

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – August 4, 2025

The meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on August 4, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Township Hall, 2600 Bayshore Road, Villas, New Jersey.

The Clerk announced that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided according to law.

The following members of Council were present for roll call taken by the Clerk:

Councilmember Thomas Conrad
Councilmember Joseph Wareham
Councilmember Roland Roy, Jr.
Deputy Mayor Kevin Coombs
Mayor Frank Sippel

Also present: Michael Laffey, Township Manager, Robert Belasco, Township Solicitor and Karen Fournier, Deputy Township Clerk

Work Session

Public Hearing – Adoption of Bidder Pre-Qualification Regulations in connection with Phase II Improvements to the Judge Nathaniel Foster House located at 1649 Bayshore Road

Mayor Sippel announced the following:

The Township recently completed Phase 1 of renovations to the historic Judge Nathaniel Foster House. Phase 1 work included a new wood shingle roof, structural reinforcement of the wooden frame, removal of asbestos siding and repairs to the underlying clapboard, installation of a new electrical panel, and rewiring of the first floor. We are now preparing to go out to bid for Phase 2, which will improve public access to the building. Planned work includes ADA upgrades, reconstruction of deteriorated chimneystacks, replacement of missing and damaged window shutters, preservation of the historic fireback in the first-floor parlor, rewiring of the second floor, replacement of stairs, landings, and railings, renovation of the side porch, and stabilization of accessory buildings.

In an effort to ensure the preservation of the historic the Judge Nathaniel Foster House, the Township has elected to establish prequalification requirements for prospective bidders. The qualifications are intended to ensure that prospective contractors have the financial stability, experience, and equipment necessary to carry out the work.

Tonight's public hearing is an opportunity for the public and interested bidders to comment on these proposed requirements. A notice of this hearing was properly published in the Cape May Star and Wave on July 2, 2025, and the Press of Atlantic City on July 3, 2025. We welcome your input before the Township considers adopting the prequalification criteria.

Mayor Sippel opened the hearing up to public comment requesting anyone wishing to address Council regarding the Bidder Pre-Qualification Regulations in connection with Phase II Improvements to the Judge Nathaniel Foster House located at 1649 Bayshore Road to please step to the microphone and state your name and address for the record.

No one commented.

Certificate of Recognition – Sea Isle City Auxiliary VFW Post 1963

Mayor Sippel and Council presented the Sea Isle City Auxiliary VFW Post 1963 with a Certificate of Recognition for their continued support in the adoption and beautification of Union Bethel Cemetery. Deputy Mayor Coombs read the information into the record.

Pary Tell, HPC Chairperson, thanked the Sea Isle City Auxiliary for their support and work at Union Bethel Cemetery.

Presentation - Delaware River & Bay Authority

DRBA Officials, Heath Gehrke and Shaun O'Brien, shared a short power-point presentation proposing a bayfront hotel at the Cape May - Lewes Ferry site and is seeking collaboration with the Township.

Councilmember Conrad commented on site location option 3.

Solicitor Belasco expounded on the zoning aspect of the proposed project.

Mayor Sippel thanks Mr. Gehrke and Mr. O'Brien for their presentation.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – July 21, 2025

Res. #2025-266 Authorization for the Payment of Vouchers \$ 700,183.50

Res. #2025-267 Authorizing the Extension of the Grace Period for the Third Quarter Taxes Due on August 1, 2025 (Aug 29, 2025)

Res. #2025-268 Authorization for Refund of Taxes

Res. #2025-269 A Resolution Adopting Bidder Pre-Qualification Regulations In Connection with Phase II Improvements to the Judge Nathaniel Foster House located at 1649 Bayshore Road, Villas, New Jersey, 08251

Res. #2025-270 A Resolution Requesting That the New Jersey Department of Transportation Convert an Existing Yield Sign Located at the Base of the Southbound Lane of the Route 109 Bridge to a Stop Sign

