



February 2020

Harbor Consultants Recommended removing impediments to development of rail dependent businesses in the economic development zone.

March 2020

Jens Riedel Natural Systems Utilities managing engineer for **Diamond Chip Realty, (DCR) LLC** held a pre-application meeting about elements of the proposed project at 33 Demarest Drive.



April 2020

Email from Jens Riedel o/b/o Diamond Chip Realty, LLC (“DC”) to Highland Council regarding the subject of the “Sparta Warehouse Project” acknowledging that the site will require an amendment to the on-site WQMP from the County and will therefore need to obtain County and Highlands consistency determination. He asks to clarify the process in Sussex County

April 2020

DC informed by SCWQM that no decision can be made by Highlands Council until approved by NJDEP



May 2020

A Sussex County committee meets an application concerning a site-specific wastewater management plan for property located off of Demarest Road in Sparta, NJ. The Sparta Twp. Engineer (Stan Puszczy) is a member of the county committee at the time.



Timeline 2020

July 2020

Josh Hertzberg, Director of Business Operations for the International Longshoreman's Association, publicly announces that he is stepping down from the Sussex County Commissioners to run again for Sparta Town Council.



His replacement was Chris Carney, a member of Operating Engineers Local 825.



September 2020

Email from NJDEP to Mike Green re: Permit Extension Act Request by DCR seeking to extend the 5/11/15 expired NJDEP Freshwater Wetlands LOI



October 2020

The attorney and engineer for the Sparta Twp. Planning Board ("PB") discuss "Rail Dependent Uses ordinance amendment and other issues".

Consultants working for Diamond Chip, LLC ("DC") communicate with Sparta Twp. professionals regarding any prior wetland mitigation project at the site on behalf of NJDOT.

October 2020

PB Attorney, Collin's 1 hour conf. call w/ PB Engineer, Stan Puszcz regarding "Rail Dependent Uses ordinance amendment and other issues"



October 2020

Email from DC's Engineer Tony Diggan to Dave Simmons confirming their conversation from today and asking for information concerning DC's site and any a wetland mitigation project at it on behalf of NJDOT. DC's reps and Mike Gross are copied.



Timeline 2020



Timeline 2021

February 2021

Sparta Twp passed the ordinance change with only Councilman Chiariello voting “No”



“little changes that can be made that are just common sense, that will help the business community and the taxpayer,” Councilman and Planning Board member Josh Hertzberg commented.

February 23, 2021
Ordinance 21-02 is introduced to amend stormwater management rules. Councilman Chiariello is the only “no” vote.



February 26, 2021
Resolution 9-1 for the Professional Services Agreement with the Engineering Contracting Firm. Councilman Chiariello requested a cost benefit analysis, but other council members proceeded with the motion without a study.



March 24, 2021
Bill Close announces retirement as Township Manager. Chief Spideletto takes over as Acting Manager with support from Deputy Manager, Sam Rome.

April and May 2021
Sparta professionals meet with DCR to review WQMP Amendment submitted by Riedel



June & August 2021
More meetings between Sparta Twp professionals and DCR

October 26, 2021
Town votes on resolution without any discussion.



November 4, 2021
Sparta Planning Board approves Ordinance 21-01 which allows the construction of warehouses in the Economic Development District. Planning Board unanimously approves

November 15, 2021
DCR applied for preliminary site plan approval



Timeline 2022

1st QRT

February 2022
Residents Raise Concerns about 880,000 square foot warehouse in advance of Planning Board Meeting



January 2022
TapIntoSparta reviews plans and published first article on January 20, 2022



March 2, 2022
211 attendees on Zoom for Planning Board hearing about the DCR Logistical Park. The public was not heard.

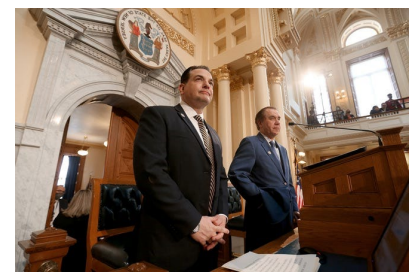
March 2, 2022
Dash challenged the developer and board about the definition of the project as a “warehouse” versus definition of a trucking terminal as set forth in the ordinance.”



