department-wide efforts to combat climate change, improve greenway connections, and enhance and grow the park in the future.

The Director reported that members of the Master Plan Project Advisory Committee (PAC), which includes Commission staff, held a special meeting with the State Park Service on September 30 to hear their thoughts about the future of the canal State park. Their comments were incorporated into the feedback received during the public engagement period held over the summer.

All of the comments collected and categorized by the Commission's lead consultant for the Master Plan, Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH), will be considered by the project's subject matter experts on the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs). The Public Engagement TAC met on October 13, and the Environment and Land Use TAC and the Recreation and Open Space TAC was scheduled to meet on October 21. Meetings with the other TACs -- Historic/Archaeology, Water Supply, and Regulation and Governance -- have been scheduled for the coming weeks.

Just to offer a few examples of what we heard during the Commission's months-long public engagement period, CCH's organization of comments by theme showed participants were most interested in trail extensions and enhanced greenway connectivity. Other top themes were Delaware and Raritan Canal - specific wayfinding and signage, historic preservation and site interpretation, safety at road/trail

crossings and conflicts along the multiuse trail, and multiuse trail surface and maintenance concerns, the Director said. The TAC meetings represent the first round of discussion and review of topics and issues that would shape strategic recommendations to be included in the preliminary draft of the updated Master Plan.

The Director noted that last month he discussed the situation regarding the imposition of fringe and indirect budget costs on the Commission by the Department of the Treasury. He said he had mentioned that he considered it unwise to impose these costs upon the Commission, which would have a significant fiscal impact on the unexpended Commission's reserve, which totaled $314,223. When applied to the Commission's $364,000 salary line, the fringe and indirect charges, which are not recovered through the Commission's fees, would total around $315,000, leaving the Commission with a scant $49,000 for emergency building repairs, litigation costs, IT purchases, or maintenance of the Commission vehicle, etc.

The Director observed that the timing of this action was particularly unpropitious. He noted one of the posts that supports the cantilevered section of the Commission office was sinking, requiring Executive Assistant Erica Vavrence to decamp from her workspace. The Director said that the entire area outside of the office had been roped off as a safety precaution, as the DEP Office of Resource Development considered how best to address this situation. The scope of repairs or who would pay for them was not immediately clear, he said.

Finally, the Commission project file digitization was hastening toward a successful conclusion. Director Hutchison said Administrative Assistant Megan Black scanned 15 boxes of files this past month, bringing the year-to-date total to 133. A total of 512 boxes out of 526 boxes of project files had been digitized, which constituted 97.33% of the total.

Park Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Nagele reminded everyone that he had assumed duties at Bulls Island Recreation Area, and that he would be responsible for feeder side of the canal, while Superintendent Mitchell would focus will be the main section of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Superintendent Nagele added that while he and Superintendent Mitchell are working together, he would be providing updates on State Park Service activities at future Commission meetings.

Superintendent Nagele reported that the resurfacing of the park multiuse trail towpath from the Kingston Lock/Bridgetender House to the Millstone Aqueduct in Plainsboro Township had been completed. He noted that this was a significant project and encouraged the public to visit the area to see the successful work that had been undertaken.

The Superintendent noted that approximately 30 people turned out on Saturday, October 17, to attend the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park second annual "Fall Fest 20206" that featured a variety of activities including a kids' costume contest, a scavenger hunt, and arts and crafts.

The Superintendent said that the installation of fencing along the park multiuse trail along the so-called

"abandoned canal" in the Duck Island area of Hamilton Township remained under investigation, but that in the meantime, the trail remained passable to park users.

Lastly, Superintendent Nagele announced that public access had been restored to a roughly one half-mile section of the former towpath park multiuse trail south of Bridge Street in Stockton Borough.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Sellar reported that the NJWSA had received the required land use permits for the project to reconstruct 17 sections of the upper (right) embankment in an approximate 3.0-mile section of the Delaware and Rartian feeder canal from Bulls Island Recreation Area in Delaware Township, to Prallsville Mills in Stockton Borough. The upper (right) embankment is a narrow embankment that separates the Delaware and Raritan Canal from the Delaware River. Both sides of the trapezoidal embankment core wall are armored with stone. This section of the embankment frequently overtops, resulting in erosion that could potentially lead to failure of the embankment.

Mr. Sellar noted that the NJWSA was in the process of obtaining other required approvals, and that once they are received, the pending application to the Commission (DRCC #22-3255C) would be updated and revised as required.

Mr. Sellar reported that work on the project to repair the Prallsville Mills culvert pit and the wastegate modification (DRCC #24-3212Q) had been paused to allow the contractor and the NJWSA to resolve a change order to the project arising from a site condition. Mr. Sellar indicated that the project was expected to resume shortly.

He said that on October 14 the NJWSA completed herbicidal treatment for Hydrilla in the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Hydrilla is a highly invasive aquatic plant from Asia that, if not controlled, could impede water flow in the canal.

Mr. Sellar said that the NJWSA was finalizing the permitting process with relevant State agencies to commence the project 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 vicinity of the Mercer County Wildlife Center in Hopewell Township (DRCC # #26-3613B).

Mr. Sellar said that no harmful algal blooms (HABs) had been reported in the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

He reported that NJWSA engineers and consultants continued to address issues related to the Lightpath Company proposed fiber optic cable project and associated horizontal directional drilling under the canal in the vicinity of Prospect Street in the City of Trenton.

Finally, Mr. Sellar reported that NJWSA maintenance crews had finished mowing duties, and were focused on removing debris, trees, and leaves that had fallen into the canal. He said that for the next five weeks, the crews would be working on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and Mr. Sellar noted that the NJWSA was now working seven days a week to keep water clear and flowing in the canal.

Executive Session
None.

New Business
None.

Old Business
None.

Public Comment
Mr. Barth thanked Superintendent Nagele and the State Park Service for reopening the closed section of the canal multiuse trail in Stockton, and that he intended to walk the trail following the meeting.

Mr. Barth noted that a geology walk, led by retired U.S. Geological Survey geologist Pierre Lacombe would be held on Saturday, October 24 at 10:00 a.m. Participants were asked to meet at Prallsville Mills and then head out to learn about the four geologic units of the Newark Basin along the canal.

Mr. Barth also noted that D&R Canal Watch was selling its full-color 2027 calendar. Proceeds from the sale would be used to purchase items for the park. The 12-inch by 12-inch calendar features photographs taken by people who patronize the park.

Written Public Comments
None.

Adjournment
There being no other business, Commissioner Lubitz entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Walsh made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bostock.

Commissioner Lubitz called for a vote on the motion to adjourn, which was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John Hutchison, Secretary