Res. #2025-271 Approving a Professional Service Contract with Marc Blauer for Labor Standard Services for the Judge Nathaniel Foster House Phase II

Res. #2025-272 A Resolution Authorizing the Bikes & Beer Cape May Brewing Bike Ride Event Scheduled for September 20, 2025

Res. #2025-273 Contract Award to Outfit Two (2) Police Chevrolet Tahoes and Two (2) Ford Police Interceptors PPV Through New Jersey State Contract to Municipal Equipment LLC and Trade In Four (4) Police Vehicles (\$53,638.06)

Res. #2025-274 Contract award for Two (2) Police Chevrolet Tahoes and Two (2) Ford Police Interceptors PPV Through New Jersey State Contract and Cranford Police Cooperative Agreements from Gentilini Motors (\$209,070.71)

Res. #2025-275 Authorizing the Sale of Township of Lower Surplus No Longer Needed for Public Use on GOVDEALS Online Auction Website

Res. #2025-276 Authorizing Payment of 3rd & 4th Quarter 2025 County Tax with Pilot Remittance per R.S.54:4-74; PL 2025 C.91

Ordinance # 2025-18 An Ordinance Authorizing the Execution of a Utility Easement Agreement with Atlantic City Electric for Real Property Identified as Block 505, Lot 15 to Facilitate the Rebuilding of the Middle-Rio-Cape 69kV Transmission Line in Cape May County. This is the first reading of this Ordinance. The second reading and public hearing has been scheduled for September 3, 2025.

Ordinance #2025-19 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 475, Parks and Recreation Areas, Article I, General Rules and Regulations, Subsection 1(C) of the Code of the Township of Lower, to Establish Hours of Operation for Township Owned Parks and Recreation Areas. This is the first reading of this Ordinance. The second reading and public hearing has been scheduled for September 3, 2025.

Mayor Sippel thanked Mr. Laffey for the work done to establish the hours of the Township parks.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD	X		X				
WAREHAM			X				
ROY			X				
COOMBS		X	X				
SIPPEL			X				

Regular Agenda

Ordinance #2025-16 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7, Traffic, Article 1, General Provisions, of the Code of the Township of Lower This is the second reading and public hearing for this Ordinance. This Ordinance has been posted, published and made available to the public.

Lisa Schubert, Iowa Ave., addressed Council on behalf of her neighbors to thank the Township for considering this ordinance and justify the need for the change.

Mayor Sippel thanked Ms. Schubert and her neighbors for bringing it to the Township's attention.

Solicitor Belasco communicated an educational aspect to the ordinance change.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD		X	X				
WAREHAM	X		X				
ROY			X				
COOMBS			X				
SIPPEL			X				

Ordinance #2025-17 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 575, Stormwater Management, of the Code of the Township of Lower to Ensure Consistency with the June 2025 Municipal Stormwater Management Plan Adopted by the Lower Township Planning Board This is the second reading and public hearing for this Ordinance. This Ordinance has been posted, published and made available to the public.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD		X	X				
WAREHAM			X				
ROY			X				
COOMBS			X				
SIPPEL	X		X				

Administrative Reports

Certification of Mailing of Tax Bills

Treasurer Report

Personnel Action Report

Public Comment

Maria Loikith, 9907 Seapointe Blvd., addressed Council to voice discontent about the variance process and approval for 9900 Pacific Avenue in Diamond Beach.

Solicitor Belasco communicated the notice requirements pertaining to Land Use Law and informed that Planning/ Zoning Boards are autonomous from the Governing Body.

Mayor Sippel reiterated the above comments from Solicitor Belasco.

Council Comments

Councilmember Conrad thanked residents from Iowa and Nevada Avenues for attending the meeting.

Councilmember Wareham gave a brief update on the paving of Townbank Road.

Councilmember Roy thanked his constituents from Diamond Beach for bringing their concerns to Council.

