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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos and bio attached

Highlands Council Welcomes Mayor Dan Bush of Holland Township

*Lifelong Hunterdon County resident brings municipal government
and open space experience to role*

CHESTER, N.J. — Mayor Daniel T. Bush of Holland Township, Hunterdon County was sworn in as a member of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council at the Council's February 15 public meeting. His appointment was confirmed by the New Jersey State Senate on Monday, February 12. Bush is replacing Robert F. Holtaway, a former mayor of Bedminster Township in Somerset County, who retired from the Council in December.

“We’re very pleased to be welcoming Dan to the Council,” says Carl Richko, Highlands Council Chairman. “He brings with him a great deal of experience as a long-time municipal official in Holland Township and employee of Hunterdon County. As a lifelong Hunterdon County resident, Dan also has strong ties to the Highlands Region, which makes him particularly well-suited for this responsibility.”

Bush grew up on a family farm in Alexandria Township and started working for Hunterdon County in a seasonal position in the roads department. That summer job ultimately led to permanent employment and Bush continued to work his way through the ranks, becoming a Public Works supervisor in 2004 and the head of the Parks and Recreation Division in 2018. Bush joined the Holland Township planning board in 2011, and a year later decided to run for Township Committee.

“I ran on the Highlands Act,” Bush says. “I believe in the Highlands Act. I believe in water protection, and I want to preserve what we have here in Hunterdon County and the rest of New Jersey for generations to come.” Bush won that election and has continued to serve on the committee, being appointed deputy mayor and later mayor, the position he holds today.

Now in his 15th year serving on the committee, Bush has been instrumental in [Holland Township’s conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan \(RMP\)](#). Holland Township has more than 13,000 acres in the Highlands planning area and just under 2,000 acres in the preservation area. Notably, the Township has adopted a Highlands Land Use Ordinance, which incorporates key components of the RMP into local land use and planning documents. Holland has also adopted a Water Use and Conservation Management Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, Farmland Preservation Plan and completed two Master Plan Re-examinations funded through the Highlands Council plan conformance grant program. Bush also serves on the Hunterdon County Shade Tree Commission and is an Ex-Officio Member of the Hunterdon County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee. He is a Certified County Administrator (Basic), Certified Public Manager (CPM), and a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP).

“Dan’s perspective as a mayor and committee member will be very valuable to the Highlands Council,” says Executive Director Ben Spinelli. “He understands the challenges of local government and what it takes to successfully run a municipality. He also understands the work of the Highlands Council and has seen the benefits working with us can bring. It’s clear he cares about this region.”

Highlands Council members serve in a voluntary capacity. The composition of the Council is directed by sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Highlands Act. The 15-member body is comprised of municipal and county elected officials and “public” members. Among the elected officials, there must be representation from all counties in the Highlands, and a balance of political party affiliation. Public members should have “expertise, knowledge, or experience in water quality protection, natural resources protection, environmental protection, agriculture, forestry, land use, or economic development” to the maximum extent practicable. Council Member Bush will be serving in one of the municipal elected official positions and his appointment corrects a lack of representation from Hunterdon County on the Council since 2021. His term will run through October 25, 2027.

There are currently four additional Council vacancies to be filled. Six nominations are pending before the State Senate to fill those vacancies and replace some members serving on expired terms. The nominees will be considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee in the coming weeks for an eventual confirmation vote by the full Senate.

“We appreciate the Murphy administration and the Senate taking action to fill this very recent vacancy on the Council with a very qualified individual,” says Spinelli. “We look forward to the Senate moving additional nominees forward and once again having a full complement of members.”

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/ (click on February 15 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. 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.

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(photos)

CAPTION for photo 1: Highlands Council Chairman Carl Richko and newly appointed Council Member Dan Bush, following Bush's swearing in.



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CAPTION for photo 2: L to R: Carl Richko, Highlands Council Chairman; Dan Bush, newly appointed Council Member; Ben Spinelli, Highlands Council Executive Director.



Daniel Bush

Dan Bush is an accomplished public sector leader with more than 30 years of experience in public works, parks and recreation, and municipal governance. Having started his career in county government as a seasonal employee with the roads department, today Dan is the head of the Hunterdon County Parks and Recreation Division, with a string of notable accomplishments to his credit, including the acquisition of 45 acres of open space in the Gravel Hill section of the Highlands Ridge and the development of a 77-acre active-use park along the Delaware River.

Since 2021, Dan has been an elected official in Holland Township, serving as both deputy Mayor and Mayor, the position he currently holds. As Mayor, Dan has responsibility for the crafting and oversight of a \$6-million annual budget, and management of more than 50 township employees. An experienced and agile communicator, Dan is adept at building and managing relationships with national, state, county, and local officials.

He is a lifelong resident of Hunterdon County and is deeply passionate about the protection of the area for the benefit of future generations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2018-present Division Head, Parks and Recreation

2004-2018 General Supervisor, Hunterdon County Department of Public Works

MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SERVICE

2012-present Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Holland Township

2012-present Public Information Officer, Holland Township

2011-present Planning Board Member, Holland Township

CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Parks & Recreation Professional (CPRP), National Recreation and Park Association
- Certified Public Manager (CPM), Rutgers
- Certified County Administrator (Basic)

COMMUNITY AND CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

- Hunterdon County Shade Tree Commission, Core trained
- Parks and Open Space Advisory Council (POSAC), ex-officio member
- County Committee, Executive Republican Party
- Employee Appreciation Committee, serving as chairmen
- Past 4H member
- Milford Fire Company Executive and Line Officer
- Lifelong member of St. Edward's the Confessor and catechist
- Holland Soccer League and Del Val Basketball League coach

PERSONAL

- Blissfully married, 1998-present, resulting in two vivacious and beautiful children.