

MINUTES

NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COUNCIL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2007

JOHN WEINGART)	CHAIRMAN
KURT ALSTEDE)	COUNCIL MEMBERS
TRACY CARLUCCIO)	
TIM DILLINGHAM)	
JANICE KOVACH)	
MIMI LETTS)	
DEBBIE PASQUARELLI)	
ERIK PETERSON)	
JACK SCHRIER)	
GLEN VETRANO)	
TAHESHA WAY)	

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairman of the Council, John Weingart, called the 44th meeting of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council to order at 12:20 pm.

ROLL CALL:

The members of the Council introduced themselves.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Chairman asked that all who wished join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

Chairman John Weingart announced that the meeting was called in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, and that the Highlands Council had sent written notice of the time, date and location of this meeting to pertinent newspapers for circulation throughout the State. Mr. Weingart also noted that there was an executive session earlier that day for a discussion of personnel matters and announced that no official actions were taken. He then turned the members' attention to the consideration of two sets of minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2007:

Mr. Jack Schrier motioned for approval his motion was seconded. The Chairman asked if there were any comments from members of the public, and none were received. One member abstained, and the minutes of January 11, 2007 were APPROVED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 18, 2007:

Ms. Pasquarelli motioned for approval, and this was seconded Ms. Letts. Ms. Tahesha Way noted she had participated by teleconference. With one member abstaining, all others were in favor and the minutes of January 18, 2007 were APPROVED.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Mr. Weingart reported that there would be two additional public meetings, one would be held in Passaic on February 27, 2007, and the final meeting was to be scheduled in Somerset County, with a date and time to be announced. He also reported that there was a newspaper mention of Governor Jon Corzine's nomination of Mr. William Cogger, a Chester Township Councilman, as the 15th member of the Highlands Council.

He then made note of the fact that John Wihbey, a journalist for the *Star Ledger* who had provided fair and accurate coverage of the Council's activities, has left the newspaper and moved to Boston.

He then announced that the next meeting of the full Council would be held on March 15, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.

Dante Di Pirro then announced that members of the Council staff would be meeting with Warren County this same evening.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Alstede reported on the activity of the **Agriculture Committee** which met on February 8, 2007 as a full standing meeting, with members Tracey Carluccio and Debbie Pasquarelli. The Committee took action on four applications of agricultural grants. Three are recommended for Council approval and one was returned for further information, clarification and enhancement. He reported the Committee would be able to entertain questions about the grant applications during the consideration of the Resolutions later in the meeting but that he would recuse himself from two applications, with committee members filling in and Kim Ball Kaiser assisting in the process.

Mr. Jack Schrier reported on the activities of the new **State and Federal Agency Coordination Committee** which met as a full standing committee on February 8, 2007 and replaces the Smart Growth Committee. Mr. Schrier asked Tom Borden to provide an overview of the Committee meeting. He described the Committee's discussion of statutory requirements from the Highlands Act and how the Act amended the statutory requirements for differing State agencies. The Committee also discussed to need to prioritize the Council's efforts for State agency coordination and the Committee suggested priority coordination between the Office of Smart Growth and the Department of Environmental Protection. The Committee also authorized Mr. Di Pirro to send a letter to the Office of Smart Growth transmitting the Council's resolution regarding Plan Endorsement.

Mr. Weingart then reported on the activities of the **Plan Development and Local Conformance Committee**. He discussed a number of requests for an extension of the public comment period to April 2, 2007, and referenced the proposed Resolution regarding this. This Resolution he believed to be necessary because of the numerous requests for additional time to provide public comment. As for requests from County Planners for map layering data, he mentioned that a meeting was scheduled for February 16, 2007, for the County Planners to get to a point of agreement on clarification of needs.

Ms. Mimi Letts then requested that a synopsis of the above mentioned meeting be made available to the Council members via email. Mr. Di Pirro said the Council would be briefed,

but the meeting was pushed back from the 14th due to the weather. Mr. Weingart replied that some examples of what was being requested of the Council would be very helpful. Mr. Borden then mentioned that the requested comments were to be elaborated on later in the agenda for today and public comments heard.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Di Pirro reported on the Highland Council's large number of public comments received to date with the release of the Draft Regional Master Plan, which were over 600; 361 are comments that have been received verbally from hearings up-to-date; 257 more written comments via mail, internet, and fax. Some major themes included requests for an extension of the comment period, submission of site specific info; requests to remove sensitive environmental areas from planned purple areas, equity and site specific standards. He mentioned the staff was beginning to sort and document these comments.

Mr. Weingart then requested a clarification of the comments. Mr. Di Pirro said the staff was checking on duplicates and multiple comments received from members of the public who spoke at more than one hearing. He said the comments would then be refined. The next phase would be preparation of the comments for Council review. First, digital and audio copies would be made available for the Council members to hear comments if or when unable to attend. As for written comments, these would be scanned and recorded and made available to all Council members. Finally, comments would be summarized for major themes for council critical review in the decision process.

Mr. Alstede responded that he was concerned that many commenters did not feel the Draft Regional Master Plan contained enough pertinent information. Mr. Di Pirro replied that his summary was not all inclusive, the themes mentioned were just a sampling, but all would be referenced later after a full review.

Ms. Letts pointed out that one important topic is a need to extend the dual land valuation under the Garden State Preservation Trust Act beyond 2009, and that the Council would probably have to go through the Legislature for approval.

Mr. Di Pirro then discussed the subject of the State budget. He mentioned the State requested all State agencies to present a ten and twenty percent reduction plans. He said he submitted the 2008 budget request which had adequate funding for the Council's critical work. He said he hoped to get budget help for the Council.

Next he discussed Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) issues, regarding the Highland Council and how 3rd round obligations will be affected by a recent court decision. The court asked COAH to go back and look at both State Planning and Regional Planning entities, with critical data represented. However the opinion of the court has not ruled out Growth Share as a potential methodology. COAH has filed an appeal to Supreme Court, and this may or may not be heard on at least one issue.

Mr. Di Pirro then said that Sue Schmidt, the Council's receptionist has moved on to local non-profit agency.

He then discussed Council hearings with affected Counties, thus far, the Council has met with Sussex and Hunterdon counties, presented to the Morris County Freeholders, and Ms. Debbie Pasquarelli was to meet Warren County officials that evening.

The meeting with the County Planners took place on January 11, 2007, and another meeting was scheduled for the 16th depending on weather, with a snow-date to be rescheduled promptly.

He reported that Mr. Borden was to meet with Hunterdon County on February 21, 2007 to discuss legal issues. Other upcoming meetings included Passaic on February 20th, Morris County on the 21st; Sussex County on the 23rd, and the Township of Ringwood on the 26th. Chris Danis would be meeting with Liberty and Roxbury Townships on 21, and 28th respectively.

In addition, Mr. Di Pirro reported that presentations were made to the organizations Main Street NJ, and NJIT and Morris Tomorrow. He believed that the discussion with Morris Tomorrow was very effective where Ms. Letts sat in. He believed that the group is very proactive on many issues that are important to Council.

In other areas, a Morris County Cable television station taped a show with Mr. Di Pirro regarding Act requirements, and its actions to finalize and adopt the Plan.

Mr. Jeffrey LeJava discussed the Transfer of Development Right's (TDR) at the State's Agricultural Convention and did a very good job. The packet for today's Council included much information on, especially the need for funding for agriculture, land acquisition and preservation, support for a strong TDR and strong agricultural conservation practices.

Mr. Alstede noted the overview done on the Plan, especially regarding its impact on New Jersey agricultural, was helpful. The Convention sent delegates from all over the state to develop policies for Department of Agriculture.

RESOLUTIONS:

"Resolution Regarding a Planning Assistance Grant for the Town of Clinton," This was a voting matter with opportunity for public comment and Councilmember Kovach recused herself and left the room.

Mr. Borden introduced the matter, which was the subject of Plan Development Committee review. The proposed resolution would authorize a MP3 planning grant to the Town of Clinton as part of the Council's prior resolution for MP3 grants. The Committee undertook analysis of additional planning and a found need for a water management plan as a key component of a pilot project for the Regional Master Plan to model. The program would deal specifically with deficit areas of water supply issues. He announced that Clinton Town was undergoing analysis of this problem, and has submitted an application to the Council.

