

HUDSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RE:

PUBLIC HEARING : TRANSCRIPT OF
OF THE :
HUDSON COUNTY BOARD OF : PROCEEDINGS
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS :
:

O P E N S E S S I O N

Hudson County
Administration Building,
County Commissioners Chambers
567 Pavonia Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey
Tuesday, January 21, 2025
6:00 p.m.

I N R E: GREEN ACRES BIRD SANCTUARY

B E F O R E:

ANTHONY ROMANO, Chairman
YRAIDA APONTE-LIPSKI, Commissioner
ROBERT BASELICE, Commissioner
FANNY CEDEÑO, Commissioner
WILLIAM O'DEA, Commissioner
JERRY WALKER, Commissioner

A L S O P R E S E N T:

ABRAHAM ANTUN, County Administrator
WILLIE ORTIZ, County Commissioner Clerk
SAM SCHROEDER, PP, AICP, Division of Planning
KRISTOPHER A. KEMPER, Suburban Design
Consulting Engineers

Reported By: Shari Cathey, CCR, RPR

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner
2 Aponte-Lipski.

3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Here.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

5 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Here.

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

7 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Here.

8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

9 Commissioner Kopacz. Commissioner O'Dea.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

12 Commissioner Walker. Chairman Romano.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We need one more.

14 Jerry?

15 THE CLERK: We're fine. I'm sorry.
16 One more. Hudson County is seeking funding through
17 the state of New Jersey Green Acres program for
18 improvements at James J. Braddock Park located at
19 9003 Bergenline Avenue at the intersection of
20 Bergenline Avenue and JFK Boulevard East in the
21 Township of North Bergen, 07047.

22 Copies of this notice were posted on the
23 County Commissioner's bulletin board and filed with
24 the Office of the Hudson County Clerk. Copies were
25 both sent to the Jersey Journal and the Star Ledger.

1 Hudson County proposes to renovate the
2 following facilities at James J. Braddock Park,
3 walking trails with signage, guardrails, and bird
4 sanctuary.

5 Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue.

7 THE CLERK: It's now for the
8 presenter.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

10 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, if I may,
11 I'd like to have Sam Schroeder from the Planning
12 Department who will lead and introduce our overview.

13 MR. SCHROEDER: Good evening,
14 Commissioners and members of the public. My name is
15 Sam Schroeder. I am a planner with the Division of
16 Planning here at Hudson County. I will be walking
17 us through Green Acres Bird Sanctuary overview. I
18 will also be sharing the presentation with Kris
19 Kemper of Suburban Consulting Engineers, the firm
20 who looked at the concept of the meeting. Finally,
21 I will wrap up this hearing with our impact
22 assessment for the public.

23 This hearing is for funding from Green
24 Acres Park Development Program for the bird
25 sanctuary in Braddock Park. This is the area

1 between River Road and Boulevard East in North
2 Bergen. With this grant application, there's no
3 local match. At this time, I will be passing it
4 over to Kris Kemper. By the way, thank you both.
5 We'll keep this program short.

6 MR. KEMPER: Hello. My name is Kris
7 Kemper. I am a project manager, a licensed
8 landscape architect, and a certified arborist. I
9 work for Suburban Consulting Engineers in preparing
10 the concept plan for the Braddock Park Bird
11 Sanctuary.

12 So briefly, I'll just give you a quick
13 overview of the project goals. Our job is basically
14 to assess existing site conditions for feasibility
15 of developing a trail on the property, focus on
16 pedestrian and cyclist access, provide a
17 traversable, safe surface that can carry people to
18 Boulevard East and River Road, maintain existing
19 habitat and the wooded feel of the site as best as
20 possible by minimizing disturbance, planning
21 additional native species and appropriate areas and
22 reducing invasives where feasible. And then
23 finally, just increasing site security and safety.

24 So the process, we had an initial kickoff
25 meeting with the County. We got some background

1 information. Then we went out in February, and we
2 did a site visit to document existing conditions.
3 I'll just go through a couple quick pictures to show
4 the general conditions of the site. I mean, it's a
5 heavily sloped site. It's about six and a half
6 acres. Grade changes are anywhere from about 120
7 feet to 170 feet between the topography to deal with
8 and getting down from Boulevard East to River Road.