Deputy Mayor Coombs thanked all volunteers and employees involved in recent Township events.

Mayor Sippel announced the following: National Night Out, the Children's Benefit Concert, and 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. He also thanked residents for bringing their concerns to Council.

Closed Session

Res. # 2025-277 A Resolution Providing for a Meeting Not Open to the Public in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-12 Attorney/Client Privilege


	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD			X				
WAREHAM			X				
ROY			X				
COOMBS		X	X				
SIPPEL	X		X				


Council adjourned to Closed Session at 5:47 p.m.

Council returned to Open Session at 6:01 p.m.

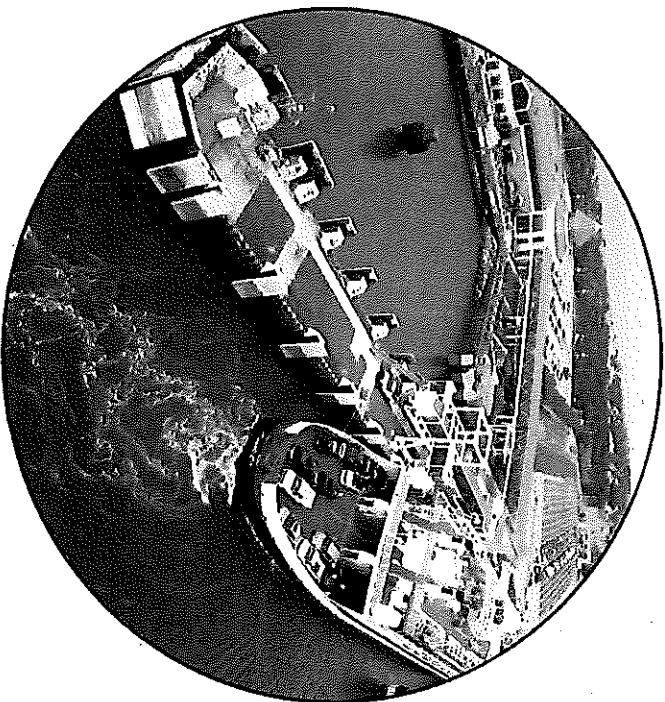
Adjourn

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Mayor Sippel, seconded by Councilmember Wareham. Motion to adjourn was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.


Frank Sippel, Mayor


Township Clerk

Approved:  Aug 18, 2025



PROPOSED BAYFRONT HOTEL AT CMLF SITE

**Community Overview
& Engagement**



TODAY'S DISCUSSION:

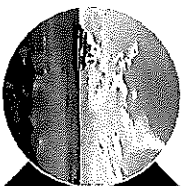
**INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSED HOTEL
AT THE CAPE MAY-LEWES FERRY SITE**

FACTS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

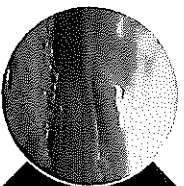
**CONCERNS AND FEEDBACK FROM
CAPE MAY & LEWES RESIDENTS**



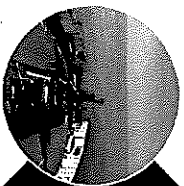
STRATEGIC AND UNIQUE LOCATION



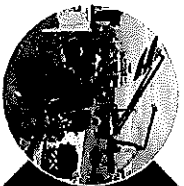
**Bayfront Location Adjacent to
the Ferry Terminal.**



**Strong Tourism Link Between
Ferry and Cape May Area.**



**Potential to Further Connect
Douglass Park to Local Assets.**



**First New Hotel Development in
Cape May County in Over 50 years**



WHY A HOTEL?

SINCE 2000, OVER 50% OF HOTEL ROOMS IN THE AREA HAVE BEEN LOST TO CONDO CONVERSIONS.

FEASIBILITY STUDIES SHOW STRONG DEMAND.