March 2, 2022
DC’s attorney and owner admit that 21-01 was specifically passed for its mega-warehouse



March 24, 2022
New Jersey Herald reports “Top NJ Lawmakers in no rush to regulate warehouse sprawl.”



IT’S UP TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS



News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent



**Timeline
2022
Continued**

SRD's mission is to join together concerned citizens to encourage responsible development that protects our people, our environmental resources, and our future.



March 23, 2022
Clark met with the New Jersey Highlands Coalition and the grass-roots organization Sparta Responsible Development (SRD) was formed.

March 31, 2022
Public Presentation on Warehouse Sprawl held at LMCC.



Sparta Township's future development must be driven by engaged and thoughtful discussion amongst its stakeholders. It should not proceed without engaging the community and weighing environmental, social, and long-term cost benefits.

APRIL 2022

Clark and Dash recently filed an application before the Sparta Zoning Board



asking for an interpretation of the Ordinance under which DCR filed its site application to determine whether the use proposed by DCR is a permitted use within the Economic Development Zone.



APRIL 2022

Volunteers start live streaming Planning Board meetings and demand transparency



April 2022

Councilman Josh Hertzberg said "me and Chris called each other because we saw it on Facebook and as members of the planning board we were both taken aback that we hadn't heard about it...I didn't think it was real and that somebody was getting it before we did."



APRIL 2022

SRD raised enough funds to hire first expert Peter G. Steck Town Planning



**Timeline
2022
Continued**

APRIL 4th 2022

DCR Hearing at Sparta
Twp Planning Board



APRIL 2022

Residents write letters
and sprout garden signs



MAY 2022

DASH/CLARK filed an
application for
interpretation before the
Zoning Board challenging
the use sought by DCR.

The ZB summarily denied
Dash/Clark the opportunity
to present their
interpretation application
claiming the Planning
Board had already taken
jurisdiction.



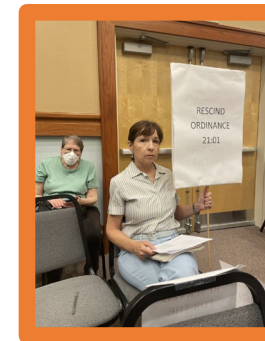
MAY 2022

DASH/CLARK Engage
Herald Law to Object to
the DCR APPLICATION

DCR Hearing at Sparta
Twp Planning Board

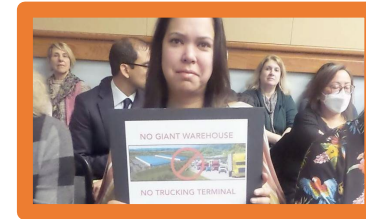
JUNE 2022

DCR Hearing at Sparta
Twp Planning Board



JULY 2022

DCR Hearing at Sparta
Twp Planning Board



News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent



**Timeline
2022
Continued**

**MAY & JUNE 2022
Education Station Events**



Journalist Jack Wright creates podcast interview talk-show with residents of Sparta Township

July 4, 2022



AUGUST 2022
Neill steps away from SRD to run for Town Council



July 5, 2022



July 6, 2022

SRD raised enough funds to retain Forensic Environmental Services, Tom Maguire

Planning Board sends DCR back to drawing board. Needs to fit the Campus like setting ordinance and prove rail-dependency for new ordinance benefits.



Anand Dash becomes President of SRD

News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent



Timeline 2022 Continued

SEPTEMBER 2022

DCR files a motion to dismiss Residents' Lawsuit



NJ State Planning Commission issues Warehousing Siting Guidelines

Township Engineer leaves. Interim Twp Engineer hired.

OCTOBER 2022

NY TIMES front page article on residents pushing back on Warehouse Sprawl



Residents have grown increasingly frustrated with the proliferation of warehouses in the region.



OCTOBER 2022
Planning Board Subcommittee considers State Planning Guidance; recommend warehouses capped at 175,000 sq ft and approximately 25 trucking bays

OCTOBER 2022

DCR Submits new plans 4x larger than the subcommittee recommendations



The plan was endorsed by Local 825 Labor Management Fund

NOVEMBER 2022

New Sparta Twp engineer rejects DCR plans for 'significant deficiencies'



Voters elected three new Town Council members who ran on an "On Your Side: no mega-warehouse" platform.