9 So these first two images here, this is up
10 along Boulevard East on the left side. It's an
11 accessible viewing platform. There's existing
12 double gates here that will probably make the most
13 sense to start any trail through the site. This
14 view on the right side is just from the existing
15 southern platform. There's another set of gates
16 here which provides access from that platform into
17 the Bird Sanctuary area.

18 This first picture on the left just shows
19 the general condition between the two existing
20 viewing platforms in the south and north end of the
21 site. As you can see, it's very overgrown. There's
22 a lot of invasive vines such as kudzu and Japanese
23 honeysuckle, some dead trees, a lot of issues with
24 littering here on site.

25 There is some existing infrastructure on

1 the site. There's some stairways, little viewing
2 areas, but all of this stuff is in very poor
3 condition, deteriorated after many years of being
4 exposed to the elements. It's not very visible.
5 We're not seeing people.

6 The view on the right is up here in sort
7 of the northwest corner of the site. It's the
8 outfall from the bank at Braddock Park that was
9 recently reconstructed. More views of that area.
10 It was cleared. It was paved with gravel. There
11 was some slope stabilization in there from the
12 little stream. The image on the right is an
13 existing gate from Bulls Ferry Road. That's just,
14 again, looking from that general area that's been
15 flattened out with the gravel.

16 Just looking out across the site, you can
17 see it's pretty open with a couple large shade
18 trees, but you can see, once again, the vines have
19 sort of overgrown everything. Here's another view
20 of some existing stairs that are out there, once
21 again, overgrown by vegetation, very poor condition.
22 Not safe. There is an existing little observation
23 platform that was constructed at some point. Once
24 again, just deteriorated, old pitches, old railing.

25 Another image on the right showing the

1 problem with littering out there. It's definitely
2 an issue. A lot of people that are accessing the
3 site are just leaving their garbage as they traverse
4 the river. And then this is a view along River
5 Road, sort of at the southeast corner of the site,
6 and then just a general view of the sidewalk along
7 River Road. This is where the stream empties into a
8 catch base and drainage structure along River Road,
9 and just more views of the sidewalk along River
10 Road.

11 So, you know, we went out there to the
12 site, we assessed conditions, we made observations,
13 and then we met with the County once again, and we
14 discussed our recommendations based off that initial
15 site visit. Basically, take advantage of the
16 existing topography and the existing informal
17 pathways that people have already been using on the
18 site. It will require the least amount of grading
19 and disturbance.

20 Create small nodes along the trail to be
21 places for gathering, people to rest. Observations
22 of nature, nice views across the river. Install a
23 prefabricated pedestrian bridge at the outfall
24 stream as it requires no more disturbance other than
25 footings. Create plaza spaces near the existing

1 surface that shows off Bulls Ferry Road. Improve
2 the existing impromptu trail between the northern
3 and southern viewing platforms. Select removal of
4 vegetation along trails, plaza spaces, fruit trees,
5 plants, and leaves to mitigate hazards. There are
6 some dead trees on the site, but we're not
7 recommending that all of them be removed. It's more
8 so, you know, secure ones that are hazardous because
9 we use dead trees for the ecosystem purpose.
10 Provide a shelter, plant additional native trees,
11 understory shrubs, and sort of plaza spaces. And
12 then create a trailhead toward the southeast corner
13 of River Road.

14 So we developed three concepts which we
15 shared with the County, basically a low, medium, and
16 high cost. Discussed it, and then basically refined
17 it into the final concept plan that you'll see on
18 the screen. It mentions everything I just talked
19 about, creating a trailhead down along River Road
20 and sort of the flattest area there. You know,
21 maybe it has some type of entrance portal which
22 catches people's eyes, draws them into the area.
23 Definitely need to improve the sidewalks to make it
24 more accessible and easier to walk on. Maybe
25 fortify the edge a little bit with some holders or

1 other structures.

2 Provide seating, interpretive signage,
3 maybe you want to put in like a bike repair station,
4 something like that, and then just continue up the
5 slope of the site towards John F. Kennedy Boulevard
6 East. The pathway alignment, like I said, sort of
7 based off of what people have already found to be
8 easiest ways to access the site and based off of the
9 existing grading we have. We're proposing two sort
10 of, we call them observation roads along the trail.
11 It would be spots where you have the best views.

12 There's already some pitches and things
13 out there, so really just revamping those areas.
14 And then once you get up towards the west corner of
15 the site, towards Bulls Ferry Road, creating another
16 sort of closet space there. It is a nice area to be
17 right beside the stream. It's -- you know, we're
18 proposing basically the same stuff that you have
19 down at the other trailhead along River Road. So
20 seating, signage, bike racks, maybe a bike repair
21 station.

