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Highlands Council Hires New Chief Counsel

CHESTER, N.J. — At its most recent meeting, the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council voted to approve the hiring of Andrew R. Davis, as Chief Counsel. Davis has 30 years of experience specializing in land-use, environmental and regulatory law in both the private and public sectors, including five years as Director of Land Use Management and Legal Affairs at the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission.

“Andrew’s background in land-use and environmental law combined with his experience applying this expertise in a regional planning context with the Meadowlands Commission make him an ideal candidate for this role,” said Jim Rilee, Highlands Council Chairman. “We look forward to working with him.”

Davis joins the Highlands Counsel staff most recently from Paulus, Sokolowski & Sartor, LLC, an engineering, architectural and environmental consulting firm, where he held the role of Vice President and General Counsel. His background also includes significant experience with the state of New Jersey including the role of Assistant Counsel to the Governor of New Jersey (Gov. Whitman), and positions with the Attorney General’s Office (Division of Law, Environmental Section) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation. Davis is a member of the Board of Directors and past Chairman of the New Jersey State Bar Association Land Use Law Section. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of New Jersey Future.

Davis holds a BA in Political Science from Tulane University, a JD from Tulane Law School and is admitted to practice law in New Jersey and Louisiana. He has published numerous articles and is a sought-after speaker on the subjects of land use and redevelopment. His published articles include,

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“Case Law since the Highlands Act,” which appeared in the *New Jersey Law Journal* in October 2011, and a commentary, “A Fix for the Highlands Problem,” which was included in the November 2011 issue.

“We were fortunate to have a number of highly qualified candidates come forward eager to support the mission of the Highlands Council,” said Gene Feyl, Executive Director of the Highlands Council. “Andrew’s experience and credentials stood out and we look forward to the contributions we know he will make.”

Also at the March meeting, the Council received a report from the most recent Highlands Development Credit [HDC] Bank Board meeting at which the Board voted to approve the purchase of HDCs allocated to four property owners in Hunterdon, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren Counties, completing the fifth round of acquisition consideration in the Initial Purchase Program. An additional offer to a property owner in Hunterdon County was approved at the Bank’s November meeting. If closed, the fifth round deals will result in the preservation of an additional 193.58 acres in the Highlands. These offers represent an investment of \$1,516,000 in land preservation in the Highlands Preservation Area. Since its inception in 2009, the HDC Bank has permanently protected 308 acres, with offers pending that would bring the total to 467 acres.

The Council also approved the submission of the 2012 Annual Report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the governing body and the chief executive officer of each municipality and county in the Highlands Region. The Report will be submitted as prescribed and published to the Council’s website on or before March 31 as required by the Highlands Act.

Actions taken by the Council today will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes.

Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at: <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/about/calend/> (click on March 21 meeting date).

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