



State of New Jersey

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 20, 2012

Highlands Council Adds Borough of Hopatcong in Sussex to list of Approved Municipalities *Borough also Approved for Highlands Center Designation*

CHESTER, N.J. — The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council today voted to approve the Borough of Hopatcong's (Sussex County) Petition for Plan Conformance. The approval included designation of a Highlands Center in the Borough's Planning Area. This action brings the total number of approved municipal Petitions to 43, and the total number of Highlands Centers to 10.

"A Highlands Center designation will help facilitate development and redevelopment where appropriate, and supports the long-term health and vibrancy of the community," explained Jim Rilee, Chairman of the Highlands Council. "It also allows the Borough of Hopatcong to address important water and sewer infrastructure needs."

The Borough had originally planned to conform only for its Preservation Area lands (2,615 acres), but ultimately decided to conform for its Planning Area lands (5,333 acres) as well to secure the Highlands Center designation. Hopatcong, known as "The Town by the Lake," is home to the northwest shore of Lake Hopatcong, the largest freshwater lake in New Jersey.

"Approval of this Petition helps the Borough of Hopatcong concentrate economic growth in areas that are already developed, while at the same time protecting the natural resources that are vital to the municipality," said Gene Feyl, Executive Director of the Highlands Council. "This is especially important in lake communities such as Hopatcong that have always had to strike that delicate balance between protection and growth." The approval today by the Highlands Council of the Petition from Hopatcong means that, under the Christie Administration, Plan Conformance has reached an all-time high.

September 20, 2012

Also at the September 20 meeting, the Council approved a resolution to award a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Receiving Zone Feasibility Grant to Pohatcong Township in Warren County. Funding will be used to explore the possibility of designating areas of Pohatcong eligible for purchasing Highlands Development Credits (HDCs) through the Highland Council TDR program. Purchase of HDCs allows for additional growth in certain areas by permitting the purchaser to build at a density greater than that permitted in the underlying zoning, while preserving critical habitat elsewhere. TDR transactions also help address landowner equity concerns.

The Council also passed a resolution renewing the authority of the Executive Director to review and approve certain matters related to Plan Conformance and Project Review, in an effort to ensure orderly implementation of the Highlands Act and the Regional Master Plan.

All Council decisions made at the 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: <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/about/calend/> (scroll to 9/20/2012 meeting)

Additional information regarding the Borough of Hopatcong's Petition for Plan Conformance may be found here:

<http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/planconformance/hopatcong.html>

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