22 And then also there's an existing service
23 gate there, so you want to pave the road with that
24 with some type of hard pavement, probably asphalt.
25 It provides a really good observation point for the

1 use of that, you know, beyond the site and
2 surveilling the entire area. And then just like I
3 said, creating a trail connection between the
4 existing border and some of the outer roads. And
5 then just other things that aren't really
6 graphically shown on the plan is we're also, you
7 know, suggesting site lighting. Maybe it's solar
8 lighting instead of, you know, background wired
9 lighting.

10 There was also a discussion of Wi-Fi in
11 certain areas maybe towards the trailheads, and so
12 maybe we're also trying to get some emergency call
13 boxes out along the trail for safety, really.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Good job. Thank
15 you. Keep doing it.

16 MR. KEMPER: And then this was the
17 call system, you know, conceptual call system at
18 this time based off of what we know. Obviously, it
19 hasn't changed.

20 MR. SCHROEDER: One more slide here.
21 I will add that with this cost estimate, we are
22 applying for \$2,099,000, which matches the 201,000
23 for our application.

24 So the last slide here is our summary of
25 the environmental impact assessment. There's three

1 things to read into the record for the transcript.
2 The project will be carefully designed to mitigate
3 erosion issues in the area. The project will
4 include planting the area with native trees and
5 plants to help improve the existing bird habitat and
6 stabilize the slope terrain to reduce the risk of
7 erosion.

8 The short-term impact is to make the space
9 accessible to the public and to improve the existing
10 habitat. Long-term, this area will reflect the
11 natural habitat of the region, provide safe public
12 access, and encourage urban environmental
13 stewardship into the future.

14 The mitigation measures, first of all,
15 there was a tree inventory conducted by Harbor Pro,
16 Inc., this past summer, which provided insight on
17 the current tree condition and extensive invasive
18 overgrowth. This proposal does not seek to disrupt
19 trees in good condition. The project will be
20 applying rules and regulations from the NJDEP.

21 And the alternative to this proposal is no
22 action. And the no-action alternative would result
23 in the bird sanctuary area continuing to be unusable
24 and closed to the public. This no-action
25 alternative would allow for the unused park area to

1 fall into farther disrepair, with increasing
2 concerns about litter, erosion, invasive vegetation,
3 and public safety from unauthorized entry. Thank
4 you all for your time.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Very
6 good presentation by both of you.

7 MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Mr. Clerk, continue
9 please.

10 THE CLERK: At this time, if any
11 member of the public would like to address the
12 Board, this is the time to do so.

13 MS. BENSON: Hi, can you hear me?

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

15 MS. BENSON: Amazing. Okay. Great.

16 First off, I'd like to thank the County
17 Commissioners for proposing an application for a
18 Green Acres grant. I was so excited to see the idea
19 of native plant way stations and providing safe
20 access for park-goers and bicyclists between these
21 two major avenues.

22 Unfortunately, the plan that's being
23 proposed doesn't seem to take into account a myriad
24 of factors that would essentially make it dangerous
25 and environmentally unsound. As we know, in

1 December of 2023, a rock slide occurred in North
2 Bergen, causing serious damage to cars below similar
3 cliffs because of recent renovations. The area had
4 been renovated, and NBC News of NBC New York
5 reported the building had a metal fence and
6 retaining wall put in place to try to prevent the
7 rock from sliding down the cliff during heavy rain,
8 but that part of the fence failed.

9 The mature tree roots, including the
10 non-natives on these cliffs, are essential to
11 maintaining the structural integrity of them. The
12 installation of a path on this property would
13 require a massive undermining of the cliff structure
14 due to the removal of so much non-native and
15 invasive vegetation. In the application, you state,
16 quote, the project will include replanting the area
17 with native trees and plants to help improve the
18 existing bird habitat and stabilize the sloping
19 terrain to reduce the risk of erosion. In the
20 concept drawings, we see very few and far between
21 installations.