Mr. Borden said the Committee identified this as the pilot project and requested to advance it to the Treasurer for the pilot project remaining funds. The recommendation is a grant to cost share for water management plan. The proposed grant from Council was not to exceed

\$25,000, with the remainder to be made up from municipal funds. The goal would be to provide the Council with a model for municipal conformance.

Ms. Letts asked if a staff member would be working with Clinton Town, and Mr. Borden replied that Jim Hutzelmann, an engineer on Council staff, would be developing guidelines, and the relationship would be a cooperative venture.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION:

Ms. Carluccio moved the Resolution, which was then seconded. Public Comments were then requested.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Robert Cutter, Business Administrator for the Town of Clinton

Mr. Cutter was in attendance from Clinton Town and said the Town was in support of the resolution, and that it is committed to full cooperation. The water company has cooperated and they are looking forward to strengthening water conservation and having an all-inclusive plan. They are also anticipating working with other municipalities. The Town would like to get started with the plan, they have worked within the timetable of an eight-week window, and he hoped the plan proposed was complete. He then asked the Council if there were any other questions, and deferred to public comments.

Sue Buck, Oxford, NJ

She believed the issue of water deficit was true in Clinton as well as other towns. She questioned the DEP regulations, the new Highlands regulations and felt that any previous township plans had the "rug pulled out from them". She has an issue with throwing money at the problem, and that this resolution strikes her as bribery. Lots of towns have this issue, if we are going to hand out money to towns to keep them quiet, this is a problem. If there is deficit area then it should be changed in Regional Master Plan.

David Shope, Lebanon Township, NJ

Mr. Shope owns a farm. He finds it strange that Clinton is reported to have a deficit area when the reservoir is right there. The Highlands area provides water to 65% of State. Believes the deficit is caused primarily by water mismanagement, and it serves mostly to profit private water companies. Clinton Town has the reservoir and should be able to access it.

Mr. Di Pirro asked Mr. Borden to explain the legality of awarding the grant to the Town of Clinton despite the fact that this particular grant was not open for solicitations. Mr. Borden responded that this grant is under the previously approved MP3 grant program for pilot projects designed to assist the Council in developing and implementing the Regional Master Plan. Under this approved program, specific municipalities may be solicited by the Council.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION VOTE:

With no further comment or Council discussion, Mr. Weingart asked for a vote of the Council and the vote was unanimous of all members present, with Ms. Kovach recusing herself.

Consideration of the Resolution Regarding Agricultural Grants Program

Mr. Weingart than introduced the next issue to be resolved regarding agricultural grants which would be presented by Ms. Kim Ball Kaiser.

Sussex County Grant Resolution

Mr. Alstede asked that the first Resolution address a proposed grant to Sussex County. At that point, Mr. Glenn Vetrano recused himself as a Sussex County Freeholder.

Ms. Kaiser began the discussion with the grant for Agriculture Committee, a grant through Sussex CADB, for promoting the Four Seasons of Agriculture/Skylands to create marketing opportunities for farmers in the region of the seven highland counties. Upon Highlands Council staff review and recommendation for approval with conditions, the Agricultural Committee recommended to Council the approval of a grant not to exceed \$50,000 and to negotiate and devise with a technical work plan as recommended.

The resolution was moved by Ms. Kovach and seconded Ms. Pasquarelli, and public comments and questions were requested.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

David Shope, Lebanon Township, NJ:

His first question regarded what happens to the funds after they are distributed and how they were tracked. Also, how were they performance monitored? He believes, in terms of agriculture, these grants were just "silly," and part of a fraud of agricultural sustainability. He then read from a 1992 U.S. Forest Service report, which began, "Decrease in NJ farming in area," The article listed some of the complex reasons to be in 1992 and now; excessive regulation, world market competition pricing, little or no interest in family to continue farming, rising property costs, etc."

He then presented a "heavily redacted memo" from the Highlands task force of 2003 regarding family farms disappearing due to heavy developing and incentives to cash out. He believes this would not be true in free market. And he mentioned other problems with farming; soils, water owned by cities, poor return on farming, etc. Again, he believes agricultural viability in New Jersey to be a fraud.

Ms. Kaiser addressed the concern with grant tracking and reporting and the Agricultural Committee discussed these in detail. She says the grant conditions were discussed and tracking will be reported and followed up with the conditions of the grants. Also, that there would be plans for studying further parameters and tracking these grants. Mr. Di Pirro noted that grants would be tracked and delivered to the Council, using a specific timetable and conditions will be noted and taken care of.

Ms Letts asked whether there would be oversight of the grants and feedback to the Council to ensure the Council's funds are being used productively. Mr. Alstede explained it is his expectation to identify and look specifically and quantitatively at the numbers to track the program within the established parameters. But this is first grant to be approved under the sustainable agriculture grant program parameters.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION VOTE:

With no further comment or Council discussion, Mr. Weingart asked for a vote of the Council and the vote was unanimous of all members present, with Mr. Vetrano recusing himself.

Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board Grant Resolution

Mr. Alstede recused himself from both Hunterdon County grants as a farmer that utilizes the integrated pest management program and a Board member of the NJ Farmer and Communities Council. Mr. Peterson recused himself from both Hunterdon County grants as a Hunterdon County Freeholder.

Ms Kaiser introduced the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board Integrated Pest Management grant in cooperation with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Agricultural Experimentation Station. The proposed grant was to provide funding support for existing integrated pest management and expand further for the vegetable and fruit farmers, to be participated by farmers on a cost-share basis. The Committee recommended a grant not to exceed \$75,000 for the first year with reserve funds for a second year grant also totaling \$75,000. Award of the second year grant is premised on performance during the first year.

The Resolution was moved and seconded. Mr. Weingart asked whether the entire \$149,000 was based on existing allocated funds from the current fiscal year budget. Mr. Di Pirro indicated that there were plans to carry over the \$75,000 for the second year from this year's budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

David Shope, Lebanon, N.J.:

Mr. Shope, stating that he was assured these funds would be properly looked after, requested the results be measured by typical return on equity, pre-Highlands Act. The average American business has a return of 19 percent. Please measure these doles against such return on equity.

Mr. Vetrano asked what the difference was between the first and the second grant presented at today's Council meeting. Ms. Kaiser responded that the first grant is going to the Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board for a marketing program and the second grant is to be awarded to Hunterdon County for an integrated pest management program.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION VOTE:

With no further comment or Council discussion, Mr. Weingart asked for a vote of the Council and the vote was unanimous of all members present, with Mr. Alstede and Mr. Peterson recusing themselves.

Hunterdon County Grant Resolution

Ms Kaiser introduced the proposed grant to the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders for Market Development Program for NJ Council of Farmers and Communities, nonprofit program administered through New Jersey Farm Bureau with oversight by Hunterdon County. Ms. Kaiser explained that the NJ Council of Farmers and Communities provides funding assistance through community grants to promote and assist

establishing community markets, and to provide web-based development services. The Committee recommendation was to give a grant not to exceed \$50K and to negotiate technical work plans and a schedule with conditions approved by Agriculture Committee. A Motion was made by Ms. Carluccio and seconded Ms. Pasquarelli

Mr. Dillingham asked to what entity this grant money is provided to. Ms Kaiser responded that the grant goes through Hunterdon County to the NJ Council of Farmers and Communities, and the end recipients are community farmers markets.

Ms. Carluccio explained that the issue of where the money was going under these grants was discussed by the Agriculture Committee. She explained that her concern was that the money be used to develop Highlands farm markets and Highlands niche crops and that this money not be used by the NJ Farm Bureau for administrative purposes. Ms. Carluccio stated that she was assured that language would be added to the technical plan that no funds would go to operational expenses of the Farm Bureau and that monies would be tracked to ensure that allocated funds are spent properly for farm markets themselves.

Ms. Carluccio explained that the NJ Council of Farmers and Communities is an existing non-profit that oversees and develops markets mainly for the NJ Fresh program. Ms Kaiser then provided a breakdown of the funds provided by other entities to the NJ Council of Farmers and Communities for support of its agriculture programs. Ms Way noted that these resolutions should provide more information and would like goals clarified in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Helen Heinrich, NJ Farm Bureau. Ms. Heinrich clarified the relationship between the NJ Farm Bureau and the NJ Council of Farmers and Communities; it was originally set up as a non-profit to track and monitor standards for New Jersey produce and farm products sold at local farm stands. The NJ Council of Farmers and Communities serves as an oversight body which establishes farmer market standards that are adhered to by member markets and farms. The relationship with Farm Bureau is totally separate other than the Farm Bureau providing administrative support. Ms Heinrich also asked for more information on grant protocol and found it odd that with small grants, everyone has such big questions.

