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Hampton, Lebanon Boroughs On Board

Petitions for Plan Conformance approved for two Hunterdon communities

CHESTER, N.J. – Two more Petitions for Plan Conformance were unanimously approved at today’s meeting of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council, bringing the total number to four with five additional Petitions scheduled for December.

Hampton Borough and Lebanon Borough, both in Hunterdon County, join Morris County’s Chester Township and Sussex County’s Byram Township in the first steps of implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

“The Plan Conformance process is moving successfully ahead,” Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier said. “We now have four municipalities completed and next month we hope to add several more. Each community that agrees to adopt these protections is not only protecting its natural resources and quality of life, but also the drinking water for millions of New Jersey residents inside and outside of the Highlands Region.”

Hampton Borough, situated on the banks of the Musconetcong River, has 823 acres in the Preservation Area, where conformance to the Regional Master Plan is mandatory, and 134 acres in the Planning Area, where conformance is voluntary; the municipality petitioned to conform to the Regional Master Plan for the entire municipality. Lebanon Borough, a 577-acre community located north of the Round Valley Reservoir, is entirely within the Planning Area.

In its Petition for Plan Conformance, Lebanon Borough requested a Map Adjustment for an undeveloped but approved site owned by the Bellemead Development Corporation that is part of the planned Route 78 Corporate Center. The Map Adjustment, approved today by the Highlands Council, recognizes the limited resources onsite and assists in ensuring its development capacity for commercial/office use under a “corporate campus” style of development.

“Conforming to the Highlands Regional Master Plan gave us the opportunity to partner with the Highlands Council to enhance preservation of our community’s historic character and natural beauty, while also pursuing the economic development of the next phase of the Route 78 Corporate Center,” Lebanon Borough Mayor Mark Paradis said.

More information about Lebanon Borough’s Petition for Plan Conformance can be found on the Highlands Council website:

http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/planconformance/lebanon_boro.html

Hampton Borough, a largely rural community with a historic district and a State Wildlife Management Area along the Musconetcong River, is using conformance to the Regional Master Plan to preserve its existing community character, according to Mayor Kristine Peterson.

“Hampton Borough is a community rich in history and natural beauty. The residents are filled with abundant public spirit. They are very proud of this small rural town they have chosen to call home. Conformance to the Highlands Regional Master Plan allows Hampton to plan comprehensively for our community's future using the best available data,” Mayor Peterson said.

More information about Hampton Borough’s Petition for Plan Conformance is available on the Highlands Council website:

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

The four conforming municipalities – Byram Township, Chester Township, Hampton Borough and Lebanon Borough – total 34,733 acres, with 30,885 acres in the Preservation Area and 3,848 acres in the Planning Area.

“Working with these municipalities, their elected officials and professional staff has been a pleasure,” Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan said. “Successful implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan is based on a collaborative partnership to ensure that planning is capacity-based and will result in resource protection and sustainable development.”

Today’s actions by the Highlands Council do not take effect until 10 business days after a copy of the minutes of the meeting have been delivered to the Governor to allow time for his review and consideration.