DECEMBER 2022

Court dismissed lawsuit brought by Clark/Dash. Anand Dash and Neill Clark file an appeal.



Town Council passed 22-21 to adopt new warehouse guidelines issued by Planning Board subcommittee.

The Sparta Twp manager resigned.



Timeline 2023

JANUARY 2023

Neill Clark
takes name off lawsuit.



Swearing in of
New Town Council

FEBRUARY 2023

DCR files new plans



MARCH 2023

Environmental
Commission meeting with
Great Waters NJ



Town Council sets policy
to LiveStream their
meetings via Youtube.

APRIL 2023



EARTH DAY EVENT

Sponsored by
Environmental
Commission

JUNE 2023

DCR files new plans



New Township Engineer
hired

News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent



Timeline 2023

AUGUST 2023

Town Council considers ordinance change to PCED zone. Residents voice their concern the ordinance doesn't do enough to stop the over development on Rt 15. Landowner files "petition of protest" asks the town not to make a decision.



News coverage compiled from:
[TapIntoSparta](#)
[NJ Spotlight News](#)
[New Jersey Herald](#)
[Sparta Independent](#)



JULY 2023

Sparta Twp Planning Board rejects DCR plans for not meeting multiple criteria

Special Joint Board Presentation by the NJ Highlands Council to Sparta Council, Planning and Zoning Boards



SEPTEMBER 2023

DCR files new plans with Planning Board & Files lawsuit claiming 8 planning board members are conflicted

OCTOBER 2023

Highlands Council presents Water Conservation Plan with CDM Smith Engineers to Sparta Town Council



Planning Board holds a concept hearing so the Wilson Family can inform the planning board of what they would like to do with their land and how the PB recommended changes to the PCED Zone, such as the environmental buffer, will have impact.



OCTOBER 2023

SRD Honored by the NJ Highlands Coalitions for volunteer work in advocating for protection of resources, sustainable development and capacity based planning.

NOVEMBER 2023

North Village accident knocks out light pole



Timeline 2024

2/13/24

Town
Council
issues
unanimous
resolution
disapproving
DCR WQMP



2/19/24

Inaugural
Master Plan
Committee
Meeting



2/20/24

Sussex County
Denies DCR
Site Plan



1/16/24

SRD
encourages
participation
in NJDEP
invite for
public
comments on
WQMP



2/14/24

SRD announces
fundraiser
partnership
with NJHC to
send
Anand
OverTheEdge
for
Environmental
Awareness

2/20/24

Sinkhole
opens on
Rt 15 in
Lafayette

News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent



Timeline 2024

2/26/24

NJDEP Regulator
Officer joins SRD FB
Group as a
participant



2/28/24

County
Commissioners
have the DCR
WQMP
Amendment on
their agenda with
a consent
resolution as part
of the packet.

2/28/24

SRD encourages
participation at the
County
Commissioner's
Meeting.



2/28/24

County
Commissioners
REMOVE
DCR WQMP
Amendment from
the Agenda as
their first order of
business

3/4/24

Recognizing Public
Interest,
NJDEP Scheduled an
extended public
comment period and a
**hearing for WQPM
Amendment**



3/23/24

The Sussex County
Commissioners approved the
Sussex County Municipal
Utilities Authority (SCMUA)
endorsement of Diamond Chip
Realty's WQMP.



**The Diamond Chip Realty
WQMP resolution was not on
the public's agenda prior to the
commissioners' vote.**

**Commissioner Carney
did not recuse himself.
Commissioner DeGroot was the
only No Vote.**

3/28/24



The Court ruled in the DCR vs
Sparta Planning Board case. The
ruling is partially in favor of
Diamond Chip Realty finding
that 8 of the 11 Planning Board
members are conflicted
because they are "members" of
Sparta Responsible
Development and because SRD
was created to object to the
Mega Warehouse application.

Hearings will resume in 45 Days.



Timeline 2024

4/25/24



NJDEP Celebrates “World Water Day: Because Our Water is worth it. Investing in New Jersey’s water leads to economic prosperity, improved public health and sanitation, and a higher quality of life for all.”

4/29/24

DCR tries to seat a favorable planning board, and recommends who should be selected to hear the application.



DCR’s notice fails to include the detail that the “use” question will be taken up in the hearings, following the appellate courts' recent decision on Anand Dash’s lawsuit.