22 The budget you would need to entirely
23 re-habitat the undeserved area would be far more
24 than the Green Acres can grant, especially if
25 there's no match from the County. Invasive plants

1 without aggressive removal tactics will only return.
2 This is a question that was mentioned at the end.
3 What are your invasive removal strategies? Leaving
4 areas completely barren is more dangerous. In
5 addition, to say in the same application that,
6 quote, this project does not impact any undisturbed
7 areas and is, quote, one of the only undeveloped
8 areas of the park is in conflict. The fact that the
9 area --

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Excuse me. Excuse
11 me.

12 MS. BENSON: I haven't finished yet.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You have three
14 minutes. We'll let you know when the three minutes
15 come along. You'll have one minute left. Three
16 minutes. You've got a minute left.

17 MS. BENSON: Okay. I will reclaim
18 the time that was spoken over me. But the fact that
19 the area has been left alone for many years is the
20 reason why, quote, from your application, currently
21 the site is occupied by a variety of bird species.
22 Myself and many here love the concept of the native
23 plant way stations, but these small habitats will
24 not serve the creatures occupying this area, plus
25 any construction will cause them to flee their homes

1 due to them being destroyed, completely mitigating
2 the purpose of the project.

3 I'd like to also contest that, quote, all
4 long-term maintenance will be conducted by the
5 dedicated park and forestry facility maintenance
6 team. As we have seen, park workers are already
7 tough on time to care for the current park greenery.

8 For example, they were barely able to assist us in
9 watering our small native plant garden nearby the
10 lake with access to a hose nearby.

11 Has the County considered how and where
12 watering will happen in an area nearby no government
13 buildings? I please urge the Commissioners and team
14 behind this project to go back to the drawing board
15 and to say in your application that, quote, no
16 alternative sites were considered. Why aren't
17 alternatives considered?

18 THE CLERK: Time is up.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Time is up. Time
20 is up, ma'am. Time is up. Thank you. Next
21 speaker. Thank you. Next speaker.

22 MR. PEREZ: Good evening, everyone.
23 I am impressed to be speaking on behalf of the
24 Hudson County Tree Allies. I'll be reading a
25 statement from the founder, Natalie Limon (ph). So,

1 my name is Natalie Limon. I am a Jersey City
2 resident and a founding member of the Hudson County
3 Treaty Allies. Our group stands in staunch
4 opposition to the removal of mature trees anywhere
5 in our community as a matter of public health,
6 environmental justice, and independent local
7 wildlife.

8 While would-be tree cutters, always
9 promise new trees, mature trees scrub 90 times more
10 carbon than the juvenile trees. They scrub ten
11 times more air pollution and provide a hundred times
12 more leaf cover, which translates to shade and
13 temperature reduction. Finally, mature trees
14 support more wildlife, which are widely displaced by
15 their removal.

16 These facts should make it clear that the
17 promise of planting new trees means very little to
18 the living beings that are occupying them now. Our
19 County's overall tree canopy is already insufficient
20 to combat the heat, iron, and the venom and support
21 our population with clean air. Don't mess with it
22 further and hope for the ignorance of the people in
23 promising something better.

24 There is nothing better than an old tree.
25 Get smart, be creative, find a way to incorporate

1 clean air design. Our group is working with local
2 governments to make this law, but until then, we
3 will not stop watching and advocating. Please take
4 a stand and set a precedent for all surrounding
5 communities that we can all be proud of.

6 In addition, a note, dogwood and Black
7 Locust have listed the removal of your document as
8 invasive and non-native trees. These are actually
9 important native trees and their inclusion on your
10 list is both suspect and disingenuous. Also, it
11 doesn't make sense to destroy bird habitats to then
12 create bird habitats. That is all.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you so much.
14 Next speaker.

15 MR. BLOOMBERG: Thanks so much. I
16 really appreciate you guys making this available on
17 Zoom for us. I'm a County resident, avid cyclist,
18 and I have a lot of concerns about this project. On
19 the web site, the objective of the project stated
20 that this is being done to meet the demand for
21 additional improved nature trails at the park. I'd
22 like to know what information and data the County
23 used in arriving at this assessment and if you can
24 share it with us.

25 I'd also like to note this keeps getting

1 referred to as a bird sanctuary. Is it truly an
2 official bird sanctuary, or is that just kind of a
3 nickname for it and do different rules apply to
4 making changes to it as a result?

5 In describing the environment in the
6 project materials, it states the project is intended
7 to improve existing bird habitat, but how does the
8 removal of the majority of trees accomplish this, as
9 well as planting native species in what will be the
10 most highly traffic areas help wildlife out? You've
11 got the place right at the entrances, right at the
12 stopping points. That looks nice for people, but it
13 doesn't help the wildlife.

