

**MINUTES****APRIL 16, 2003**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met for a work session in its offices in the Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on April 16, 2003, at 7:41 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Freeholder Director Doherty and upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder Michael J. Doherty, Freeholder Richard D. Gardner and Freeholder John DiMaio. Also attending were County Administrator Steve Marvin, County Counsel Joseph J. Bell, Planning Director Dave Dech and Deputy Clerk Tammy M. Lynn.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Director Doherty.

Director Doherty read the following statement: “ **ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING OF APRIL 16, 2003 WAS GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT BY FORWARDING A SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO THE WARREN COUNTY CLERK, THE STAR/GAZETTE, THE EXPRESS-TIMES, STAR-LEDGER, AND BY POSTING A COPY THEREOF ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS AT THIS MEETING. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED. IN ORDER TO ASSURE FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO WISH TO ATTEND THE MEETING SHOULD SUBMIT ANY REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE.**”

Director Doherty opened the work session meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Planning Director Dave Dech thanked the Board for the opportunity to present updates of the Morris Canal plans, current and future acquisitions and information relating to the Morris Canal Incline Plane 9 West. Mr. Dech distributed to the Board, maps of each municipality which listed the current properties acquired, some that could be acquired and some areas that have already been developed. He told the Board there are considerable acres of preserved Morris Canal land countywide.

Mr. Dech reviewed each municipal map with the Board pointing out current acquisitions, some areas where appraisals are being performed, other areas that they have contacted for potential acquisitions and last, areas that have already been developed.

Mr. Dech concluded that the established goals relating to the Morris Canal are to preserve a Historic component, a Farmland preservation component, have a Highland Region Protection component, and to create recreation facilities for the citizens of the county. He offered to answer any questions from the Board.

Mr. Gardner stated that some of the Morris Canal was acquired with and during farmland preservation efforts. Mr. Dech explained yes. He explained the process that occurred with the Fang Farm. Mr. Gardner commented that the Morris Canal committee needs to be aware of a priority to get the Jim Lee portion completed, which would be economic improvements and a tourist attraction within the county.

Mr. Doherty asked how long is the Morris Canal, and how much is currently preserved. Mr. Dech responded the Morris Canal is 33 miles, and currently 10 miles is acquired either through county or state acquisitions. Mr. Doherty asked what the possibility would be to acquire all 33 miles. Mr. Dech stated truthfully, that is not a reality to have 100% acquired.

Mr. Doherty commented that Warren County is at a crossroad, should there be efforts to acquire as much Morris Canal land as possible or to take the area in Greenwich and convert the Jim Lee property into an economical, educational, tourism attraction. Greg Sipple, Sr. County Planner responded that the Morris Canal is part of a grand scheme to allow acquisition of farmland

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along with acquiring the canal areas. Mr. Dech concluded that the Jim Lee property has been a priority since 1995 and confirmed the Morris Canal is on the Federal Historic Registry.

Mr. Doherty thanked him for his presentation.

Mr. Dech introduced Herb Githens at 8:25 p.m. and explained he will present the draft preservation master plan for the Inclined Plane #9. Mr. Githens distributed handouts to the Board to follow along with his presentation. He explained that initially he gathered all documentation, historic site information and maps of the Morris Canal. Then he performed field/site surveys, archeological tests, had an engineering analysis of the Plane Tenders House and Power House completed for availability of water use. Mr. Githens explained after gathering all the information an initial plan of action was developed. Now, he is pleased to present the Master Plan which has 3 component phases with an anticipated time of completion to be within ten (10) years if all was approved. The plan would include recreating the tow path, having an exhibit for the Power house and Plane Tenders home as an information site to the public. Mr. Githens offered to answer any questions from the Board.

Mr. Doherty stated if this Master Plan was approved, where would the funding come from. Mr. Githens responded that some would be from Federal and State grants and there has been some communication indicating private groups are also willing to participate in the funding process.

Mr. Doherty asked if the Open Space Preservation Tax Funds would be used.

Mr. Dech responded that he understand that a public hearing would have to occur before it could be approved to use the funds.

Mr. Marvin asked if there was a total cost estimate for the master plan.

Mr. Githens stated no, as it would be difficult to measure the material, labor and time costs over the ten year process.

Mr. Doherty thanked Mr. Githens for his presentation.

Mr. Dech introduced Dave Detrick, Chairman of the Morris Canal Committee at 9:05 p.m. to give a presentation on the current Morris Canal activities.