5/1/24



After nearly two-years, New Sparta Planning Board Begins New Diamond Chip Mega-Warehouse Application meetings.

5/5/24



Dash Interviewed by Chris DeBello on Issues & Ideas Podcast
<http://www.issuesandideasradio.com/podcasts/ananddash.mp3>

5/8/24



Sussex County Engineers meet closed doors, then agree to take minutes of their meetings after an OPRA request from TapIntoSparta.

The technical review meetings have been requested by DCR’s attorneys after they were “disapproved” by the Sussex County Planning Board Development Review Committee according to emails obtained by TAPinto Sparta through OPRA requests.

4/23/24

The appellate court ruled the question of use needed to be heard at the planning board.



Without this lawsuit, the use issue would remain prejudged and contrary to the Municipal Land Use Law and fundamental notions of fairness.



4/26/24

SRD President rappels at NJ Highlands Coalition event to raise funds to hire professionals to represent the interests of the citizens of Sparta and bring environmental awareness to new heights on Earth Day!



Timeline 2024



5/21/24

NJDEP hosts Hearing for DCR WQMP Amendment on Teams call. More than 40 devices signed in. Public comments heard for nearly two hours.



NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

5/9/24

NJHC hosts a testimony webinar for SRD to provide informed comments at the NJDEP Hearing on DCR Water Quality Management Amendment Plan



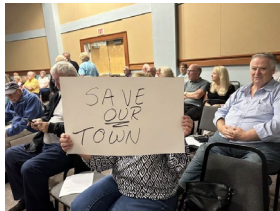
Barbara Gomes, Vice President of Sparta Responsible Development said, "Make no mistake, the generous support of the community has made meaningful change at every level, yet here we are two years later and the objection to the development is still up to us to fund, as citizens, Spartans, neighbors, family, friends, and community members."

We continue to witness the selfless dedication and sacrifice of so many of our neighbors for a cause that transcends individual happiness and will protect our town from the detrimental impacts of this intermodal trucking facility/mega warehouse."

April through June 2024 Education Station Events



Donors continue to raise funds, match funds, sponsor billboards, create newspaper ads, write letters to the editor, attend meetings and educate their neighbors on the Mega-Development concerns.



News coverage compiled from: TapIntoSparta NJ Spotlight News New Jersey Herald Sparta Independent

Timeline 2024



6/6/24

SRD dedication plays vital role in delivering a stunning victory for the People of Sparta, the Planning Board agreed with our legal argument to first hear the fundamental question of whether the development is a permitted use or not.

News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent



7/1/24

DCR files new lawsuit against the planning board.



The Sparta Elks Lodge #2356 announced SRD as First Place Community Organization winner in the Fourth of July parade!



7/15/24

Sparta's Environmental Commission collects community's input as it considers an Open Space Plan.



7/23/24

Sparta Town Council hearing of ordinance 24-08 to authorize an appropriation to finance the revision of the town's over 40 year old Master Plan. As the Master Plan is the "blueprint" for our town, what it values and what it encourages, it's important to bring this visionary document in line with what it's residents value in the Sparta of today (such as shielding our town from out of character, large scale proposals).

Needing a super majority or 4 votes to pass, **the ordinance failed to pass with only 3 yes votes (Councilman Hertzberg voted "No" and Councilwoman Quinn abstained).**



7/24/24

Concerned residents from Sparta and surrounding towns attended the Hardyston Town Council meeting to comment on the Redevelopment plan to blast and quarry the granite and flatten the land to place 1 million square feet of "warehouse space" next to the rail line. Information can be found at: <https://hardyston.com/>



Residents Partner with Highlands Coalition to form Hardyston Responsible Development



7/24/24

8/21/24 County Commissioners Meeting



The County Commissioners took their vote on the DCR Wastewater Management Plan Amendment off the agenda.

Director Space commented the item will be put back on the agenda at a meeting where the Policy Advisory Committee attorney is in attendance.

At the meeting, Commissioner Hayden put on public record that he will not support the Diamond Chip matter as he represents the citizens of the county and "will not bend to a few big donors".

