

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

McDade Administration Building
640 South Broad Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08650-0068

August 8, 2017

PRESENT:

Leslie R. Floyd
Haig Kasabach, Chair
Alan Hershey, Vice Chair
Michael Shine
Jennifer Rogers
Gary Mount

REPRESENTATION:

County Executive
Assunpink Rep.
Piedmont Rep.
Planning Board
Park Commission
Ag. Board Rep.

NON-VOTING:

Lisa Fritzingler

Acting Secretary

Chairman Kasabach called the meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:00 PM

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Ms. Fritzingler announced that pursuant to the Sunshine Law, notice of this meeting was mailed to the Trenton Times and the Trentonian, and was posted in the County Clerk’s Office and the County Administration Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mount made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2017 meeting. Mr. Hershey seconded the motion. The minute were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD BUSINESS

8/8/2017 Rails to Trails

Ms. Fritzingler reported that negotiations are continuing. The issue is on the price. The donation from Conrail is lower than we were lead to believe. We still expect to get the property well below appraised value. Even once we have an agreed price, the County would not enter into an agreement until the Environmental Assessment is completed.

6/6/2017 Rails to Trails

Mrs. Fritzingler reported that negotiations are still ongoing with Conrail.

2/7/2017 Rails to Trails

Ms. Fritzingler reported that Hamilton Township has passed a resolution in support of taking ownership of the Hamilton section. With both Townships in support of the project the county has met with Conrail and has begun negotiations with the possibility of a significant donation. The County anticipates a response for Conrail in 6-8 weeks.

12/6/2016 Rails to Trails

Ms. Floyd reported that she has reached out to Hamilton to follow up on the meeting that was held. She felt that Hamilton received the project favorably.

10/4/2016 Rails to Trails

Ms. Fritzingler reported that a four page color Vision Plan has been created by Rails to Trails staff. It will be used for meeting with Hamilton Township. Informal discussions with Township staff about the projects, indicates that a meeting with the Mayor will be possible. If the Mayor is supportive we will continue negotiations with Conrail.

8/2/2016 Rails to Trails

Ms. Fritzingler reported that the project is moving along nicely. The County had a meeting last week with Rails to Trails people and D&R Greenway. Appraisals have been completed and have been giving to CONRAIL. CONRAIL requests that the County make an offer on the amount CONRAIL will contribute. The County is working on putting together information on the project to provide Hamilton due to the importance of having Hamilton on board with this project. Ms. Fritzingler notified the board that the parcel of land the County is purchasing is owned by CONRAIL.

2/7/2017 Powell Property

Ms. Fritzingler reported that lot 11 is still undergoing the cleanup of the dump site.

12/6/2016 Powell Property, Princeton

Mrs. Fritzingler reported that lot 8 of the property has been acquired. Lot 11 still needs to be acquired after the household dump site has been resolved. The wetlands permit for that work has been submitted to DEP.

2/2/2016 Powell Property, Princeton

Ms. Fritzingler reported that the property is adjacent to Herronton Woods. The County is working with D&R Greenway on this project. The agreement currently on the table is for the County to buy Lots 8 and 11, Lot 9 has a house that the property owners will sell separately. County will purchase the property and will provide a grant to D&R Greenway. D&R Greenway will manage the property and Mercer County will own it eventually hoping to transfer ownership to Princeton.

The only issue is the County will have to buy lot 8 first then lot 11, which has some environmental issues. However, the environmental issues involve household dumping which, the consultant involved isn't worried about. Lot 11 is also considered wetlands which require getting a wetlands permit. The County will close on Lot 8 then move forward with Lot 11 after environmental issue is resolved. The County will conduct the environmental work on both properties while the property owners will cover cost of the work. If the owners do not clean up the issues the County can rescind the deal.

