



State of New Jersey

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Robert Holtaway Concludes 14 Years of Service as a Highlands Council Member

CHESTER, N.J. — After serving as a dedicated member of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council for more than a decade, Robert Holtaway stepped down from his seat on the Council at the conclusion of the December 14 meeting. Highlands Council Chairman Carl Richko presented Holtaway with a plaque commemorating his service and the Council passed a resolution memorializing the occasion.

“As I look back over my 14 years, I’m of the opinion that the current leadership and staff are the strongest and most productive that I’ve worked with during my tenure, which bodes well for the Council’s future success,” Holtaway said when announcing his departure at the October Highlands Council meeting. “The Council has an important job of remaining a responsible steward – both fiscally and environmentally – of the Highlands Region. Although my time here is ending, I look forward to seeing this very important work continuing.”

Holtaway was appointed by then-Governor Jon Corzine in 2009. Officially his term expired in 2012, however Holtaway continued to serve in his voluntary capacity on the Council through subsequent administrations. Appointments to the Highlands Council are overseen by the office of the Governor and must meet requirements defined in the 2004 Highlands Act. With Holtaway’s departure, membership in the Council drops to 10 members of what should be a 15-member body. A quorum of 8 members is required to conduct Council business.

“During my time with the Council, Member Holtaway has been a valued and reliable partner to staff,” said Ben Spinelli, Highlands Council Executive Director. “His retirement is well deserved and I thank him his continued to commitment to helping us protect the New Jersey Highlands.”

While on the Council, Holtaway served as treasurer from 2011 to 2023. He was also a Highlands Development Credit Bank Board Member from 2011 to 2020, becoming chair of the Bank Board in 2021. Holtaway was also chair of the Council’s Budget and Finance Committee, and a member of the

Regional Master Plan Amendment and Landowner Equity & Land Preservation committees. Additionally, he was a member of the steering committee for the Economic Sustainability Plan and is currently a member of the County Coalition, established to implement the Plan.

Holtaway began his public service in 1975 as a member and later vice chairman of the Planning Board for the Borough of North Plainfield. He also served as a member of the North Plainfield Zoning Board of Adjustment, including 11 years as its Chairman, and volunteered to serve as North Plainfield Zoning Officer from 1993 to 1995. He served for eight years as the mayor of Bedminster Township and also was a member of the Bedminster Township Planning Board for 15 years, including seven as the board's chairman. He was a member of the Somerset County Economic Development Incentive Program committee throughout the committee's existence. He served on the Bedminster Township Municipal Building Committee, the Bedminster Township Open Space Committee, and the Bedminster Township Open Space Assessment Committee.

In 2013, after leaving elected office, Holtaway joined the Lamington Conservancy, a group that works to preserve land in the Lamington River Valley. He became Vice President of the Conservancy in 2017 and president in 2018, a position he continues to hold. Holtaway has also served as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Friends of the Jacobus Vandever House in Bedminster Township.

In 1977, Mr. Holtaway founded Frank R. Holtaway & Son, Inc., an electrical engineering firm in Bedminster, and served as the company's president until retiring in 2015. He graduated from Newark College of Engineering (now New Jersey Institute of Technology) with a Bachelor of Science in industrial engineering and also received a master's degree in business administration from Seton Hall University. He is a licensed professional engineer and a licensed electrical contractor (retired).

Highlands Council Chairman Carl Richko, who coincidentally was appointed at the same 2009 meeting as Holtaway, offered his warm thanks and congratulations: "Serving with Bob has been an absolute pleasure and I want to offer my congratulations not only on his retirement from this role, but also on his many years of public service in Somerset County and in various charitable and volunteer capacities. He will be missed."

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. Actions taken by the Council will take effect following the Governor's review and consideration of meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of meeting minutes. Meeting materials, including an audio recording of the meeting are available on the calendar page of the Council website.

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(photo)

CAPTION:

Highlands Council Chairman Carl J. Richko (center right) presenting a plaque to retiring Council Member Robert F. Holtaway (center left) in recognition of his 14 years of service on the Highlands Council. Also pictured are Council Members Michael Francis (far left) and James A. Visioli (far right); All four were appointed to the Highlands Council in 2010.