14 Why not plant native species in areas that
15 are a little bit more distanced than people and why
16 not limit the length of the nature trail and not
17 have it connect the River Road? There is another
18 alternative where you could say, if we're going to
19 move forward with this, have a smaller trail, have
20 it go in a loop.

21 What percentage of trees, dead, diseased,
22 non-native are expected to be removed? Will that
23 include the roots? Will an equal number of new
24 native species trees be introduced? And won't
25 removal of the trees increase erosion? As someone

1 already mentioned, right next door, you had a
2 landslide event that was pretty significant. The
3 overall length of the trail, what's the average
4 grade going to be? Do you really expect cyclists to
5 be able to ride up this thing? And how are
6 pedestrians going to be protected from cyclists who
7 are traveling downhill at what will likely be high
8 speeds?

9 What's the ongoing maintenance costs for
10 this? And is the town of North Bergen going to
11 contribute at all towards maintenance costs if this
12 is replacement property for the proposed preschool
13 that's in the park? Have there been any issues
14 reported with the current use of the space, such as
15 homeless encampments? And if that part is what's
16 behind this project, then what will be the
17 clear-cutting of a lot of the areas, like what you
18 did behind the football stadium? The environmental
19 assessment --

20 THE CLERK: Your time is up.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Next speaker.

22 MS. RAYWOOD: Hello. My name is
23 Margaret Raywood. I live actually just a few doors
24 away from this proposed area. I have a lot of the
25 same concerns that Mark raised. I'm particularly

1 concerned about the safety of access for this. The
2 intersection at Bulls Ferry Road and Boulevard East
3 is absolutely deadly. It's practically worth your
4 life just to try to make a turn there, and people
5 crossing that street there at that point, or even
6 anywhere in that vicinity between 79th Street and
7 Bulls Ferry, it's a treacherous street to try to
8 cross.

9 And the same thing is true on the bottom
10 end, at River Road. There will be no -- there's no
11 parking. You'd be asking potentially having people
12 stop their cars and dropping people off or picking
13 people up. I think that all of those access issues
14 are really critical. The safety, overall safety of
15 the placement of this, even though the idea of
16 encouraging more habitat, certainly as I'm a garden
17 designer, anything that involves native plants is
18 something very interesting to me, and I certainly
19 support that.

20 The idea of supporting our bird life is
21 fantastic. But the placement of this is very
22 concerning. There is very little visible access to
23 looking -- unless you are really standing there
24 looking over the wall, you're kind of in a blind
25 spot at every point going down that slope. The

1 slope, as you, as engineers understand, is extremely
2 difficult to navigate. Mark raises the issue about
3 bikes. I have the same concern. I can't imagine
4 allowing bikes on a trail that is such a steep
5 slope.

6 Who will do that maintenance? This is an
7 area that already suffers from kind of a hangout
8 propensity and always has, and between the trash,
9 the potential for fires, people hanging out, I have
10 some really serious security concerns. And given
11 the access issues, I'm not sure that this whole
12 project might not be better moved to certain other
13 parts of the park where there are already existing
14 trees, and we could augment those areas with
15 intensive planting that would encourage this idea of
16 wildlife and nature trails, which I think are all
17 highly commendable and certainly something to be
18 explored.

19 But I have very, very serious reservations
20 about this site serving the purpose that we all
21 would like to see it serve. I will tell some of my
22 neighbors here, I don't know how much you passed the
23 site recently, but this site for many, many years
24 has essentially been clear cut already at the top.
25 So there's already a lot of open space that needs to

1 be addressed for all those issues.

2 THE CLERK: Your time is up.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Before
4 the next speaker, the representative, Commissioner
5 Baselice, has asked that we table this off until he
6 has an in-person community meeting with him. So he
7 wants an in-person community meeting with him. So
8 we'll let Carol, would you like to say a few words.
9 Carol and Shiryn, and then, so it's going to be
10 tabled. Go ahead, Carol.

11 MS. CAROL: Hi. I just wanted to get
12 myself unmuted. Yes, thank you for having us
13 tonight. And all the points that were raised so far
14 are so valid and important to look at very
15 carefully. My purpose of being here tonight is
16 specifically to address the bird sanctuary. I was
17 looking at the environmental impact assessment and
18 number two, description of environment, let it be
19 wildlife.