Mr. Detrick told the Board that the Morris Canal has created historic initiatives and assets to Warren County that will out live everyone here tonight. He also advised the Board that the committee clearly understands that all 33 miles of the Canal will not be acquired. Mr. Detrick told the Board the committee was established in 1981, it has and will continue to work with every Freeholder Board. The Morris Canal Committee is an advisory Board to the Freeholders. He wanted the Board to know that all the committee has accomplished until now, was because of approval from prior Boards. He asked the Board to consider establishing a Task Force to look at managing the Morris Canal and Open Space Park area along the canal, form a Study Group to develop tourist attractions, and a separate Study Group to create long-range goals to develop the Jim Lee Property. He stated that he is also trying to see about changing the committee meeting day so it doesn't conflict with the Freeholder regular meetings and invited the Freeholders to a private tour of the canal.

Mr. Doherty thanked him for the information and suggestions from the committee.

Mr. Detrick introduced Bob Barth of the NJ Canal Society at 9:22 p.m. to present a slide program on canals and the economic / tourist opportunities, historic values to whole communities. Mr. Barth explained the photos were presented to show the real potential for economics in Warren County. He told the Board that he knows so many communities that have flourished tremendously because of the preservation efforts to other canals. Mr. Barth shared his vision for the three canals, Delaware Canal, D&R Canal and the Lehigh Canal to be fully restored and operational. He was informed by the Easton Canal Society that they had almost 400,000 visitors in 2002. He concluded telling the Board it would be a shame to lose the world renowned model legacy of the Incline Plane #9 that Holland and China duplicated.

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Mr. Gardner asked when the Morris Canal was constructed. Mr. Barth responded between 1825 and 1841.

Mr. Doherty asked when the peak time of its use was. Mr. Barth explained that the Civil War in 1866 was the highest use, which enabled the military to get the needed materials to the troops on the front lines. Mr. Doherty followed asking what occurred when the canal froze. Mr. Barth explained when the canal froze, that time was used to do maintenance work.

Mr. DiMaio asked what the width of the canals were. Mr. Barth explained depending on the area in New Jersey, one of the canals could be between 20 to 50 feet wide.

Mr. Doherty thanked Mr. Barth for his presentation.

Under public comments on agenda items only, Walter Menegus, White Township thanked Mr. Dech and presenters for the Morris Canal information presentation tonight.

Mr. Menegus stated that he presented another applicant relating to agenda item D1. This individual has many Environmental issue experiences and he would rather see White Township represented by this applicant. He also asked if this is a paid position appointment. Mr. Marvin responded that the Pequest River M.U.A. appointment positions have a small stipend. Mr. DiMaio stated that this Board has a stipend included because of the services required. Mr. Menegus asked to have this item pulled from the agenda and to have an advertisement published for additional applicants, before a final decision is made.

Bob Shandor of Lopatcong Township, told the Board that everyone here was in violation for taking an agenda before 7:30 p.m., as this was what he was told by the Deputy Clerk, he was not able to have a copy when he came in earlier today and that it would be available to him at 7:30 p.m. Deputy Clerk Tammy Lynn offered to respond.

Mrs. Lynn told Mr. Shandor and the Board that he was informed that the agenda is usually completed by 12 noon the day of the meeting and is available to the public before the meeting begins. As far as his request to have an agenda earlier in the day it would be denied. She explained to him and the Board that is the current practice due to past situations when an agenda had been distributed prior to a meeting and changes/deletions occurred before the final agenda was presented for the meeting. She was informed by her predecessor that created misinformation in the local newspaper. The Board stated that they were unaware of this practice and see no problem releasing the agenda the day of the meeting. However, they wanted a notice included on the agenda that it may be subject to change. Mr. Shandor thanked the Board for the revised option.

Gina Bertoline, Washington Boro told the Board that as a Morris Canal committee member, she wanted them to know the importance the Canal affords to all areas of the county. She specifically pointed out areas on the county map that could be potential areas to preserve the canal. She also noted the areas could allow some municipalities without a lot of land to provide Parks or recreations sites.

Ms. Bertoline concluded that there is public interest and concern to maintain the heritage and history of the Morris Canal in Warren County. She thanked the Board for listening to her concerns.

**RESOLUTION 246-03**

On motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. DiMaio, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held on April 16, 2003.