Ms Way responded to Ms. Letts concerns regarding ensuring all appropriate information is included in the packets for Council Members when voting on grants. Ms. Way suggested that there be a specific delineation of funds. Ms. Pasquarelli asked Mr. Borden whether there will be an agreement that will precede release of these funds. Mr. Borden explained that there will be a detailed scope of work with conditions agreed to by the recipient and Agriculture Committee before funds are disbursed and that this information will be made available to all Council Members.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION VOTE:

With no further comment or Council discussion, Mr. Weingart asked for a vote of the Council and the vote was unanimous of all members present, with Mr. Alstede and Mr. Peterson recusing themselves.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE COMMENT PERIOD ON THE DRAFT REGIONAL MASTER PLAN

A motion was made by Mr. Schrier to approve the Resolution which stated that the public comment period be extended to April 2, 2007. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dillingham. Mr. Schrier then moved to amend the resolution to provide that the comment period be extended until 30 days after all of the GIS data and metadata had been released to the County planners. Mr. Vetrano seconded Mr. Schrier's motion to amend the resolution.

A discussion ensued as to the appropriate period for the extension of the public comment period. Mr. Schrier stated that without the release of all the GIS data there would not be adequate information to make comments by the public. A number of Council Member contended that the amended motion created a timeline that was too indefinite and that the comment period should not be open ended, and that the 30 day extension was adequate.

Mr. Carluccio pointed out that the resolution as proposed without Mr. Schrier's amendment provides closure to public comment period. Ms. Carluccio also noted that the Council was not holding anything of substance back from the public and that creating new files would push back adoption of Regional Master Plan by months.

Ms Pasquarelli stated that she would not support amendment noting that all technical documents had been released to the public and that these documents serve as the basis of the draft Plan. Additionally, Ms. Pasquarelli stated that she wants to move forward to final adoption of the Plan.

Mr. Vetrano suggested that if the GIS data was used in formulating the draft Regional Master Plan then it should be released to the public, and the comment period should be extended until all that data is released. Ms. Letts reiterated the point raised by Mr. Vetrano. She stated that she understands that the counties have already explained why they cannot provide substantive comments on the draft Regional Master Plan, and that reason is because the counties have not received all of the GIS data.

Mr. Weingart then suggested that the question of whether the GIS data was or was not relied upon in formulating the draft Regional Master Plan was not going to be resolved today. He explained that the public comment period was scheduled to close on March 2, 2007, and that some action to extend the time period must be taken at today's meeting.

Mr. Di Pirro stated that he agreed with the need to extend the public comment period and that extension should at a minimum be thirty days so that the staff could continue its conversations with the counties regarding the GIS data the counties are seeking. Mr. DiPirro also explained that agreeing to a thirty day extension now would not mean that the Council could not further extend the public comment period after further discussion with the counties.

Mr. Dillingham requested that the counties specifically define exactly what GIS data and information they are requesting from the Council.

A vote was then taken on the motion to amend the resolution to extend the public comment period until thirty days after the public release of all GIS information and metadata. Five

Council Members voted in favor of the motion to amend the resolution and six Council Members voted against the motion. The motion to amend the resolution failed.

With that, the motion pending before the Council was the resolution to extend the public comment period until April 2, 2007. Ms Letts stated that the county planners should be more specific in what data they are suggesting should be released.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

David Murphy, Borough of Mendham, Council President and Land Use Chair
He was upset his questions vocally and in writing were not responded to. He feels the time for comment should be extended. Mendham is in the Planned Community Zone, wants to be able to decide whether they should opt into Preservation Zone. He felt not enough time has been allotted, that their Borough engineer, planner and attorney all looking at information. Even more than 30 days should be allocated perhaps to April 23, 2007. He supports Jack Schrier's amendment and must find out what planners really need including GIS data files. The extension should be 90 days from when all county planners receive data.

Tony Soriano, Morris County Planner

Mr. Soriano confirmed that the county planning meeting was cancelled. He believes counties will have a better idea what is needed in order to comment if all of the GIS data are released. The said that half of the data sets have been released, which are mostly boundaries. Mr. Soriano explained what the counties are requesting is the "recipe" of ingredients for the "cake" that is the draft Regional Master Plan. Mr. Soriano explained that the counties want to determine whether they can agree with methodology used by the Council and whether the GIS Data was used correctly. Until this data is released, only then can it be useful for comment. He would like extension to be 60 days after release of GIS data. The planners are not at fault for slow GIS data released and he feels they can only comment on text with technical data. Mr. Soriano stated that the zones were created using 51 criteria, but he does not know how these were weighted, how each was influenced on selection. Then staff needs to analyze this, what was used to create the boundary lines and how.

Steve Shaw, Special Counsel to Warren County.

Mr. Shaw stated that the Warren County Freeholders did not request a further extension. That extension was requested by the Warren County Planning Board. In response to Mr. Shaw's comment, Mr. Dillingham stated that the language used in the resolution speaks to "representatives" of the counties, of which the county planning boards would be considered representatives.

Mr. Vetrano stated that there are 51 drivers that determine the overlay zones based on resource assessment. Mr. Vetrano reiterated that the counties are seeking the data that was used in determining the 51 drivers, and that this request has been previously made. Ms. Letts asked for a meeting between the Council and GIS staff to prepare data for public release.

David Shope, Lebanon:

Questioned back in November how data was handled and he received a song and dance. The plan as submitted believed it to be a legal plan, per Mr. Di Pirro. He stated that this obviously this was not the case and that this Plan is going to be defined in the courts. He asked the Council move so this can move to the next phase.

Julia Somers: NJ Highlands Coalition

Ms. Somers believes that call for specific GIS data is overkill. This is a plan with policies. The way this is proposed is based on questions with boundaries which can be addressed in comment period, pre-conformance, and plan conformance. Ms. Somers asked that the Council Members extend the public comment period to April 2 and leave it at that.

Mr. Schrier believes that the message the Council is sending to the public is that the Council is acting secretly in developing the Regional Master Plan by not releasing publicly the information. Mr. Weingart stated that Mr. Schrier's characterization of what the Council is doing is inaccurate. Mr. Weingart stated that the Council has released extensive information to the public, including all of the technical reports. Mr. Weingart stated that he believes the disagreement is mostly on the role of data in Draft Regional Master Plan.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION VOTE:

With no further comment or Council discussion, Mr. Weingart asked for a vote of the Council and the vote was unanimous of all members present.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

David Shope, Lebanon Twp:

Mr. Shope highlighted an article from the Economist about the decline in attendance at national parks. He believes that ecotourism is a fraud. When all is said and done, the Act was perpetuated on series of frauds. He then highlighted a Scientific American article on climate change, particularly on methane, which he stated is, 23% more potent than carbon dioxide. Wetlands produce methane emissions. If we brought them back to pre-industrial rates the carbon dioxide equivalent would be appropriate. He asked Council to fund a program to fill wetlands to mitigate methane emissions in wetlands.

Scott Olson, Byram Twp.

He believed this meeting addressed more substance. He missed the meeting at Voorhees Where his name was used in a matter that was untrue. He was never arrested for trespassing, some other person whose name was Scott was. The speaker was misinformed and ill-informed.

Andy Drysdale, Farmer in Chester Twp.

He and wife Lois, in attendance, believes the Act was unnecessary to begin with. According to Mr. Drysdale, a self-serving Governor and environmental extremists created the plan. Municipal planning boards are better able to serve environmental friendly water conservation plans and farm plans. He's been a land surveyor since 1988. As for water, 2/3rds of the earth's surface is under water. Mr. Drysdale believes that the Highlands Act is unnecessary and should be repealed.

Ms. Pasquarelli noted that there is one more public hearing in Somerset, and municipalities should be notified.