Objector Attorney Anand Dash explains some of the inconsistencies of the DCR WQMP are related to the statute DCR uses to calculate the GPD flow; they changed from 7:14 (used since the initial application in 2021) to 7:9, without explanation. They moved the number of employees from 200 per day with 10,000 gpd to 555 per day and are still requesting 10,000 gpd having changed to the 7:9 calculation.

Using that calculation with the most recent estimate of employees the calculation should be 17,000 gpd: $555 \times 25 = 13,875$ gpd
•10,000 sq ft office space $\times 0.1 = 1,000$ gpd
•85 "transit" employees $\times 25 = 2,125$
•Total – 17,000

Speaking as a resident, not in his official capacity, Sparta Mayor Neill Clark asked Commissioner Deputy Director Chris Carney to recuse himself because of an "indirect pecuniary" conflict; the Operating Engineers Local 825 made posts to Facebook supporting DCR's project in Sparta.

Road to Repair
Paid for by Local 825 Labor Management Fund ·
The Diamond Chip Logistics Park will upgrade an existing concrete production plant into local jobs and property taxes while using minimal services



The attorney for the commissioners, Senator Doug Steinhardt, who Politico reported as being under investigation by the FBI for public land flipping involving Warehouses, said Carney "is not an employee of 825. He may occasionally be a subcontractor there. He's not an employee. He does not draw a paycheck from them." Carney interrupted Steinhardt.
"I technically work for 825," Carney said. "We're always a union shop but we are on non-union jobs."

Carney indicates on his annual Local Government Ethics Law Financial Disclosure form he is employed by Mountain View Layout. On the "employment" tab of that company's website it states "You must be a member of the Union of Operating Engineers Local 825 to work with us at Mountain View Layout."

Robert McBriar, attorney for the Sussex County Water Quality Policy Advisory Committee, said the PAC has "satisfied their charge in completing the multistep process that was approved by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection" referring to the Sussex County Water Quality Plan Amendment Procedure approved in 2014.

"Very importantly, you must note that NJ DEP itself issued a determination that the proposed amendment is indeed compliant with the applicable regulatory criteria set forth in NJCA 7:15," McBriar said referring to the process of seeking approval. "From my perspective, the PAC has satisfied its charge," McBriar said.

- News coverage compiled from:
- Politico
- TapIntoSparta
- TapIntoPhillipsburg
- NJ Spotlight News
- New Jersey Herald
- Sparta Independent



Timeline 2024

8/21/24

Commissioner's Vote



Commissioner Bill Hayden voted 'No'.



Commissioner DeGroot laid out a thoughtful analysis of the Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan, questioning the DCR resolution supporting that plan, under a section called "water supply."

News coverage compiled from:
TapIntoSparta
NJ Spotlight News
New Jersey Herald
Sparta Independent

Despite hearing a number of flaws in their resolution, Commissioner Director Jill Space, Deputy Director Chris Carney and Commissioner Earl Schick voted yes to pass a resolution to support Diamond Chip Realty's application for a Water Quality Management Plan amendment over the Germany Flats aquifer.



Space said "This is a vote on the process. It still has to go through NJDEP and it still has to go through Sparta."

Residents expressed disappointment in the vote without consideration of the inconsistencies in how the wastewater gallons per day was calculated the same when the application was for 200 employees as it was for 555 employees.

Decision moves to NJDEP.

8/30/24



Anand Dash received **confirmation from NJDEP that DCR used the incorrect standard in their application.** The miscalculation was not caught by 4 engineers who reviewed the plans: Sparta Township's Engineer, Sparta Township's Planning Board Engineer, Sussex County's Chief Engineer, Sussex County's Municipal Utilities Authority Chief Engineer.

Objector Attorney Anand Dash sends letter to NJDEP thanking them for confirming the material error that impacts public health and safety and asking for them to deny the DCR WQMP with prejudice and not give the applicant the chance to cure its deficiency alleging that DCR used the wrong calculations to deliberately mislead the NJDEP.

9/4/24

TapIntoSparta reports:

Was it an oversight in the way DCR calculated how much wastewater will flow into the Germany Flats Aquifer beneath the site?

New Jersey Highlands Coalition Policy and Communications Director Elliott Ruga said, "Anand Dash is to be congratulated for uncovering a fatal flaw of this application that half a dozen professionals should have and didn't catch including the staff at NJDEP.

There is enough evidence to show it was intentional deception by the applicant that should at least require them to reapply."