

**New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council
Minutes of April 14, 2015 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Wetlands Mitigation Council was held on April 14, 2015 at The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Hudson Room, 501 East State Street, 2nd floor, Trenton, New Jersey at 9:30 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Claudia Rocca, Patricia Burns, David Roth, Robert Tucker, and Sue Lockwood.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: DAG Jill Denyes, Diane Dow, Natalie Young and Ana Incollingo.

Meeting called to order.

Ms. Claudia Rocca called the meeting to order, read the Sunshine Law statement and stated that public notice for this meeting was provided on March 26, 2015 to the Secretary of State's office and written notice was sent to the following newspapers; The Newark Star Ledger/Trenton Times, The Camden Courier Post, and the Atlantic City Press.

Review and approval of the February 10, 2015, 2014 Council meeting summary.

Ms. Sue Lockwood motioned to approve the summary with a noted correction on page 5.
Mr. David Roth seconded the motion.
All present voted in favor.

Review and approval of the February 10, 2015 executive session summary.

Ms. Sue Lockwood mentioned that there was a typo on the first page.
Ms. Claudia Rocca motioned to approve the executive session summary with a correction on the first page.
Ms. Patricia Burns seconded the motion.
All present voted in favor.

Update on the Mitigation Fund.

Ms. Natalie Young stated that as of February 28, 2015 the balance of the wetland mitigation fund was \$8,232,451.53. There were no expenditures during the months of January and February. The total amount of remaining committed funds for approved projects was \$6,399,059.53. The new fund balance was \$1,833,392.00 as of February 28, 2015.

Discussion on the review process for the conceptual projects that have been approved by the Council to submit final grant proposals.

Summarizing the discussion of the last meeting, Diane Dow stated that the Township of Bloomfield inquired about the conceptual approval they received in April, 2014. The Township asked the Council to allow them to present their final proposal. The Township and their design

team met with Assistant Commissioner Ginger Kop'Kash and Ms. Diane Dow two weeks prior to the Council meeting to discuss their project. They anticipated that their final proposal would be ready by the end of May and that they would like to present their final proposal at the August meeting. Ms. Diane Dow stated that there would not be enough time to review the application for the June meeting.

Ms. Diane Dow asked if the Council wanted to discuss this further or vote on a decision.

Ms. Claudia Rocca summarized the history of the project by explaining that a letter was sent out to the three conceptually approved projects. The letter explained that the new ILF program required resubmittal for conceptual proposals. Bloomfield requested that the Council honor the conceptual approval for their project. The Council went into executive session to discuss the matter.

Ms. Diane Dow recommended that the Council review Bloomfield Township's final proposal during the August meeting, as long as the Township submits their final complete application to DEP by May 28, 2015.

Mr. David Roth asked if the 75- day review period was standard.

Ms. Dow stated it was a requirement in the existing grant guidelines in order to provide staff enough time to review the application.

Mr. Bob Tucker motioned to allow Bloomfield Township to present their final project to the Council at the August, 2015 meeting as long as the complete final proposal is submitted to the Department no later than May 28, 2015.

Ms. Sue Lockwood seconded the motion.

Ms. Patricia Burns asked if it would be an issue if the ILF document was not signed by the deadline.

Ms. Diane Dow stated that the signed ILF document has not yet been received by the Department. She stated that the grant guidelines in the ILF document are identical to the existing guidelines except that the ILF document requires the Council to put forth a RFP and to send a copy of all grant applications to the EPA to provide them an opportunity to comment.

Mr. Andy Strauss stated that they did present their project to the EPA.

Ms. Claudia Rocca suggested revising the motion to allow Bloomfield Township to submit their full proposal by May 28th or upon the effective date of the ILF program, whichever is later.

Ms. Sue Lockwood suggested that the Council keep the May 28th deadline and if the deadline is missed that the Council could discuss it further and decide whether to set another deadline.

Mr. David Roth agreed with Ms. Sue Lockwood.

Ms. Patricia Burns asked if the Council would see the signed ILF document by the next meeting.

Ms. Diane Dow stated that she periodically checks with the EPA regarding status of the document, but was unsure if the Council would see it by the next meeting.

Mr. Bob Tucker restated the motion to allow Bloomfield Township to present their final proposal to the Council at the August meeting in accordance with the existing grant guidelines provided the complete final proposal is submitted to the Department no later than May 28, 2015.

Ms. Sue Lockwood seconded the motion.

All present voted in favor.

Mr. Andy Strauss asked if the Mitigation Fund balance that was included in the update would decrease by August.

Ms. Diane Dow stated that the existing fund balance that was reported today is the balance assuming all existing approved grants were fully funded. Therefore, the available funds should not decrease prior to the August meeting.

Mr. David Roth requested that Bloomfield Township provide the Council with periodic updates on the status of the project after the August meeting if the Council approves the final proposal

Ms. Patricia Burns stated that she believes it is important to document the successes and failures of the project as it is constructed so that we can all learn what works and what doesn't. She stated that gorilla research may be an essential tool in circumstances where there is not a lot of funding. It is important to hear about these processes at professional conferences in order to continue to improve the process of restoration.

Mr. Andy Strauss stated that Rutgers has volunteered to assist the professional design team, and hopefully others will also get involved.

Ms. Beth Ravit stated that it would be very interesting for Rutgers students and the general public if students create a documentary on the project as it unfolds.

Mr. Mark Renna inquired about the status of the new Council member appointments.

Ms. Diane Dow stated that the recommendation letter for new Council members has been submitted to the Governor's office but that the Department has not received a response.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Claudia Rocca motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dave Roth seconded the motion. All voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

The next meeting date has been tentatively scheduled for June 9, 2015