ADJOURN

With no further public comment, Mr. Weingart asked for a motion to adjourn which was approved

Vote on the Approval of
the February 15, 2007 Minutes

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Councilmember Alstede	—	—	—	✓
Councilmember Calabrese	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Carluccio	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Dillingham	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Kovach	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Letts	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Pasquarelli	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Peterson	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Salovaara	—	—	—	✓
Councilmember Schrier	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Vetrano	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Way	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Weingart	✓	—	—	—
Councilmember Whitenack	✓	—	—	—

Dated: March 22, 2007


John Weingart, Chairman

PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED

2/15/07
DNEB / JHP/E

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SUBMITTED AT
COUNCIL MEETING
ON FEB. 15, 2007

12 pages

CLIMATE CHANGE

The surprising recent finding that living plants produce methane does not throw doubt on the cause of global warming. Human activities—not plants—are the source of the surge in this and other greenhouse gases

By Frank Keppler and Thomas Röckmann

What do you do as a scientist when you discover something that clearly contradicts the textbooks? The two of us faced this problem head-on when experiments we were running in 2005 showed that living vegetation produces the greenhouse gas methane. The established view held that only microbes that thrive without oxygen (anaerobic bacteria) can manufacture this gas. But our tests unexpectedly revealed that green plants also make methane—and quite a lot of it.

The first thing we did was look for errors in our experimental design and for every conceivable scenario that could have led us astray. Once we satisfied ourselves that our results were valid, though, we realized we had come across something very special, and we began to think about the consequences of our findings and how to present them to other researchers. Difficult as this discovery had been for us to accept, trying to convince our scientific peers and the public was almost impossible—in large part because we had to explain how such an important source of methane could have been overlooked for decades by the many able investigators studying methane and puzzling over climate change.

Natural Gas

MOST PEOPLE KNOW methane (often written as the chemical formula CH₄) as natural gas. Found in oil fields and coal beds as well as in natural gas fields, it has become an important source of energy and will most likely remain so given the limited reserves of oil on the planet. Approximately 600 million

metric tons of it—both anthropogenic (from human activities) and natural—rise into the atmosphere every year. Most of these emissions have been thought to come from the decay of nonfossil organic material as a result of activity by anaerobic bacteria. Wetlands such as swamps, marshes and rice paddies provide the greatest share. Cattle, sheep and termites also make methane, as a by-product of anaerobic microbial digestion in their gut. Forest and savanna fires release methane, as does the combustion of fossil fuels [see box on page 55]. Over the years, researchers have gained considerable knowledge about the global methane cycle, and the consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2001 was that the major sources had probably been identified (although the proportion each source contributes was still uncertain).

Nevertheless, some observations were difficult to explain. For instance, large fluctuations of atmospheric methane during the ice ages and warm ages, which have been reconstructed from air bubbles trapped in ice cores, remained a mystery. But no scientist in 2001 would have factored in direct emis-

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sions of methane by plants, because no one suspected that biological production of methane by anything other than microbial anaerobic processes was possible.

Knowing the sources of methane and how much they emit is important because methane is an extremely efficient greenhouse gas. Much more carbon dioxide is spewed into the atmosphere every year, but one kilogram of methane warms the earth 23 times more than a kilogram of carbon dioxide does. As a result of human activities, the concentration of methane in the atmosphere has almost tripled over the past 150 years. Will it continue to increase into the 21st century? Can emissions be reduced? Climate scientists need to answer such questions, and to do so we must know the origin and fate of this important gas.

Startling Findings

THE IDEA OF INVESTIGATING plants as methane emitters grew out of research we had been conducting on chloromethane, a chlorinated gas that destroys ozone and was thought to come mainly from the oceans and forest fires. A few years ago, while working at the Department of Agriculture and Food Science in Northern Ireland, we discovered that aging plants provide most of the chloromethane found in the atmosphere. Because methane, like chloromethane, is released during the burning of biomass, we wondered whether intact plants might also release methane.

To satisfy our curiosity, we collected 30 different kinds of tree leaves and grasses from tropical and temperate regions and placed them in small chambers with typical concentrations of atmospheric oxygen. To our amazement, all of the

various kinds of leaves and plant litter produced methane. Usually a gram of dried plant material releases between 0.2 and three nanograms (one billionth of a gram) of methane an hour. These relatively tiny amounts were difficult to monitor, even using our highly sensitive state-of-the-art equipment.

The task was made still more challenging because we had to differentiate between methane produced by plant tissue and the high background levels normally present in ambient air. We believe this difficulty is what prevented biologists from observing the phenomenon earlier. The secret to our discovery was that we removed the interfering effect of the natural methane background by flushing the chambers with methane-free air before the start of each experiment. We were then able to measure the methane released by plant tissue.

Our curiosity fueled, we undertook similar experiments with living plants [see box on page 56], and we found that the rates of methane production increased dramatically, jumping to 10 to 100 times those of leaves detached from plants. By running a series of experiments, we excluded the possibility that bacteria that thrive without oxygen produced the methane. Finally, we were absolutely convinced that living plants release methane in significant quantities. We could provide no immediate answers about the mechanism of how they did this, although we suspect that pectin, a substance in the walls of the plant cells, is involved. We decided that this question would have to await further research, which is currently under way. Because of methane's role in climate change, however, we realized it was crucial to begin to take into account the quantity of gas released into the atmosphere by this newly discovered source.

How much might plants be contributing to the planet's methane totals? It was immediately obvious to us that even though a single leaf or plant made only tiny amounts of methane, these small bits would add up quickly because plants cover a substantial part of the globe. We were nonetheless astounded by the figure generated by our calculations: between 60 million and 240 million metric tons of methane come from plants every year—this constitutes 10 to 40 percent of annual global emissions. Most of it, about two thirds, originates in the vegetation-rich tropics. We knew, of course, that extrapolating global estimates from a limited sample of laboratory measurements was open to error. Still, the final number seemed extremely large—and if it surprised us, it would be heresy to many of our scientific peers.

Fortunately for us, support for our work soon came from an unexpected source. A group of environmental physicists in Heidelberg, Germany, was observing the earth's atmosphere from space. In 2005 the scientists' satellite measurements revealed "clouds" of methane over tropical forests [see illustration on page 57]. They reported that their observa-

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Overview/Nature's Surprise

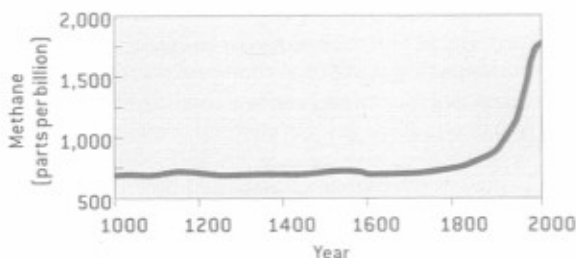
- The established view has been that methane (natural gas) is produced by microbes that thrive without oxygen, but experiments by the authors' team unexpectedly revealed that living plants also manufacture this potent greenhouse gas.
- Although this startling finding can explain many previously puzzling observations, a number of scientists are still skeptical, in particular about the amount of methane that plants generate. Knowing the sources of methane and how much they emit is important because of methane's role in trapping heat.
- An early misinterpretation of the finding suggested that forests might actually be contributing to global warming, but the authors emphasize that plants do not contribute to the recent increase in methane and global warming.

THE TEXTBOOK VIEW

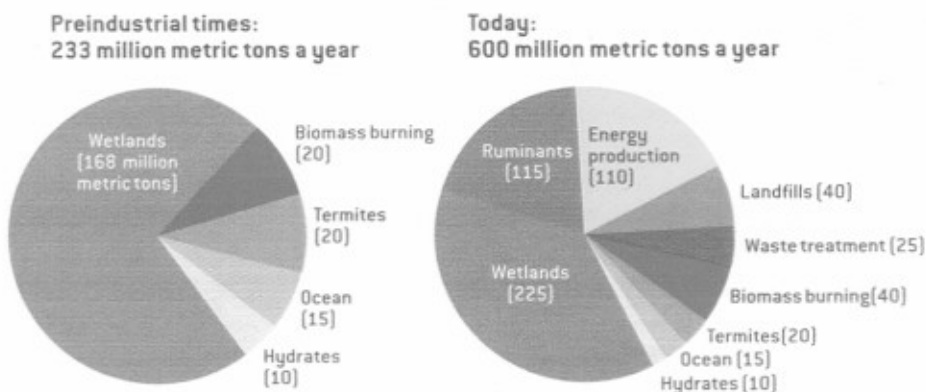
In the past 150 years, methane emissions into the atmosphere have roughly tripled (*graph*), and today some 600 million metric tons are sent into the air annually. That rise is a concern because methane, like carbon dioxide, traps heat in the earth's atmosphere and therefore contributes to global warming.