20 The project is intended to improve the
21 existing bird habitat. Currently, the site is
22 occupied by a variety of bird species that can be
23 heard from the adjacent sidewalk. Our inventory
24 does not include wildlife species. However,
25 according to what I have heard, if there is

1 something from a snake, he's talking to this one
2 bird. I really think it should definitely be tabled
3 until, if this is truly a bird sanctuary, this could
4 be under protection, whether it's -- we won't know
5 unless we assess what birds are in there.

6 And we must understand that to crumble
7 this area of untended maintenance is a perfect bird
8 sanctuary. It provides habitat for not only birds,
9 but insects and other birds. So making it neat and
10 tidy is a disservice to a bird sanctuary, in this
11 case anyway. You say that you will create a better
12 bird sanctuary. I don't know if you can do that.

13 And what happens with all the noise and
14 construction that will occur while you're doing this
15 project? You know, birds will sit around and listen
16 to that, even if you disturb them. And what's
17 happening here, how are you going to do that work
18 when the birds are nesting with their little chicks?
19 You know, this has a lot of stuff that needs to be
20 addressed, and I appreciate you wanting to move it
21 on, and I very much appreciate being here. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You're welcome.
24 Thank you. And before I think Sharon comes on,
25 again, it's going to be an in-person meeting, but I

1 was just informed by one of the department heads
2 that this meeting has to come very soon, Bobby,
3 because there's a February 5th deadline for
4 submission. So Sharon, and then you can get
5 together. Bob. Bob, is it Bob first? Is it Bob? I
6 thought I shared your text, but then we'll wrap it
7 up.

8 MR. BOB: Hello?

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes, go ahead.

10 MR. BOB: Can you hear me?

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

12 MR. BOB: First, I'm glad that you're
13 doing this on Zoom. And I think that any meeting in
14 the future should be a hybrid meeting, not just an
15 in-person meeting. Yeah. And I'm concerned, I have
16 many of the same concerns of all the speakers that
17 spoke before me.

18 I would like to see a hiking trail,
19 certainly not bikes there, and I think a lot more
20 trees need to be planted than what you're
21 suggesting, because I'm concerned about the erosion
22 issue also. And I think a lot of trees were just
23 recently removed to put in a lot of gravel up the
24 Bulls Ferry Road, by where the lake overflow is, and
25 I don't know why all of that gravel was put in. I

1 don't know why so many trees were cut down, and I
2 think it should have been reported to DEP.

3 The other thing is regarding River Road,
4 in the past, there was a suggestion for a parking
5 lot on River Road so that a plan like this could be
6 put into action, and that would be a big mistake to
7 have a parking lot on River Road, because it would
8 get used by all of the residents that live down
9 there and their visitors.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's not in the
11 plan, sir. We just got told that.

12 MR. BOB: I know that's not in the
13 plan, but it was proposed in the past. That's what
14 I'm saying. Excuse me -- stop cutting me off,
15 please. I would like to make sure that the plan
16 does not change and you do not put in a parking lot.
17 Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Okay,
19 next is Shiryn.

20 MS. SHIRYN: Hello. Thank you so
21 much for having this meeting. Again, I think the
22 hybrid format is really important, as some of us are
23 sick. I myself wouldn't be able to make it to that
24 in-person meeting, but hopefully I can figure things
25 out better before then.

1 A few things that I want to mention or
2 just point out in the plan is that if this is truly
3 a bird sanctuary, something that needs to be
4 considered, and should the County move forward, is
5 we mentioned daylighting. And daylighting, if you
6 don't know, affects the way the animals live. No
7 matter how it's lit, no matter how it's put into the
8 park, it just disrupts the life of the animals.

9 Also, creating a bike path is dangerous if
10 you've ever driven down that road. I can only
11 imagine the way that the light, no matter how much I
12 think that we want to be, to make the design sound,
13 I just think that with water, it just will create
14 some issues. Also, I feel like because the idea is
15 making this a bike path, you'll find that a lot of
16 delivery e-bikes will be using the path and creating
17 just a disturbance, not just for the animals, but
18 anybody using the space.

19 If we do want to continue this project and
20 make this a great bird sanctuary, I think leaving
21 the existing design is important, cleaning it up,
22 including those native plants, and just minimizing
23 the human presence is really important.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Shiryn, thank you
25 for your comments, very well received. Okay. A

1 suggestion is, Bobby, we're going to have a meeting
2 in North Bergen with them. Everyone, Bob Baselice's
3 e-mail is rbaselice@hcnj.us, rbaselice@hcnj.us.

