



CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322
(908) 879-6737
(908) 879-4205 (fax)
www.nj.gov/njhighlands



JIM RILEE
Chairman

MARGARET NORDSTROM
Executive Director

Contact:

Carole Ann Diction, Manager of Communications
(908) 879-6737 ext. 105 or caroleann.diction@highlands.nj.gov

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Chester Borough Strengthens Planning Efforts with Highlands Plan Conformance

CHESTER, N.J. — At its most recent meeting, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council) approved a Petition for Plan Conformance from the Borough of Chester in Morris County. The Borough is located entirely in the Planning Area of the Highlands Region, where conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) is entirely voluntary.

The Highlands Plan Conformance process provides a framework for municipalities and counties in the Region to integrate the land use and resource management requirements of the 2004 Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act into local planning and regulatory documents. Grant funding is available to support reasonable expenses associated with this work.

“For the Borough of Chester, conformance with the RMP helps advance a number of efforts they already have underway,” explains Highlands Council Chairman Jim Rilee. “The well-known and recognized historic downtown is a vital part of the municipality’s economy and identity, and so funding has been allocated for sustainable economic development and historic preservation planning. The town is also eager to address some wastewater and affordable housing challenges and we are very happy to be able to support them in that work.”

The Chester Borough Plan Conformance “Implementation Plan and Schedule” specifies funding for development of a Sustainable Economic Development Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, and an Innovative Alternative Wastewater Evaluation among other items. All funding is reimbursement based and contingent upon approved scopes of work.

“Like many small towns throughout the Highlands Region, Chester Borough’s growth outpaced available infrastructure and upgrading is a priority,” notes Highlands Council Executive Director Margaret Nordstrom. “The Borough is very clearly committed to addressing the issues and we look forward to working with them to help meet their goals.”

Chester Borough is the 50th municipality to have a Plan Conformance Petition approved by the Highlands Council. Additional details about the Borough’s Petition, including Highlands Council recommendations and specific funding allocations related to Plan Conformance implementation, are available in the “Final Consistency Review & Recommendations Report” and the “Highlands Implementation Plan and Schedule,” which can be found along with all other Chester Borough Petition materials on the Chester Borough page of the Highlands Council website: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/planconformance/chester_boro.html.

Actions taken by the Council at this meeting will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes. Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend/index.html (click on July 21, 2016 meeting).

The Highlands Council is a regional planning agency, established in 2004 with the passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and charged with implementation of the Act. More information is available at www.nj.gov/njhighlands

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