Until the authors and their colleagues published their recent discoveries, traditional thinking held that all natural releases of methane resulted from the activity of bacteria that thrive in wet, oxygen-poor environments. Such environments include swamps and rice paddies as well as the digestive systems of termites and ruminants. And analyses of the sources of the gas in the environment (*pie charts*) indicated that the dramatic rise in methane concentrations since the mid-1800s has stemmed from human industrial activities (such as the use of fossil fuels for energy) and increased rice cultivation and breeding of ruminants (because of population growth). The authors' work casts no doubt on the explanation for why methane concentrations in the atmosphere have increased, but estimates of the relative contributions to methane levels from natural sources will have to be revised.

Methane Concentration in the Atmosphere



Methane Emissions



tions could not be explained by simply using the current understanding of the global methane budget. In light of our findings, however, their work made sense: green vegetation was the source of the methane clouds.

Recently further support has come from Paul J. Crutzen, a 1995 Nobel Prize winner, and his colleagues. After our findings were published in January 2006, they reanalyzed measurements made in 1988 of air samples from the Venezuelan savanna and concluded that 30 million to 60 million metric tons of methane could be released from vegetation in these regions. Crutzen said that "looking back to 1988, we could have made the discovery, but accepting the general wisdom that methane can only be produced under anaerobic conditions, we missed the boat."

Despite this support for our work, many scientists are still

skeptical about methane emissions from plants, especially about our estimate of how much methane comes from vegetation. A number of our scientific colleagues are therefore recalculating the budget for the plant source, using different methods from ours but applying our emission rates. Of course, we keenly await an independent verification of our laboratory findings.

Solving an Old Puzzle

OUR FINDINGS WOULD EXPLAIN a trend that has puzzled climate scientists for years: fluctuations in methane levels in parallel with changes in global temperatures. Ice cores serve as natural archives that store information about atmospheric composition and climate variability going back almost a million years. Tiny bubbles of air trapped in the ice reveal the relative concentrations of atmospheric gases in the past [*see box on next page*]. We see in the ice cores, for example, that variations of past carbon dioxide levels are closely linked to changes in global temperatures. During ice ages, carbon dioxide concentrations are low; during warm spells, levels increase.

In general, methane concentrations follow the same trend as carbon dioxide, but the reason has been unclear. Scientists have tried to use models of wetlands (the only major natural source of methane previously believed to exist) to reconstruct the curious variations of past methane levels. Yet they found it difficult to reproduce the reported differences in atmospheric methane levels between glacial and interglacial periods.

THE AUTHORS

FRANK KEPPLER and **THOMAS RÖCKMANN** first discovered methane emissions from plants when they were working together at the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in Heidelberg, Germany. Keppler earned a Ph.D. in environmental geochemistry from the University of Heidelberg in 2000. He recently received a European Young Investigator Award (EURYI) to build his own research group at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Mainz. Röckmann received his Ph.D. from the University of Heidelberg. In 2005 he was appointed full professor at the Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research Utrecht in the Netherlands.

LAURIE GRACE AND JANA BRENNING

6

Farm Numbers Continue to Decline

WASHINGTON, D.C. —The number of farms in the United States in 2006 is estimated at 2.09 million, 0.4 percent fewer than in 2005, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Total land in farms, at 932.4 million acres, decreased 780 thousand acres, or 0.08 percent, from 2005. The average farm size was 446 acres during 2006, an increase of one acre from the previous year.

The decline in the number of farms and land in farms reflects a continuing consolidation in farming operations and diversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.

Farm numbers and land in farms are broken down into five economic sales classes. Farms and ranches are classified into these "sales classes" by summing their sales of agricultural products and government program payments. Sales class breaks occur at \$10,000, \$100,000, \$250,000, and \$500,000.

Farm numbers declined in the \$1,000-\$9,999 and the \$100,000 - \$249,999 sales classes. Farm numbers rose slightly in the \$10,000 - \$99,999 and the two largest sales classes. The decline in the smallest sales class is most likely due to normal attrition, such as retirements, and rising incomes. The changes within the other sales classes were a result of operations moving to larger sales classes by consolidation and expansion.

Because of rising incomes, many farms and ranches near the top of their sales class in 2005 moved into the next higher sales class in 2006 without adding land or otherwise expanding their operations.

The largest percentage changes from 2005 occurred in the smallest and largest sales classes. Farm numbers declined 1.1 percent, to 1.15 million farms, in the \$1,000 - \$9,999 sales class. Meanwhile, farm numbers increased 2.4 percent, to 81,350 farms, in the \$500,000 & over sales class. The number of farms with less than \$100,000 in sales fell 0.6 percent from 2005 and the number of farms with \$100,000 or more in sales rose 0.7 percent.

Land in farms also shifted from lower sales classes to higher sales classes. In the \$1,000-\$9,999 sales class, land in farms dropped 3.0 percent, to 114.7 million acres, while land operated by farms in the largest sales class, \$500,000 & over in sales, increased 1.7 percent, to 213.4 million acres.

Over all, the average farm size increased 1

acre in 2006. However, average farm sizes declined in some of the sales classes due to smaller farms moving up to higher sales classes.

This report also contains estimates of farm numbers and land in farms for Puerto Rico. The number of farms with sales of \$1,000 or more in Puerto Rico was 13,600 in 2006, unchanged from 2005. Land in farms, at 610,000 acres, also remained unchanged from the previous year. The average farm size in Puerto Rico in 2006 was estimated at 45 acres.

Livestock Operations Summary

The number of operations with cattle totaled 971,400 during 2006, down 1 percent from 2005 and 2 percent below 2004. Beef cow operations in 2006 were down 1 percent from 2005 and 2 percent below 2004. Milk cow operations were 4 percent below last year and 1 percent below two years ago.

The three operation classes: cattle, beef cows and milk cows, are classified into size groups independently. Therefore, it is possible to have more beef cow operations in a particular size group than cattle operations. As an example an operator with 75 cattle and 40 beef cows would be classified in the 50-99 size group for cattle and 1-49 size group for beef cows.

The number of operations with hogs totaled 65,540 during 2006, down 3 percent from 2005 and 6 percent from 2004. Places with 2,000 or more head accounted for 80 percent of the inventory.

The number of operations with sheep totaled 69,090 during 2006, up 1 percent from 2005 and up 2 percent from 2004. Of all sheep operations that include breeding sheep, 90.3 percent were comprised of 1-99 head, 7.6 percent had 100-499 head, and the remaining 1.6 percent were operations with 500 head or more. Operations with 1-99 head account for 28.7 percent of the inventory, 100-499 head account for 24.0 percent of the inventory, and 500+ head account for 47.3 percent of the inventory.

This NASS report contains annual estimates of Puerto Rico livestock operations. Operations with cattle and calves were 4,300 unchanged from 2005; operations with beef cows were 2,800, unchanged from 2005; operations with milk cows were 1,600, unchanged from 2005; operations with hogs were 1,500 unchanged from 2005; and operations with sheep were 800, unchanged from the previous year.

Environment awareness

No child left inside

SAN FRANCISCO

Put down that Xbox, young man

TO THE alarm of environmentalists and park managers alike, interest in the great outdoors seems to be tailing off among young Americans. The country's extensive system of national parks includes some of the most photographed and best preserved landscapes on earth—like Yosemite Valley in California, the crenellated Teton Range in Wyoming, Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone National Park or the white edifice of Mount Rainier in Washington state. But attendance at the parks is falling. Between 1995 and 2005, overnight stays in them declined 20% overall, and camping and backcountry stays dropped by 24%, according to statistics compiled by the National Parks Service.

