



State of New Jersey

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Highlands Council Supports Comprehensive Planning Efforts for Southwest Shore of Budd Lake

CHESTER, N.J. — In support of efforts to protect and revitalize an area along the southwestern shore of Budd Lake in Mount Olive Township, Morris County, the Highlands Council has approved a Redevelopment Area Designation that includes 17 parcels near and adjacent to the lake. Through its planning work, Mount Olive Township hopes to improve existing conditions in the area and create an environment that will induce reinvestment, while being protective of natural resources.

The properties that will be the focus of planning efforts comprise approximately 16 acres that include business and retail sites, residential units, a number of vacant lots, the Budd Lake beach area and former municipal complex. Given the proximity of Budd Lake to the project area, redevelopment planning will focus sharply on lake management, scenic resource management, stormwater management, and critical habitat protection, as well as sustainable economic development, and transportation.

Highlands Council approval of a Redevelopment Area Designation is a prerequisite to obtaining a Highlands Preservation Area Approval (HPAA) with redevelopment waiver from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The municipality will then continue to work with Highlands Council staff to ensure land use standards and development plans for the area remain consistent with the goals and purposes of the Highland Act, within the framework of the HPAA.

“This section of Route 46 is already largely developed, but underutilized and not optimally designed,” notes Jim Rilee, Highlands Council Chairman. “Because the area lies entirely within the Preservation Area of the Highlands, the HPAA waiver is needed to address the challenges facing this area of Mount Olive. The Council was happy to support the Redevelopment Area Designation

because it ensures that planning and development efforts will be consistent with the requirements of the Highlands Act and the Regional Master Plan.”

The Redevelopment Area designation also includes grant funding of \$57,000 to complete planning activities associated with the designation, including development standards in compliance with the Highlands Redevelopment Area approval, stormwater management and water quality standards. Among other activities, the Township’s plans include:

- Visioning sessions for the Township Beach and contiguous four-acre vacant site as a center for lake-related activities and public amenities.
- Discussions with NJDOT regarding pedestrian safety improvements and development of a circulation plan across and along Route 46 to link residential neighborhoods to the lake area.
- New zoning for the proposed redevelopment area together with comprehensive site design standards (architectural, landscaping, signage, lighting).
- Develop a Lake Management manual to provide information and direction on Shoreland Protection, Water Quality, Scenic Resources, and Lake Watershed tiers pursuant to the Lake Management goals, policies and objectives of the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP).

“Mount Olive first envisioned this Redevelopment Area when working with staff to develop the municipality’s Petition for Plan Conformance, which was approved in 2011,” explains Gene Feyl, Highlands Council Executive Director. “The Township identified two areas for potential redevelopment at that time: one along Sand Shore Road and Route 46, which was approved by the Council later in 2011 and this area along the southwest shore of Budd Lake. We are delighted to continue this productive working relationship.”

In other business, the Council also voted to award a contract to create a Highlands Functional Ecosystem Valuation Model and Forest Conservation Guidance, which fulfills requirements of the Highlands Act and RMP regarding habitat and resource management. Additional administrative resolutions were also passed. Meeting materials, including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at:

<http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/about/calend/> (click on September 19 meeting).

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

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