

## Milford Riverfront Park Highlighted During Hunterdon Economic Development Sites Tour

**MILFORD**- The Hunterdon County Freeholders' Economic Development sites tour continued last week when Freeholder Matt Holt and Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren gained a first-hand update from Milford Mayor Henri Schepens on economic and tourism projects moving forward in the riverfront borough.

Van Doren, Holt and Mayor Schepens, joined by County Economic Development Director Marc Saluk, walked the site of the future county riverfront park, which anticipates a connecting trail way to Frenchtown, and discussed how the project fit into Milford's larger development plans, as well as discussing the Boroughs' plans to utilize a recently awarded county economic development grant.

"The Milford project is the epitome of the county's economic development initiative. It represents an investment in one of our communities and combines elements of tourism, open space, and economic development in a single project," stated Holt, the Board's Economic Development liaison.

The Hunterdon Freeholder Board approved a contract to purchase the 6.2-acre site through the open space trust fund in June. When the sale is completed, the park would stretch along the river south from Bridge Street.

The Freeholders' economic development sites tour is highlighting projects funded through the county economic development municipal grant program and agri-tourism locations along the new Hunterdon 579 Trail. A previous stop on the tour was the Old Salem Vineyards in Alexandria, part of the 579 Trail.

Mayor Schepens also walked the Freeholders through the towns' main business district, highlighting the lack of vacancies and discussing how local business has successfully adapted this year to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The borough is making a substantial effort to encourage investment and grow the local economy," commented Holt. "And the county will continue to partner with them on this effort in every way that we can."

Schepens detailed the town's plans to use a recent county economic development grant to work with planners to review local ordinances and procedures, in an effort to implement changes designed to encourage business growth. A portion of the grant will also be utilized to expand the Bridge Street business district out along Water Street to the Milford Borough Hall.

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Mayor Schepens also discussed the recently completed clean-up of the former Curtis Paper Mill site, noting that there are already developers interested in the site and that it may be on the market soon after years of EPA-mandated environmental work by International Paper and Georgia Pacific.

“Milford has been successfully rebuilding for several years now,” stated Schepens. “We appreciate the county partnering with us to capitalize on this momentum.”