4 My suggestion also is our office is
5 201-795-6001, extension 0. Again, 201-795-6001,
6 extension 0.

7 THE CLERK: Mr. Chairman, if they put
8 their e-mail addresses into the chat, I'll get those
9 too.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You could also put
11 your e-mail addresses into the chat so we can get
12 that list ASAP. Bobby will give you dates for a
13 meeting, all right, Bobby? With the department
14 heads. So for the Commissioners, we all agree that
15 due to the public comments, we are hearing our
16 constituents, and right now that this is going to be
17 tabled. Do we need a vote on that?

18 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, this is
19 just a public hearing. All you really need is a
20 motion to close the public hearing. There is a
21 resolution on the agenda for Thursday, so if the
22 Board wants to carry that resolution.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes, we'll carry
24 it.

25 MR. ANTUN: So just make a motion to

1 carry the resolution.

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: What's the
3 next meeting?

4 MR. ANTUN: The next meeting is in
5 February.

6 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: It's after
7 the 5th?

8 MR. ANTUN: It's after the 5th, yes.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So we may have to
10 have a special meeting.

11 MR. ANTUN: Well, what we could do
12 is, again, you know, there were some valid points
13 that were made that could alter the design, and if
14 it alters the design dramatically, we may not be
15 able to file the application, you know, and this may
16 have to wait until next year.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: At least the people
18 know and their voices are heard, and just to be
19 sure, except the one gentleman, there's no parking
20 lot included in this, correct? Okay. And there's
21 nothing to do with trails?

22 MR. ANTUN: No.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Just to make
24 sure every speaker knows that. Your comments were
25 heard. Your elected officials have heard it. So

1 please, we'll get a meeting going. If it can be
2 done this year, it will be done. If not, then it
3 will have to come next year.

4 MR. ANTUN: And let me say that,
5 let's say after we get some more comments, or at
6 least address the comments that were made at today's
7 meeting, if the engineer can provide some kind of a
8 concept within the time frame, then we could file
9 the application and then get more approval at the
10 first meeting, and then just send the resolution
11 now. But if it's too extensive, or if some of the
12 points that were made just may not be addressed
13 outside the parameters that are criteria.

14 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I wish I knew
15 some more of these people, because I did meet with
16 people, and we did discuss it, but I want this to be
17 a venue for us to come to, just so anybody else that
18 wants to talk about it, come here, we'll talk about
19 it. Again, this is for my residents. My residents
20 are the County, not for me, so whatever they decide,
21 it's up to them.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Everybody
23 that's on, we heard that? Everybody get your
24 e-mails?

25 MR. ANTUN: I just wanted to lay that

1 out in terms of the time frame. So that's all.

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: And if we
3 can't make it, we can't make it.

4 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, and we'll just
5 consider it for the following year.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And also, just so
7 you know, all our e-mails are our first initial, our
8 last name. For example, mine, aromano@hcnj.us. I
9 am the Chair. The vice chair is Jerry Walker. The
10 chair Pro Tempore is Fanny. We have Commissioner
11 O'Dea, as you know. We have Commissioner Lipski
12 here. We're all available, but that's our spearhead
13 right there, your Commissioner Rob, and we'll, you
14 know, we'll follow him, get a date going, and see if
15 we can get this done. If it's not to your
16 satisfaction, then we'll have to wait for another
17 year.

18 Thank you very much, all of you, for your
19 wonderful comments. We appreciate your feedback,
20 and looking forward to following Bobby's lead upon a
21 meeting. Again, thank you all. Our office number
22 you have. Some of our cells are available, too. If
23 there's anything else you need, please feel free to
24 call us or e-mail us. Thank you.

25 THE CLERK: May we have a motion to

1 adjourn?

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Motion.

3 THE CLERK: All in favor? We are
4 adjourned.

5 (Whereupon the proceeding is then
6 concluded at 6:36 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR, License No.
30XI00234700, and Notary Public of the State of New
Jersey, hereby certify that the proceedings herein
are from the notes taken by me of a Public Hearing
of the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners,
held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 2021; and that
this is a correct transcript of the same.



SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR
A NOTARY PUBLIC of the
State of New Jersey
I.D. No. 2283786
Commission Expires 2/4/27

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