No park, it seems, is immune to the decline: even in Yosemite, one of the system's oldest parks and probably its best known, the number of visitors dropped 17% over the ten-year period. The number of visitors to Death Valley, an easy drive from vigorously growing Las Vegas, went down 28% over the same span. In some of the system's remoter parks, such as Lava Beds National Monument near the California-Oregon border, site of much fighting in an Indian war of 1872-73, the number of daily visitors is down to ten or fewer.

The importance of this decline can hardly be over-estimated for big environmental organisations such as the Sierra Club: they have depended on what one expert calls "a transcendent experience in nature", usually in childhood, to gain new members and thus remain powerful lobbyists for environmental causes. "The political implications are enormous," says Richard Louv, a writer whose most recent book, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder", describes the social, psychological and even spiritual ramifications of a dearth of outdoors experience for a generation raised on electronic, rather than natural, stimulation and entertainment.

To encourage environmental interest in young people, particularly non-whites who are much less like to visit parks than whites are, Martin LeBlanc at the Sierra Club manages 65 volunteer-led programmes around the country to bring inner-city children into direct experience with the natural world. "We don't need to be giving them propaganda about offshore oil-drilling, not when they're 13 years old," he said. "We just need to get them outside."

For its part, the National Wildlife Fed- ▶▶

Health care

God, sex, drugs and politics

NEW YORK

A new vaccine sparks controversy

"THE governor's action seems to signify that God's moral law regarding sex outside of marriage can be transgressed without consequence." Those words came this week from Rick Scarborough of Vision America, a Christian lobbying group. The US Pastor Council and various Republican politicians have piled in too.

Usually, this sort of right-wing animosity is reserved for the likes of Hillary Clinton, but this week's attack was on one of the Christian right's favourite sons: Rick Perry, the deeply religious Republican governor of Texas. His offence? Promoting the use of a highly effective new vaccine that is sure to save many women from a nasty form of cancer. But to some people, it is tantamount to encouraging promiscuity.

On February 2nd Mr Perry bypassed the state legislature and mandated vaccination against the human papilloma virus (HPV). His order would affect all girls entering sixth grade (at about 11) unless their parents opt out in writing. Perhaps 20m Americans carry this virus, making it one of the most common sex-

ually transmitted diseases in the country. Most strains are harmless, but a few can lead to cervical cancer, the second most deadly form of cancer in women.

Merck, a drugs giant, won federal approval for its HPV vaccine last year and has been lobbying for its adoption. California, South Dakota, New Hampshire and other states now make it available. Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia are considering the matter, while Washington state this week announced a voluntary scheme. But no state has mandated its use until now.

Why did Mr Perry do it? Some sneerers have noted that his former chief of staff is now a lobbyist for Merck. Others think that the wily governor is distancing himself from his conservative base so that he can make a plausible vice-presidential candidate in 2008. But there is another explanation: that he had the courage to make a politically difficult but sound policy decision. As he said this week: "If the medical community developed a vaccine for lung cancer," he asked, "would the same critics oppose it, claiming it would encourage smoking?"

eration (NWF) has had its "Ranger Rick" magazine and education programme for children in place for 40 years, but Kevin Coyle, the group's vice-president for education, thinks that the declining interest in the outdoors has spurred a feeling of urgency among environmentalists. "There won't be a conservation movement 30 years from now if there's no love for nature," he says.

The NWF has created a new "green hour a day" programme to encourage families to spend at least an hour a day outside; a website with green-hour activities will go live in March. The group has also joined with traditional hunting and sportsmen's organisations, which are also experiencing declining membership and interest, to lobby state governments for more outdoor-education funding.

Mr Louv, the writer, has been busy as well, helping local, state and national groups bring America's children outdoors under a campaign he calls "No Child Left Inside". He is pleased by the idea's wide appeal. "This issue has the power to pull people together from sectors you wouldn't expect. Environmentalists are traditionally liberal, but conservatives, too, are worried about children and nature," he said. "It's a grass-roots movement in both the literal and metaphorical senses". ■

Visa policy

Keeping out more than terrorists

NEW YORK

Disquiet is growing over restrictions on foreign visitors

"ON THE boats and on the planes/ They're coming to America/ Never looking back again/ They're coming to America." Neil Diamond might want to rethink the lyrics of his 1980 hit in light of recent developments. The number of overseas visitors to the United States (ie, excluding Canadians and Mexicans) has fallen by 17% since 2000. Last year, arrivals from western Europe dropped by 3%, despite the attractions of a weaker dollar and a record-breaking year for world tourism.

The travel industry blames a tortuous visa process and a perception of poor treatment on entering the country. In a survey late last year, America scored more than twice as badly as the next region (the Middle East) on traveller friendliness. Respondents said they feared immigration officials more than terrorists. New York worries that extra security measures since 2001 are making it less competitive as a fi-

Comments Don H. Hoopes

8

- The economic value of the Highlands timber resource is estimated to be over \$3.2 million. This includes gross income to landowners and the wages of those engaged in harvesting and processing. It does not include the value of the estimated 84,000 cord of fuelwood taken, worth approximately \$8 million dollars.

See maps following page 33.

B. Other Important Resources

1. Agriculture

Although normally considered a "land use" and not a resource, the 16 percent or 160,000 acres of land classified as 'Agriculture' within the Highlands is essential to the area's future. Farms:

- Contain many of the regions vast forest resources;
- Contribute significantly to the Area's economy: over 120 million dollars per year in marketable products;
- Sustain the intrinsic natural character of the working landscape;
- Provide jobs and a sustained quality of life for many landowners and residents of the Highlands.

There are approximately 4000 farms in the nine (9) county area. Less than half or about 1500 are within the Study Area boundaries. Most are in the 10-49 acre size class and located in Warren, Hunterdon, and the very eastern part of Sussex County in New Jersey, and Orange County in New York. Not all farmlands are owned by the farmers. Approximately half are leased.

Farm production is quite varied and includes:

- Livestock and poultry such as cattle, beef cows, milk cows, hogs, sheep, chicken, and broilers;
- Crops such as corn (grain, seed, and silage), soybeans, hay, vegetables, orchards, fruits and nuts, berries, nursery and greenhouse crops, mushrooms and sod.

Farming has been declining in the Highlands since 1970, as exemplified by the land use figures. From 1970 to 1985, agricultural land use went from 17 percent to 16 percent with almost 9,000 acres developed. It is projected that land use will drop to 14 percent by 2010 with another 14,000 acres developed. Clearly, farming in the Highlands is becoming less attractive as development increases.

The 160,000 acres of land classified as agriculture within the Highlands are essential to the Area's future.

9

The decrease in farming throughout the area is due to a complex set of issues. Some of the more popular notions include:

- World market competition and pricing
- Little or no interest by family members to continue farming
- Excessive regulations
- Development pressure and buy-out offers
- Rising property taxes
- Large capital investments and debt loads with marginal net incomes

Both New Jersey and New York have attempted to alleviate the property tax burden with legislation. New Jersey's Farmland Assessment has 26 percent participation and New York's property tax law Section 480-A has only six percent.

In July 1991, New York passed a Farmland Protection Trust Fund. This legislation begins a process to establish a Purchase of Development Rights Program. In New Jersey, the Farmland Preservation Program, which funds farmland easements on a willing seller-willing buyer basis, has been overwhelmingly supported by the voters. Over 70,000 acres have been protected and an additional 23,000 acres are under limited term restrictions. Applications have increased ten-fold and funds are drying up. In 1989, 346 farms applied (38,500 acres), but funding was available for less than half.

While most farmers support farmland assessment and development rights programs on a voluntary basis, there are fears that resource protection tools such as local zoning may lower the value of farmland and subsequent landowner equity.

2. Biological Communities

Biological diversity means the variety of life and its processes. Its distinct and measurable parts include: genetic variation, within and between species; distinct species such as the bog turtle; biological systems such as those found in freshwater marshes; and the variety of systems and their linkages across regional landscapes, such as the Highlands.