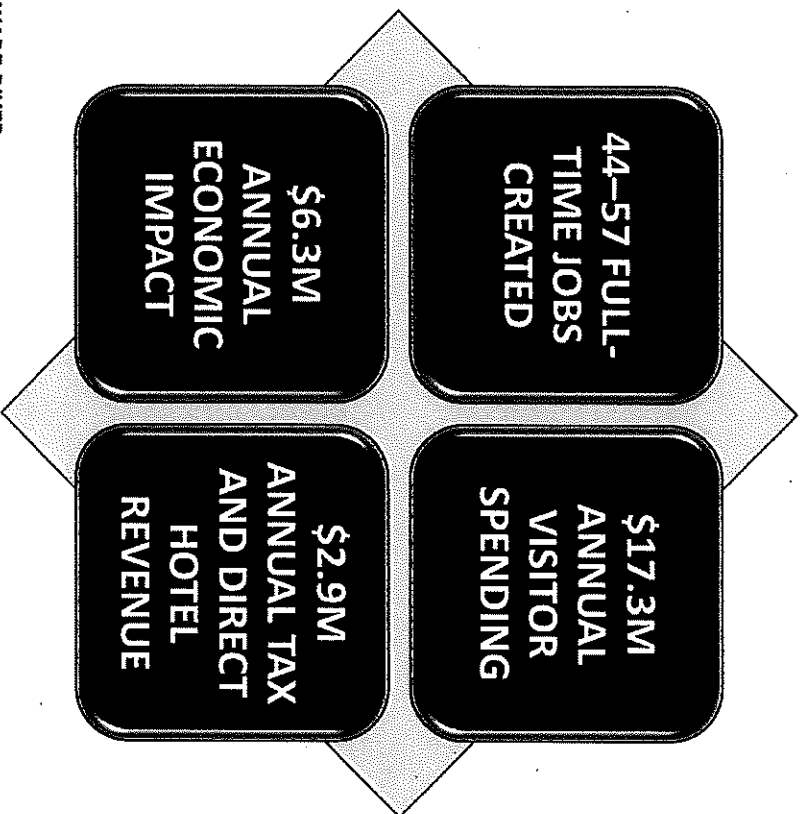
CONSISTENT SEASONAL AND FERRY-GENERATED VISITORS.

HOTEL SUPPORTS BROADER ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT GOALS.

