

WARREN COUNTY MORRIS CANAL COMMITTEE
c/o Warren County Department of Land Preservation
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179
Oxford, NJ 07863

November 10th, 2025
MINUTES

Call to Order: Mr. Lee opened the meeting at 5:33 PM.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Charles Fineran, Dave Detrick, Tim Roth, James Lee III and Paul Tarlowe

Members Absent: Randy Piazza Sr.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Roy

Minutes: Mr. Fineran motioned to approve the 10/6/25 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Roth. All voted in favor. Motion passed, minutes accepted.

Public Comment (on agenda items): None.

Correspondence/Communication:

There was discussion about a memo sent by Corey Tierney regarding the reorganization of the MCC under the Cultural and Heritage Board and as well as the email responses sent by Mr. Detrick and Mr. Roth. Mr. Lee also thanked Mr. Tierney for replying to the emails as they were received although he was out of the office. Ms. Roy clarified that the goal behind reorganizing MCC as a subcommittee would be to maintain the operation of the group with separate meetings and projects and to minimize onerous approval processes, a concern that was shared in the email comments.

Mr. Detrick asked if this change in structure would be taking place immediately in the New Year. Ms. Roy answered that this process will take more time and she does not anticipate this change taking effect by January 1st, 2026.

Mr. Detrick shared his concern about losing the staff knowledge about the various projects around the canal. There is discussion about maintaining lines of communication between the canal committee and department staff regarding projects.

Mr. Detrick asked if the plan is for the Cultural and Heritage Division to be housed at Bread Lock Park. Ms. Roy answered that yes the Cultural and Heritage Division will be based at the new Headquarters building.

Mr. Roth asked for clarification of what Ms. Roy described as an onerous approval process. Roy clarified that the issue of onerous approvals was connected to concerns raised if project approvals would need multiple department approvals. This will not be the case as the Cultural and Heritage Board also operates within the Department of Land Preservation.

Mr. Roth shared his concern that the group will lose their autonomy with this restructuring. Ms. Roy stated that this is why Mr. Tierney is seeking the status of a subcommittee, to preserve the autonomy of the group.

There was discussion about the current state of the Cultural and Heritage Board and the MCC and the time and needs of restructuring that will take place.

Mr. Fineran mentioned that there is overlap between cultural arts events and the opportunities to educate visitors about Warren County History.

Mr. Detrick asked if a meeting between the MCC and Mr. Tierney would be needed soon to discuss the plans. Mr. Lee answered that he would be open to a meeting, but also believes that Mr. Tierney's response to written feedback has been very prompt and thorough and would be best until bylaws are drafted for review.

Mr. Roth asked if the billing and handling of the budget would still be within the department. Ms. Roy answered that will the tasks would be taken over by Mrs. Gina Rosseland and Mrs. Andrea Franks with the Cultural and Heritage Board.

There was discussion about planning department collaboration and new maps for the kiosks.

Mr. Detrick shared that he is grateful for Mr. Tierney's guidance and advocacy.

There was discussion about County staff roles and responsibilities.

Bills & Budget: Ms. Roy commented that the committee is on track to meet the budget.

Reports of Officers and Committees/Old Business/Land Preservation Project Updates:

Phillipsburg: Mr. Detrick reported that the graffiti on one of the new signs on Morris Canal Way was removed.

Pohatcong: Nothing to report.

Lopatcong/Plane 10 West/Lock Street: Ms. Roy reported that the second picnic table was added. Mr. Lee reported that there is a lot of trash at the meeting of Sycamore Landing and Lock Street.

Strykers Road: Mr. Detrick asked if the Youth Corps could trim the canal basin over the winter. Ms. Roy answered that the canal basin would be on the winter maintenance list for the NJ Youth Corps. Mr. Roth mentioned that there is a broken beam on the fence that they discovered while painting last month.

Port Warren/Plane 9 West: Ms. Roy requested an update about the pedestrian bridge from the Public Works Department, but had yet to receive any new information. Mr. Lee stated that he would like to discuss the parking situation at the bottom of Plane 9 when the appropriate time comes.

Ms. Roy reported that Colliers has approved the Tailrace Exit and Turbine Chamber improvement project and are working on the bid package. Ms. Roy reported that the two barns

on the Miller Property were removed for safety reasons, and that the stones from the walls and foundations were left. The stones may possibly be used for the Tailrace/Turbine chamber project, to satisfy the SHPO request for local stone.

Mr. Lee asked if the County had purchased the Miller house. Ms. Roy answered that the demolitions and environmental cleanup efforts are all part of the process to gain authorization to purchase the house.

Mr. Lee asked about the plans to rework the driveway plan, and if an archeology survey would be required. Ms. Roy had not received an answer. Ms. Roy reports that the plan is to request a pause to the work on the section of driveway to the Miller house so the rest of the work can continue. There was discussion about county access to the property and the driveway plans.

Mr. Detrick asked if the County has plans for the Miller house. Ms. Roy reported that based on the advanced deterioration and major structural issues may require demolition of the house.

Mr. Detrick asked if the construction of a new public facilities building was still within the plan for this property. Ms. Roy answered that it is not in the near future, but remains part of the master plan.

Mr. Detrick asked if the steam train owned by Ken Miller had been removed from the basement. Mr. Lee answered that he believes the train was removed along with other items.

Ms. Roy reported that she did not have a TAPP grant update.

Bread Lock Park: Mr. Roth reported that 55 people visited the park on the WC History Trail Day. There was discussion about the success of the History Trail Day.

Ms. Roy reported that the plans for the nature center and park headquarters projects will be going out to bid soon.

Mr. Lee asked if the barn door was fixed. Mr. Roy answered that Justin Tibbetts and his crew fixed the door.

Mr. Detrick mentioned that there was some excavation work being completed near the nature center and the shop.

Mr. Roth asked if access to the workshop would be interrupted while the building is under construction. Ms. Roy answered that most likely, with the whole site being a construction site, access will not be allowed, though details have not been discussed yet.

Mr. Detrick shared that he was told that Mr. Tierney would give the group substantial warning before access would be restricted.

Sigler Property: Ms. Roy reported that the environmental report came back with no issues, and the county will proceed with the closing.

Meadow Breeze Park Museum: Mr. Detrick reported that the pedestals are installed and are ready to have the signs added.

Port Colden/Plane 6 West: Mr. Roth reported that there was a WCPF work day which focused on sign cleaning, mowing, and trail clearing.

Port Murray: Mr. Roth reported that a sign as Port Murray was very generic, which could be useful to place at other sites without specific topics to present. Mr. Detrick requested new locks for the Port Murray access gates.

Rockport: Nothing to report.

Florence Kuipers: Mr. Roth reported that pedestals are ready to have the signs added.

Bilby Road: Nothing to report.

Events/Education/Public Awareness: Mr. Lee stated that there are no more events planned for this year. Mr. Lee reported that there was a Youth Corps Tour of Plane 9W on Monday Nov. 3rd.

New Business:

Ms. Roy reported that the owner of the Port Murray Boat Basin has expressed interest in donating that property to the County. Ms. Roy stated that issues related to the dam structure will be investigated that the Board of Rec is in support of pursuing this property subject to those investigations.

Mr. Roth mentioned that this would be great for access to the basin. Mr. Detrick mentioned if the purchase cannot go through, then requesting a public access agreement may be worth pursuing.

Public Comment: None.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held virtually on December 8th, 2025 at 5:30PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Fineran made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Roth. All in favor. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 6:40PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Olivia Stettler

Staff Representative