**RESOLUTION TO PAY BILLS FOR MASTER VOUCHER NUMBER 2003 - 15.**

**Be and it is hereby resolved** that Master Voucher Certificate **For Certification/Ratification for Payment No. 2003-15 dated April 16, 2003** in the amount of **\$655,132.80** including bills and investments, is approved subject to the review of the vouchers By the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

**MINUTES****APRIL 16, 2003****2003-15                      \$ 655,132.80****GRAND TOTAL                \$ 655,132.80**

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

Tammy M. Lynn      Deputy Clerk

ROLL CALL: Mr. DiMaio yes, Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Doherty yes.

On motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. DiMaio, there was a Recommendation for appointment of a regular member to the WC (PEQUEST RIVER) MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY to Chad Chamberlain to fill White Township vacancy of J. Peter Delgado, term to expire 02/01/05.

Mr. Gardner commented that contrary to comments earlier, he still believes that this individual will provide the services needed as a member to this authority.

Mr. DiMaio stated in future when a Municipal Appointment position is open, he wants the local municipality to submit applications for the Boards review and final decision.

ROLL CALL: Mr. DiMaio yes, Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Doherty yes.

Under reports and comments, County Administrator Steve Marvin presented Hiring Requests from the WC Library for One (1) fulltime Sr. Library Assistant position and the vacancy was due to a recent resignation, in the WC Road Department for three (3) Seasonal Laborer positions which were approved in the 2003 Budget, and in the WC Planning Department for two (2) Seasonal Planning Aides which were approved in the 2003 Budget. The Board agreed.

Mr. Marvin distributed the Human Service Department, Phase I Reorganization Report. He reminded them that this is for internal review and not subject to Open Public Records Release. Mr. Marvin explained the intention is to implement portions of the plan at the May 14, 2003 regular meeting.

Mr. Marvin told the Board that he just received another request from the Sheriff to meet in executive session. He distributed the request to the Board. Mr. Marvin stated that the requests seem above and beyond what the Board agreed to at the last regular meeting. He asked the Board if they would like to meet with the Sheriff and reminded them he will away that week.

Mr. Gardner responded that it is not necessary to discuss this issue next week. He has received contacts from the Sheriff and offered to meet with him personally.

Under Freeholder comments, Mr. DiMaio reported that he will be going to Trenton to attend the DEP Commissioners Highlands issues meeting.

Mr. Gardner reported that he was informally notified about some state FY 2004 budget proposal cuts for WC Rutgers' Cooperative Extension and New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. He will report further, when more information becomes known to him. He also thanked Mr. Dech and presenters for the information provided during the work session tonight.

Mr. Doherty commented that during his door to door visits with the citizens of Warren County, he continues to hear it is harder and harder to live in NJ. Some of the older property owners are moving out, they cannot afford the Education Tax. He explained sometimes it is hard for him to agree to budget items, when he sees it as a opportunity to help offset some of the other taxes incurred by county property owners.

Under closing public comments, Bob Shandor, Lopatcong Township, told the Board that discussion began in March this year to get the Open Space, Land Preservation Bond Ordinance

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introduced. There are many property owners shaking their heads, wondering if they should sell to developers if they didn't receive anything by April 9th. He asked the Board when is this going to happen.

Mr. Gardner responded that he inspected all the properties and recommends introducing the Bond.

Mr. Doherty stated that it will be introduced in the near future.

Mr. DiMaio commented that he was ready in December 2002, unfortunately the weather cancelled that meeting. He looks forward to introducing the Bond Ordinance as soon as it can be processed properly.

Mr. Marvin explained that the CFO is required to prepare a supplemental debt statement and he will need to know if the Director wants this on the agenda for April 23, 2003. He reminded the Board that he will be away and Director Doherty will need to call Pete Houck directly to begin the process.

Mr. Shandor concluded that he has tried to work with this Board for the last two years, it has been nothing but delay, now he is going to solicit daily until he knows this will be ready for the next meeting.

Mr. Shandor then told the Board that he was upset by the CFO's comments made at the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding county financing of farm lands acquisitions. He went to Trenton, gathered the information which confirms it is legal and within the law, and he delivered an information packet to each of the Freeholders to review. He described his 20 plus years of service as Lopatcong Mayor, member of the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners and many other Boards over the years. He sees that this Board has done everything it can to delay land acquisitions, in addition he reminded the Board that every tract of land is presented to the Board who has final approval.

After some discussion between Mr. Shandor and the Board, Mr. Doherty thanked him for sharing his experiences and concerns.

There were no press comments or questions.

On motion by Mr. DiMaio, seconded by Mr. Gardner the meeting was adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. DiMaio yes, Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Doherty yes.

**ATTESTED TO:**

***Tammy M. Lynn, Deputy Clerk***