POTENTIAL SITE LOCATIONS

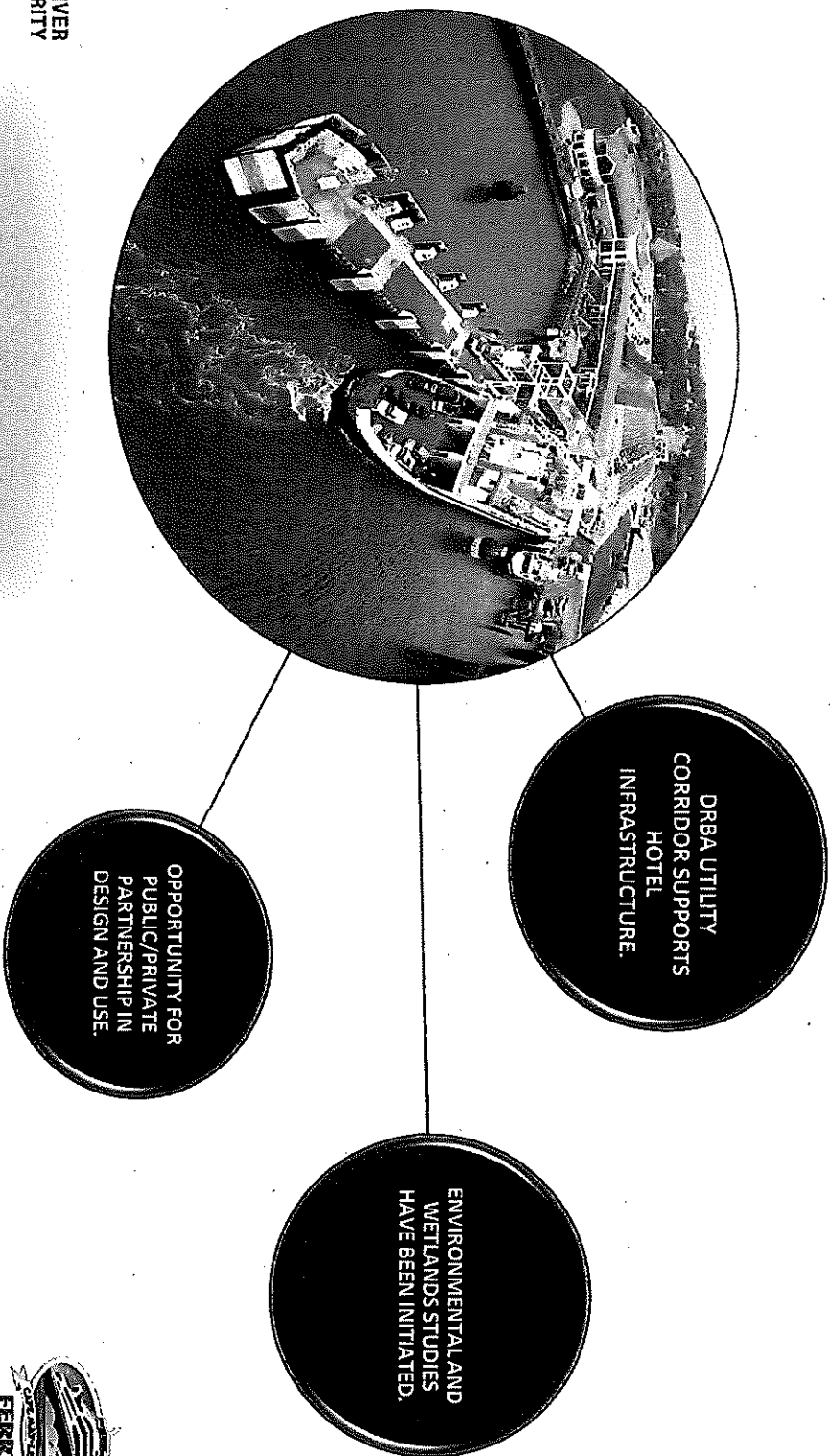


PROJECTED LOCAL BENEFITS

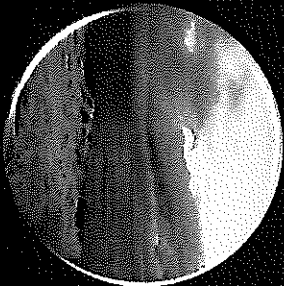


**OVER \$200M
ECONOMIC
CONTRIBUTION
OVER 20 YEARS**

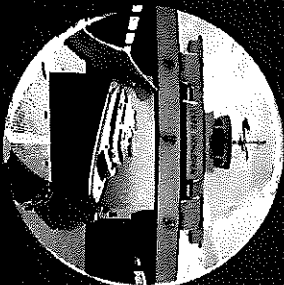
WHAT'S ALREADY IN PLACE?



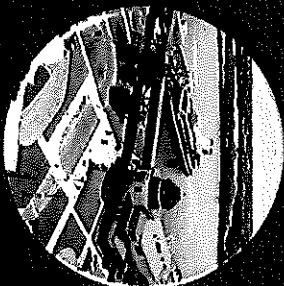
DRBA DELAWARE RIVER & BAY AUTHORITY



SITE IS CURRENTLY
ZONED
CONSERVATION (C)
- HOTEL IS A NON-
CONFORMING USE.