8/8/2017 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

The Environmental Assessment revealed two areas of concern regarding the garage and storage of equipment. The owners are in the process of cleaning up the garage, and then the soils will be tested,

6/6/2017 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

Mrs. Fritzingler reported that the Agreement of Sale has been approved by the Freeholders and the survey, title and environmental work is all underway. We could close in a few months.

2/7/2017 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

The home inspection has been completed and the county is waiting to receive the report. The report will help determine the best use of the house and provide information regarding terms of the sale.

12/6/2016 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

Mrs. Fritzingler reported that the Park Commission is evaluating the house and buildings to determine the future uses. A house inspection is also to be done.

10/4/2016 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

Ms. Fritzing reported that the agreements are still with the sellers for their execution. The sellers are working on the removal of UST and have indicated that once that is completed they will contact the County regarding the agreement. Ms. Floyd expressed that the County is very enthusiastic about acquiring this property.

8/2/2016 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

Ms. Fritzing described that the property is five acres and connects to Dam Site 21. Mr. Viteritto came to the County a few years ago and was interested in having the County purchase the property for preservation. The County had the property appraised and an offer was made. However, Mr. Viteritto got ill and passed away and the acquisition was put on hold. His two sons are now the owners of the property and want to honor their father’s commitment to preserving the property. This parcel is in a good location because it will provide a way to get into the dam site. Ms. Floyd reported it will create a nice street entrance.

Ms. Fritzing reported that the County sent draft agreements to the brothers. An agreement was made between the two parties. The County is now waiting on the brothers to sign and return the agreements.

NEW BUSINESS

Grant Request Regan

Ms. Fritzing presented three applications as part of the Regan preservation proposal. These three properties are all under the same ownership, but the funding and the acquisition will be separate for each property. They are in the same area but all three are not entirely connected and can close independently.

Below is a summary of the three properties and the grant requests. The applications are eligible for 50% of CFMV. Applications received after this meeting will go to the new funding program at 40%.

Mountain Parcel

Block 51 P/O Lot 22.03
138 Acres

\$2,100,000 CFMV

County Grant request to D&R Greenway	500,000
County Grant request to FHVOS	500,000

Agricultural Property

Block 29 Lot 9
82 acres

\$1,435,000 CFMV

County Grant request to D&R Greenway	500,000
County Grant request to other	217,500

Connector Property

Block 29 Lot 18.02
28 acres

\$500,000 CFMV

County Grant Request D&R Greenway (or to the Twp.)	250,000
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The mountain property has existing trails and would be used for passive public recreation. The agricultural parcel will continue in agricultural use where there are large farm fields, and the property would also provide for trails. Deer management was also proposed, and the D&R Greenway would manage the properties. The properties have connections to existing state and township open space land and there are also several preserved farms in the area.

Discussion was as follows:

- It was noted that a few years ago the forest was cut down on Lot 18.02
- The Township funding for the connector parcel is pending council approval.
- It was not clear if the Green Aces funding was currently available, and it was clarified that the county would not give the applicant the grant without all the other funds secured.
- The application for the Mountain parcel included a request for a county share of \$350,000 plus ancillary cost. Ms. Floyd informed the Board that the county does not provide funds for ancillary costs and that the county direct funding was outside the grant program and Board approval.
- The funding is based on 50% of CFMV, so if they purchase for less than CFMV the difference would be a donation and part of their match
- It was agreed that they could be three separate applications, and it was noted that the total grant request of \$1,967,500 was under the project cap of \$2,000,000.
- It was also noted that all the grantees were providing some funding.

Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the grant requests for all three properties, Mr. Shine seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Staff

Ms. Floyd announced that Emily Blackman will be joining the Planning Department staff in September. She is from the D&R Greenway and will be working with the Open Space Preservation Board.

Ms. Roger reported that she also has a new staff member, who has been hired as the County land Steward. Jillian Stark will be working with Emily on stewardship issue. Per Jenn's suggestion it was agreed that Jillian would join us at the next Meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2017.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hershey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Mount seconded the motion. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Fritzingler
Secretary