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CARL J. RICHKO
Chairman

BENJAMIN L. SPINELLI, ESQ.
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Plan Conformance Committee
From: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – June 5, 2025
Date: June 11, 2025

A Plan Conformance Committee meeting was held on Thur., June 5, 2025 at 12:00pm via Zoom. The following participants were present:

Committee Members present: Council Chair Richko, Committee Chair Dressler, and Committee Members Kibler and Van Abs.

Staff Members present: Ben Spinelli, Carole Ann Dicton, Gabrielle Gallagher, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Corey Piasecki, Liz Ward, Neda Hartman, and Annette Tagliareni

GAU Member present: Alexis Franklin, Associate Counsel, Governor’s Authorities Unit (GAU)

Committee Chair Dressler opened the meeting at 12:02pm.

Approval of Public Health and Safety Waiver, Washington Township (Warren)

James Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS, gave a presentation/summary on a Public Health and Safety Waiver for New Jersey American Water (Washington Township, Warren County) where 142 properties with private wells have elevated levels of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). A 30-day comment period was held. Mr. Humphries noted that Council staff received three (3) written comments (Members Van Abs and Kibler and a long-time resident of the township.) Mr. Humphries noted that this resolution would authorize the Executive Director to further extend the waiver if NJDEP/EPA finds that other contamination exists.

Chair Richko asked if Council staff is aware of the source of this contamination. Mr. Spinelli explained it comes from a former industrial site in Washington Borough.

Chair Richko also asked, due to the 142 or maybe more properties, will this be extended for new development. Mr. Humphries responded that this extension is for existing development only and will not accommodate new growth.

Member Van Abs suggested Council staff add to the presentation that no waiver is required for extension into Existing Community Zone.



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Committee Chair Dressler asked for a motion to move the Public Health and Safety Waiver to the full Council for consideration. Chair Richko made the motion and Committee Chair Dressler seconded it. All were in favor.

Authorization to Submit Cross Acceptance Report to State Planning Commission

Mr. Humphries gave a presentation/summary on the approval of cross acceptance response reports to the State Planning Commission (SPC). Mr. Humphries noted that Council staff has been meeting with SPC for the past year and a half. SPC sent notices to all 88 Highlands municipalities advising them that if they were conforming with the Regional Master Plan (RMP) they would be represented by the Highlands Council as their negotiating entity during the cross-acceptance process. Ten (10) municipalities indicated they did not want to be represented by the Highlands Council. Council staff sent information to 78 municipalities and ultimately 46 responded and completed the Cross Acceptance Report. One municipality wants to meet with staff to discuss some corrections. Committee Chair Dressler asked if Council staff could meet with the municipality before a decision is made. Council staff did not feel it was necessary considering that their concern is minimal.

Committee Chair Dressler asked for a motion to move the Cross Acceptance Report to SPC to the full Council for consideration. Chair Richko made the motion and Committee Chair Dressler seconded it. All were in favor.

Petition for Plan Conformance, Mendham Township (Morris County)

Corey Piasecki, Principal Planner, gave a presentation/summary on Mendham Township's Petition for Plan Conformance.

Member Van Abs noted that given the committee is considering three (3) reports today, he suggested that Council staff use standard format and appendices for these reports

Member Kibler commented on the Council staff's response to Mr. Backer. Council staff responded that Council will continue to provide assistance to Mr. Backer and the Conformance of the Township will not hinder the proposed project. Member Kibler asked if Council staff has a model for a farm ordinance. Mr. Humphries responded that staff uses the state-wide model.

Committee Chair Dressler asked for a motion to move the Petition for Plan Conformance, Mendham Township, Morris County to the full Council for consideration. Member Kibler made the motion and Member Van Abs seconded it. All were in favor.

Petition for Plan Conformance and Center Designation: Town of Belvidere (Warren County)

Mr. Piasecki gave a presentation/summary on the Town of Belvidere's Petition for Plan Conformance and Center Designation.

Committee Chair Dressler asked where Council staff stands on the proposed warehouse. Mr. Piasecki responded that the proposed warehouse is likely not in conflict with our Addendum 2024-1: Policy Standards for Warehousing in the New Jersey Highlands Region and that the Plan Conformance Ordinance would not impact it as the project already constitutes an "application for development" and thus falls under the "time of application" provisions in the Municipal Land Use Law. It was noted that an application for the proposed warehouse has not been received.

Committee Chair Dressler asked for a motion to move the Petition for Plan Conformance and Center Designation for Town of Belvidere, Warren County to the full Council for consideration. Chair Richko made the motion and Member Van Abs seconded it. All were in favor.

Petition for Highlands Council Plan Conformance, Jefferson Township (Morris County)

Elizabeth Ward, Regional Planner, gave a presentation/summary on Jefferson Township's Petition for Plan Conformance.

Member Kibler is pleased that so many municipalities have an interest in plan conformance but asked how the Council's budget stands for these grants. Mr. Humphries responded that these grants are for the FY2025 budget and no other grants will be considered by the Council until the start of our new FY2026 budget in July.

Committee Chair Dressler asked for a motion to move the Petition for Plan Conformance for Jefferson Township to the full Council for consideration. Member Kibler made the motion and Chair Richko seconded it. All were in favor.

Lastly, Mr. Spinelli noted that Washington Township (Warren County) adopted a Highlands conformance ordinance and is now a fully-conforming municipality.

The meeting adjourned at 12:29pm.