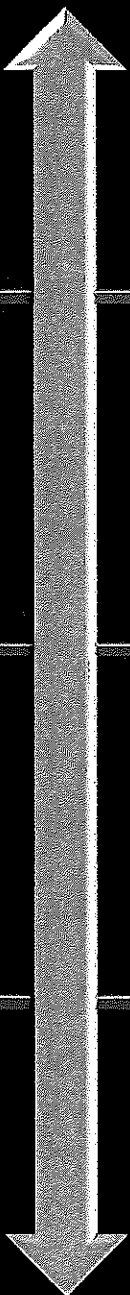
DRBA OPERATES
INDEPENDENTLY
BUT IS SEEKING
COLLABORATION
WITH LOWER
TOWNSHIP.



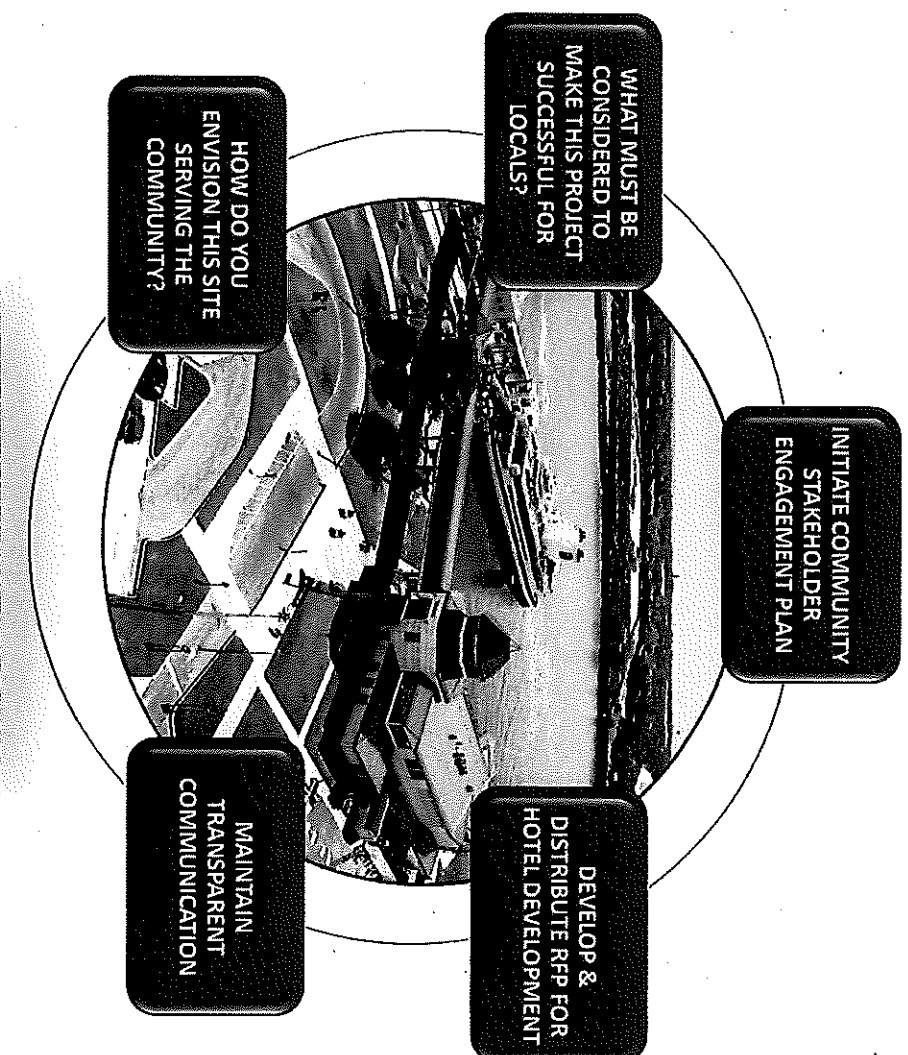
PERMITS REQUIRED
INCLUDE
STORMWATER,
FLOOD, AND
WETLANDS
APPROVALS.