Two primary systems, terrestrial and palustrine (freshwater) wetlands, are represented in the Highlands, predominantly in the remaining large blocks of contiguous forests. These natural systems are characterized by a combination of physiognomy (outward appearance), vegetation structure and composition, topography, substrate, and soil moisture and reaction. Within each system can be found a number of communities which are representative of local variability. It is this variability which provides the

Some of the community types found in the Highlands include:

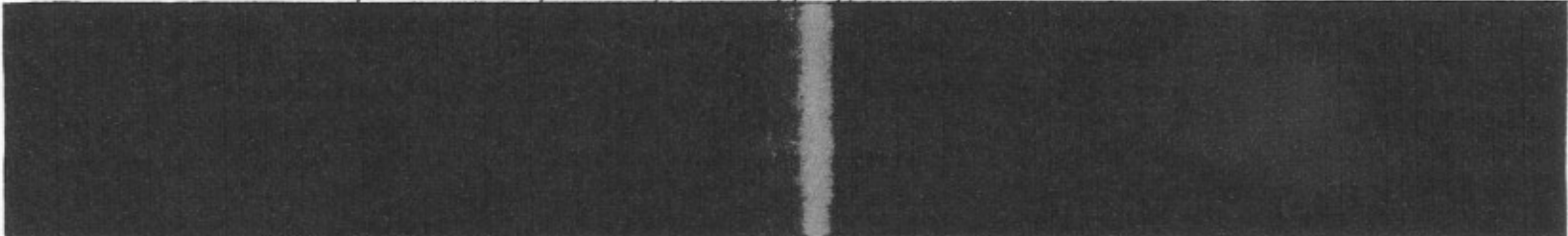
- Glacial bogs
- Hardwood conifer
- Swamps
- Rock outcrop communities
- Chestnut oak forests

**HIGHLANDS TASK FORCE
Regulatory Committee**

December 9, 2003

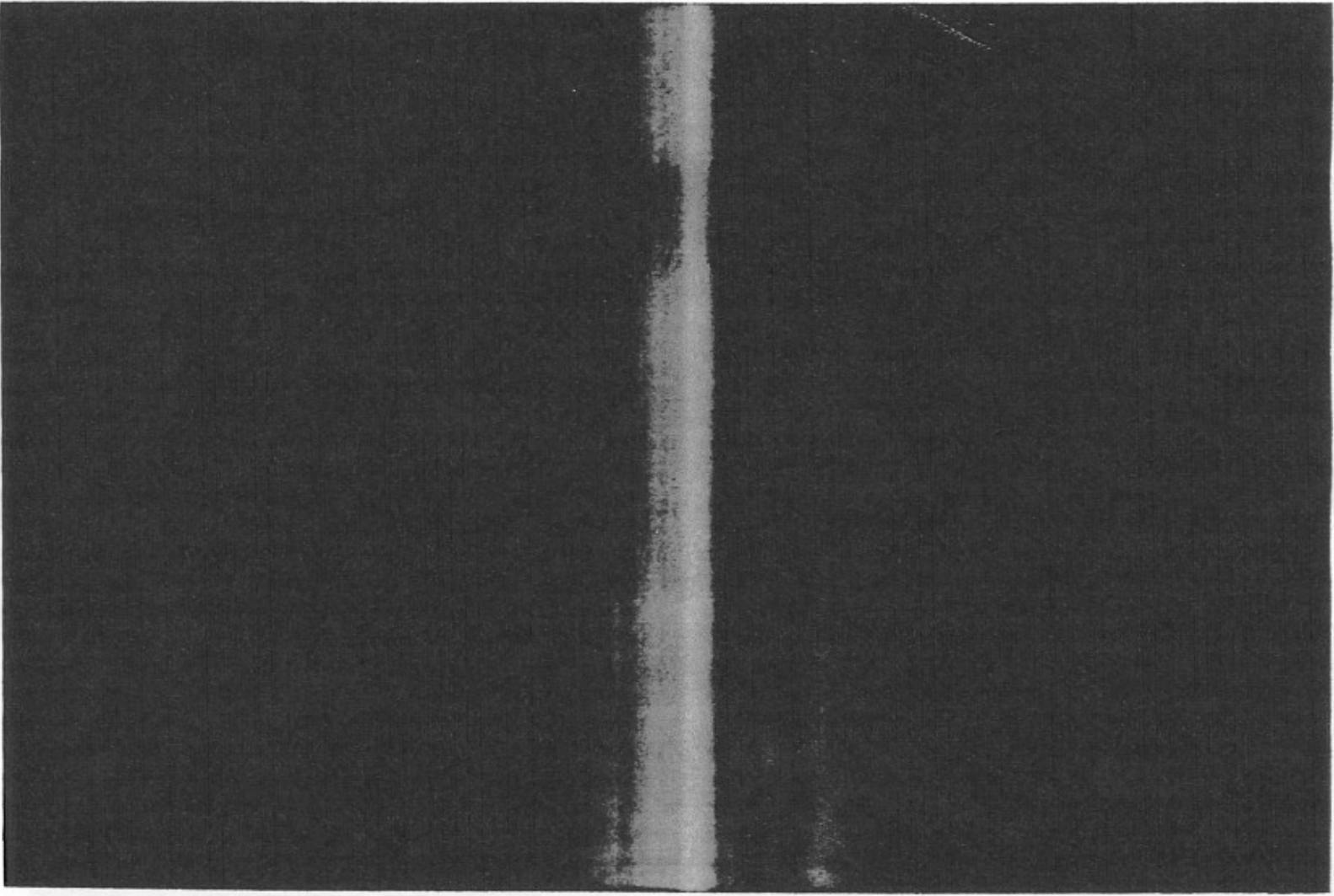
In attendance-- Task Force Members: Bradley Campbell, Commissioner NJDEP; Tom Gilmore, NJ Audubon; Denise Coyle, Somerset County Freeholder; Malcolm Borg, General Public Member.

Others: Joe Bertoni, NJDOT; Jeanne Herb, NJDEP; Bill Harrison, OSG; Jayne Hausler, NJDA; Bill Wolfe, NJDEP; Rene Mathez, Knowlton Twp; Miriam Crum, NJDOT; Dennis Keck, NJDOT; Daren Eppley, Governor's Office.



A. Regulatory Issues

Environmental Protection



B. For Land Acquisition Committee



ANDREW DRYSDALE
Land Surveyor
32 East Fox Chase Road
Chester, NJ, 07930
Tel. 908-234-1079 Fax 908-234-1326

*SUBMITTED AT
COUNCIL MEETING
ON FEB. 15, 2007*

January 24, 2007

Highlands Council
100 North Road
Chester, NJ 07930

Good Afternoon,

My name is Andy Drysdale, my wife Lois and I live and own farmland at 32 East Fox Chase Road, Chester, NJ our land is in the "Preservation Area" and some of it in the "Conservation Zone" of the Regional Master Plan.

We are here today to comment on a plan that is based on an unnecessary Act.

When the environmental activists and the former self serving Governor saw the strip of green land that still existed in New Jersey, they should have examined why it still existed, instead they chose to use it to justify and enhance their own importance.

Municipal planning boards have been working diligently for years to create plans that were best suited for their communities; large lot zoning was already in place in much of the area. Municipal engineering practices have become environmentally friendly with huge improvements in storm water runoff control and septic system design.

Many thousands of acres had already been preserved under various voluntary programs such as Farmland Preservation and Green Acres.

As a land surveyor I have often been contracted to locate wetlands flags and groundwater monitoring wells as far back as 1988 that were required by the DEP long before the unfortunate McGreevy Administration even existed.

As for water, more than two thirds of the earth surface is under water, there is plenty of it. In a natural distilling process the sun evaporates the water from all over the world and it falls in the form of rain snow and sleet. This process is probably less than perfect as some pollutants may still be present and the moisture must pass though polluted air before it even gets to the highlands.

Please decline to finalize this plan until this unnecessary Highlands Act is repealed.

Sincerely,
Andrew Drysdale
Andrew Drysdale

RESOLUTION 2007- 4
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
APPROVAL OF A PLANNING ASSISTANCE GRANT
TO THE TOWN OF CLINTON

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Act authorizes the Highlands Council to enter into any and all agreements or contracts, execute any and all instruments to carry out any power, duty or responsibility under the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, the Act authorizes the Highlands Council to make available grants and other financial and technical assistance to municipalities and counties in furtherance of the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2005, the Highlands Council by Resolution 2005-27 authorized the initiation of a grant application process for certain grant categories, and included among the categories are Planning Assistance Grants for Municipal Partnership Pilot Projects; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council's staff has reviewed the materials received by the Town of Clinton and has made a recommendation for a Municipal Partnership Pilot Project Grant; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Development and Local Conformance Committee met on February 9, 2007, reviewed that staff grant recommendations, and recommends the approval of a Planning Assistance Grant to the Town of Clinton;

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council's staff has reviewed the formal grant application received by the Town of Clinton and recommends the approval of a Municipal Partnership Pilot Project Grant; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Highlands Council that the Executive Director, or his designee, is authorized to enter in a grant agreement with the Town of Clinton for an amount not to exceed \$35,000 and to negotiate and devise a technical work plan and schedule to achieve the objectives of the proposed scope of work.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 15th day of February, 2007.



