



State of New Jersey
Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
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Acting Chairman

EILEEN SWAN
Executive Director

April 21, 2011

The Honorable Robert Giordano
Township of Independence
286 Route 46
P.O. Box 164
Great Meadows, New Jersey 07838

Subject: Petition for Plan Conformance
2009 Plan Conformance Grant: Module 7
Township of Independence - Grant #09-033-011-2112

Dear Mayor Giordano:

Thank you for your municipality's submission of a Petition for Plan Conformance. On behalf of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council), I am pleased to advise you that your municipality's Petition is Administratively Complete. Within 10 days of the date of this letter, the Highlands Council will post the complete Petition on the Highlands Council website at: www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/planconformance/.

The process of substantive review of the Petition will now begin. We anticipate that this phase will require 45-90 days, culminating in preparation of a Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report. This Draft Report will provide a detailed assessment of the Petition for Plan Conformance and its level of consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP). The Draft Report will be provided to the municipality for review and consideration, with a municipal response period to follow, prior to any further official action. The Highlands Council notes that the municipality did not request any RMP Updates or Map Adjustments; however please be aware that the opportunity to request either will continue throughout the Plan Conformance process.

Please be advised that a finding of Administrative Completeness does not preclude the Highlands Council from requesting additional information, should it prove necessary during the process of substantive review, to clarify, complete, correct, or modify a Petition in the interest of ultimately achieving Plan Conformance.

Please note that this letter has been copied to all individuals on the enclosed Plan Conformance Service List, which was developed based on the most current municipal information available to the Highlands Council. The list should contain the names and contact information for the specific individuals designated by the municipality to receive copies of all direct communications from the Highlands Council regarding Plan Conformance. Please review the Plan Conformance Service List for inclusion of all appropriate individuals and for accuracy of contact information. To the extent feasible, we would prefer to send copies of the original

paper communication to Service List representatives by e-mail. Please be aware that the Service List will become a public document, however, and should not contain personal e-mails that individuals may wish to keep private. Should modifications to the Service List be necessary, please forward the requested changes by e-mail to your Highlands Council Staff Liaison, whose name and contact information is provided below. Please be advised that the Service List should be limited to municipal officials, staff representatives, and/or municipal professionals responsible for guiding or assisting in the Plan Conformance process. All other interested parties will have access to municipal Plan Conformance reports, status, and Petition materials via postings and tracking sheets to be incorporated into the Highlands Council website. The Service List is a subset of the complete municipal contact list maintained by the Highlands Council, which will be updated by the municipality on-line. Separate instructions have been provided to your Municipal Clerk for this update process (copy enclosed).

We are also pleased to advise that to the extent that you have not already done so, you may now submit 2009 Plan Conformance Grant invoices for Modules 5, 6 and 7 not to exceed \$15,500, and accumulated through the date of submittal of your municipality's Petition for Plan Conformance. All invoices should be grouped by Module and must be broken down by task, employee, date completed, hours spent, and applicable billable rate. **In accordance with the Plan Conformance Grant Agreement, the total amount of the requested reimbursement for each module should not exceed the base amount established under the Plan Conformance Grant Program. Authorization for excess expenditures must be approved by the Highlands Council Executive Director prior to incurring any such expenses. Any overages that occur without prior written authorization, inconsistent with the grant agreement, may not be honored.** Please note that at this time, work on the Plan Conformance process should temporarily be suspended, other than responses to specific information requests from the Highlands Council (regarding any module), or any Highlands Council approved work within an authorized amount of grant funding, or from COAH (regarding Module 3 costs up to the amount approved).

A Highlands Council Staff Liaison has been assigned to each municipality to coordinate interactions with municipal staff and consultants on any issues regarding Petitions for Plan Conformance. The Staff Liaison for your municipality is Keri Bencoter, Resource Management Specialist, who may be reached by telephone at (908) 879-6737 ext. 129, or via e-mail at keri.bencoter@highlands.state.nj.us. If you have questions or concerns regarding grants or invoices, please contact Herbert August, Manager of Grants Administration at (908) 879-6737 ext. 105, or via e-mail at herbert.august@highlands.state.nj.us. Should you or other elected or appointed officials have any other questions, I will also continue to be available to you for all Highlands matters and can be reached at (908) 879-6737 ext. 101, or via e-mail at cilcen.swan@highlands.state.nj.us.

Thank you for partnering with the Highlands Council to protect the unique qualities of the Highlands Region. We recognize the significant time and effort that have gone into development of your Petition for Plan Conformance and look forward to working with you to ensure a successful outcome.

Yours sincerely,



Eileen Swan
Executive Director

enc: Instructions for On-Line Municipal Information Updates

c: Plan Conformance Service List (without enclosure)

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