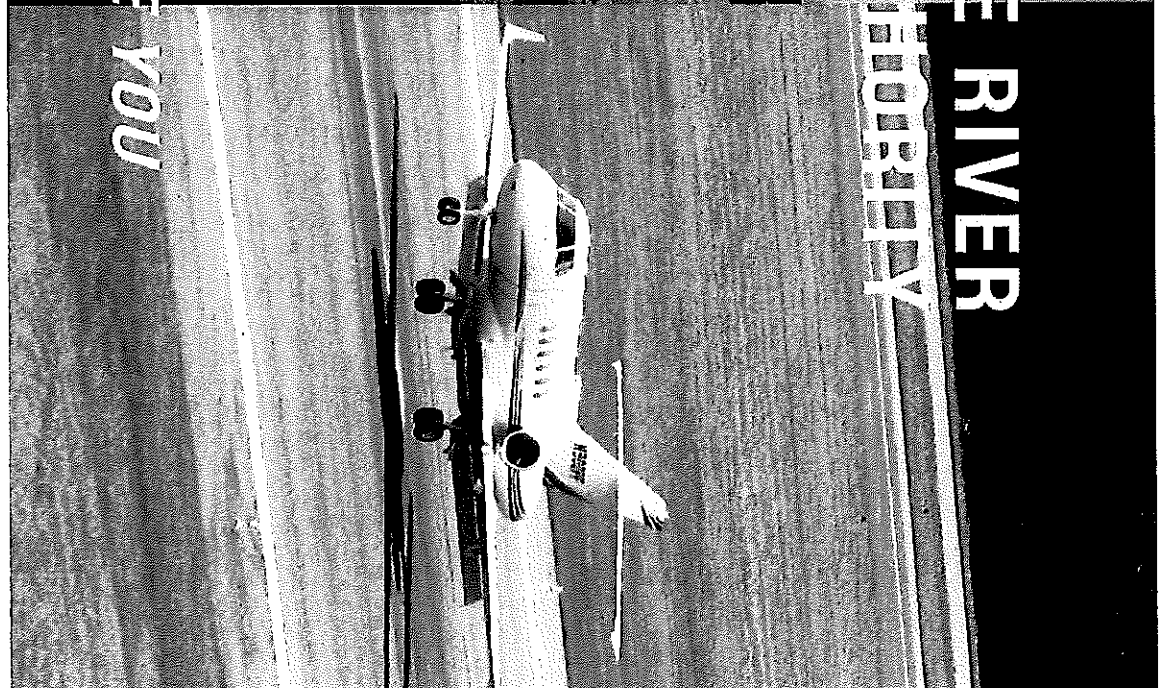

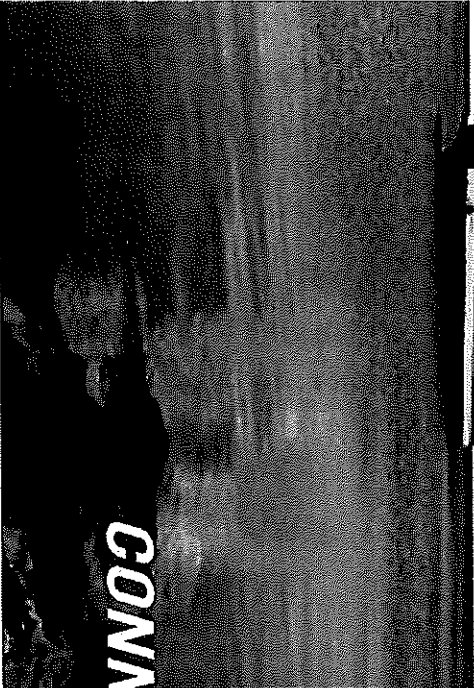


LEGAL REVIEW IS
ONGOING TO
DETERMINE
APPLICABLE CODE.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PATH





DRDA DELAWARE RIVER & BAY AUTHORITY

CONNECTIONS THAT MOVE YOU