John Weingart, Chairman

Vote on this Resolution

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Recuse</u>
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RESOLUTION 2007- 5
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
APPROVAL OF A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANT TO
THE SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

WHEREAS, Section 2 of the Highlands Act specifies that the maintenance of “agricultural production and a positive agricultural business climate should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible wherever appropriate” in the Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, Section 10 of the Highlands Act sets goals for the Regional Master Plan to preserve farmlands and promote the continuation and expansion of agricultural uses and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Section 18 of the Highlands Act authorizes the Highlands Council to make available grants or other financial and technical assistance to municipalities and counties in furtherance of the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Council in Resolution 2006-19 authorized the development of a process for the solicitation of grants to Highlands Region municipalities and counties in three grant categories: Integrated Crop Management Grants; Market Development/Niche Crop Grants; and County Agriculture Development Board Capacity Building Grants; and

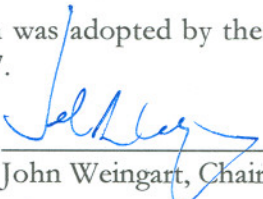
WHEREAS, the Highlands Council’s staff has reviewed the grant applications received by the Council and has made recommendations with conditions to the Agricultural Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Agriculture Committee met on February 8, 2007, reviewed those staff grant recommendations, and recommends the approval of the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board Market Development Program Grant with conditions;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Highlands Council that the Executive Director, or his designee, is authorized to enter in a grant agreement with the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board for an amount not to exceed to \$50,000 and to negotiate and devise a technical work plan and schedule with the conditions approved by the Agriculture Committee.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 15th day of February, 2007.



John Weingart, Chairman

Vote on this Resolution

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RESOLUTION 2007- 6
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
APPROVAL OF A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANT TO
THE HUNTERDON COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

WHEREAS, Section 2 of the Highlands Act specifies that the maintenance of "agricultural production and a positive agricultural business climate should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible wherever appropriate" in the Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, Section 10 of the Highlands Act sets goals for the Regional Master Plan to preserve farmlands and promote the continuation and expansion of agricultural uses and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Section 18 of the Highlands Act authorizes the Highlands Council to make available grants or other financial and technical assistance to municipalities and counties in furtherance of the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Council in Resolution 2006-19 authorized the development of a process for the solicitation of grants to Highlands Region municipalities and counties in three grant categories: Integrated Crop Management Grants; Market Development/Niche Crop Grants; and County Agriculture Development Board Capacity Building Grants; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council's staff has reviewed the grant applications received by the Council and has made recommendations with conditions to the Agricultural Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Agriculture Committee met on February 8, 2007, reviewed those staff grant recommendations, and recommends the approval of the Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board Integrated Pest Management Program/Sustainable Agriculture Program Grant with conditions;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Highlands Council that the Executive Director, or his designee, is authorized to enter in a grant agreement with the Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board for an amount not to exceed \$75,000 for first year with reserve funds to support a second year grant request for a two year total not to exceed \$149,358 and to negotiate and devise a technical work plan and schedule with the conditions approved by the Agriculture Committee.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 15th day of February, 2007.



John Weingart, Chairman

Vote this Resolution

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Recuse</u>
Councilmember Alstede	_____	_____	_____	_____	✓
Councilmember Calabrese	_____	_____	_____	✓	_____
Councilmember Carluccio	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Dillingham	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Kovach	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Letts	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Pasquarelli	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Peterson	_____	_____	_____	_____	✓
Councilmember Salovaara	_____	_____	_____	✓	_____
Councilmember Schrier	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Vetrano	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Way	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Weingart	✓	_____	_____	_____	_____
Councilmember Whitenack	_____	_____	_____	✓	_____

RESOLUTION 2007- 7
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
APPROVAL OF A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANT TO
THE HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

WHEREAS, Section 2 of the Highlands Act specifies that the maintenance of “agricultural production and a positive agricultural business climate should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible wherever appropriate” in the Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, Section 10 of the Highlands Act sets goals for the Regional Master Plan to preserve farmlands and promote the continuation and expansion of agricultural uses and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Section 18 of the Highlands Act authorizes the Highlands Council to make available grants or other financial and technical assistance to municipalities and counties in furtherance of the Regional Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, Highlands Council in Resolution 2006-19 authorized the development of a process for the solicitation of grants to Highlands Region municipalities and counties in three grant categories: Integrated Crop Management Grants; Market Development/Niche Crop Grants; and County Agriculture Development Board Capacity Building Grants; and

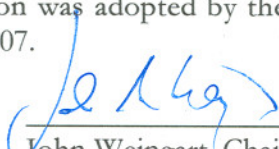
WHEREAS, the Highlands Council’s staff has reviewed the grant applications received by the Council and has made recommendations with conditions to the Agricultural Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Agriculture Committee met on February 8, 2007, reviewed those staff grant recommendations, and recommends the approval of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders Market Development Program Grant with conditions;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Highlands Council that the Executive Director, or his designee, is authorized to enter in a grant agreement with the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 and to negotiate and devise a technical work plan and schedule with the conditions approved by the Agriculture Committee.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 15th day of February, 2007.



John Weingart, Chairman

<u>Vote this Resolution</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Recuse</u>
Councilmember Alstede	—	—	—	—	✓
Councilmember Calabrese	—	—	—	✓	—
Councilmember Carluccio	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Dillingham	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Kovach	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Letts	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Pasquarelli	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Peterson	—	—	—	—	✓
Councilmember Salovaara	—	—	—	✓	—
Councilmember Schrier	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Vetrano	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Way	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Weingart	✓	—	—	—	—
Councilmember Whitenack	—	—	—	✓	—

RESOLUTION 2007- 8
NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
EXTENSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) has created a public body corporate and politic with corporate succession known as the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council); and

WHEREAS, Sections 8 and 10 of the Highlands Act mandate that the Highlands Council prepare and adopt a Regional Master Plan with the goal of protecting and enhancing the significant values of the resources in the Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council has prepared a draft Regional Master Plan and supporting technical reports and guidelines; and

WHEREAS, on November 30, 2006, the Highlands Council adopted Resolution 2006-30 and thereby authorizing the Executive Director to publicly release the draft Regional Master Plan for public review and comment, publicly release the supporting technical reports and guidelines as these documents are completed, and issue a public notice and schedule for public hearings for public comment on the draft Regional Master Plan and the Council's technical reports; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director issued public notice providing that the public comment period would expire on January 28, 2007 and this was subsequently extended to March 2, 2007; and

WHEREAS, more than twenty-five requests have been presented to the Highlands Council seeking a further extension of the public comment period, including requests submitted by representatives of all of the seven Highlands counties; and

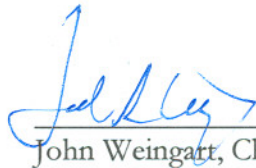
WHEREAS, on February 9, 2007, the Plan Development and Local Conformance Committee considered the request for an additional extension of time and approved a recommendation to extend the comment period to April 2, 2007 for public comment on the draft Regional Master Plan and the Council's technical reports; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Development and Local Conformance Committee recognized that the extension of the comment period will provide more than sixty days to review and comment upon all of the technical reports released by the Highlands Council and more that one hundred and twenty days to review and comment upon the draft Regional Master Plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Highlands Council that the public comment period shall be extended to April 2, 2007, to ensure that the public is provided sufficient time to comment on the draft Regional Master Plan and the Council's technical reports.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Highlands Council at its regular meeting held on the 15th day of February, 2007.


John Weingart, Chairman

Vote this Resolution

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Recuse</u>
Councilmember Alstede	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Calabrese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Carluccio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Dillingham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Kovach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Letts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Pasquarelli	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Councilmember Vetrano	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Way	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Weingart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Whitenack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>