

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

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

October 2, 2018

PRESENT:

Leslie R. Floyd
Haig Kasabach, Chair
Alan Hershey, Vice Chair
Wendy Mager
Tricia Fagan (arrived late)
Jennifer Rogers

REPRESENTATION:

County Executive
Assunpink Rep .
Piedmont Rep.
Millstone Rep.
Cultural Rep.
Park Commission

ABSENT:

Michael Shine
Frank D'Amico

Planning Board
Ag. Board Rep.

NON-VOTING:

Emily Blackman
Lisa Fritzinger

Secretary
Assistant Planning Director

Chairman Kasabach called the October 2nd, 2018 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:00 PM.

I. STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Ms. Blackman 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.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the June 5, 2018 minutes. Mr. Kasabach seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Rails-to-Trails, Hamilton/Robbinsville

Ms. Floyd reported that there has been progress with this project since the last meeting. The current negotiation is likely to be the most time consuming.

6/3/18 Rails to Trails Ms. Floyd reported that the negotiations with Conrail continue. We still expect a positive outcome and hope to have news to share at the next meeting.

4/3/18 Rails to Trails Ms. Blackman and Ms. Floyd reported that the negotiation with Conrail is ongoing. There are no updates that can be publically shared as yet, but there has been some positive progress.

10/10/17 Rails to Trails Ms. Fritzing reported that the County is still negotiating about the acquisition cost. Conrail is in the process of contacting landowners adjacent to the corridor to see if any want to purchase land. Conrail does not want to donate too much of the value of the corridor because of the precedent it might set for its other corridors around the country.

8/8/2017 Rails to Trails Ms. Fritzing 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. Fritzing reported that negotiations are still ongoing with Conrail.

2/7/2017 Rails to Trails Ms. Fritzing 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 meet 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. Fritzing 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. Fritzing 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. Fritzing notified the board that the parcel of land the County is purchasing is owned by Conrail.

B. Herrontown Woods Transfer

Ms. Fritzing reported that the transfer of the Herrontown Preserve from the County to Princeton is complete. She clarified that the County will continue to own the Powell land with D&R Greenway managing.

6/5/18 Herrontown Ms. Floyd reported that the transfer of the Herrontown Preserve from the County to Princeton is almost complete.

4/3/18 Herrontown Woods Transfer Ms. Floyd reported that the Powell property closed and both Powell lots will be managed by D&R Greenway Land Trust. The transfer of the Herrontown Woods property to Princeton is in process and should be completed soon. The County will continue to own the two Powell lots.

10/10/2017 Powell Property/Herrontown Transfer Ms. Fritzing reported that we should be able to close soon on the second Powell lot. There is a berm that needs to be removed that required a wetlands permit. The contactors have obtained the permit and are in the process of the removing the berm and some debris now. Ms. Floyd updated the committee on the transfer of Herrontown Woods from the County to Princeton. Both Powell lots will be transferred to Princeton as well – the County is working through the Green Acres property transfer process.

2/7/2017 Powell Property Ms. Fritzing reported that lot 11 is still undergoing the cleanup of the dump site.

12/6/2016 Powell Property, Princeton Mrs. Fritzing 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. Fritzing reported that the property is adjacent to Herrontown 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.

C. Crosswicks Greenway/AT&T

Ms. Fritzing reported that an agreement of sale for the AT&T property has been approved and technical work is in progress.

6/5/18 Crosswicks Greenway Ms. Fritzing reported that the County is currently in contract negotiations with AT&T for the AT&T property that would add to the Crosswicks Greenway. Ms. Fritzing then reviewed maps of the Crosswicks Greenway trail plan for the Board's information. Mr. D'Amico brought up the importance of farmers being able to hunt stream corridors on their properties for deer management. In the Crosswicks Greenway, most of the stream corridors have been subdivided from the farms to the north to provide land for the future trail. It would be ideal if the County could have a deer hunting program for these areas.

4/3/18 Crosswicks Greenway Ms. Blackman and Ms. Floyd reported that the County is in the process of buying a small property from AT&T that will add to the Crosswicks Greenway to improve potential trail connections. The Board expressed interest in re-visiting the maps of the Greenway and trail plan at the next meeting.

(Ms. Fagan arrived 5:10 pm)

D. County Stewardship Projects

Ms. Blackman and Ms. Rogers reported to the Board about County stewardship projects planned for this fall on both County parkland and open space. The projects include the County's large freshwater tidal wetland restoration at Roebing Park and a number of meadow restorations where native wildflowers and grasses will be planted to create pollinator habitat. These projects are being funded by the County Open Space Trust Fund.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Grant Applications

a. Maziarz Property, Hopewell – D&R Greenway Land Trust application

32 acres (open space fee), 194 Van Dyke Road, Block 4, Lot 24

Grant Request: 40% CMV or appraised value (~\$180,000)

Status: Approved

Ms. Blackman presented the Maziarz property application for the Board's consideration. D&R Greenway Land Trust (D&RG) applied for 40% of the Certified Fair Market Value (CMV) or appraised value (~\$180,000) to preserve 32 acres of the Maziarz property at 194 Van Dyke Road in Hopewell Township (Block 4, Lot 24) in fee. The entire property is 38 acres, including a residence. The residence will be subdivided on a 6 acre lot prior to preservation, leaving 32 acres of open space. D&RG has one appraisal at \$13,800 per acre, so the 32 acres of open space is valued at \$441,600 based on the one appraisal. If D&RG uses Green Acres funding, they will obtain a second appraisal and a CMV. In addition, D&RG has the property under contract for \$375,000, so this is a bargain sale for the owner. The property is forested wetlands with a significant tributary of the Stony Brook and important wildlife habitat. D&RG is planning a trail connecting their Sourlands Ecosystem Preserve with their Cedar Ridge Preserve to the south. This property would be part of that connection. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application for 40% of CFMV or appraised value if D&RG does not use Green Acres funding. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. The application was unanimously approved.

b. Brown Property, Hamilton – Hamilton Township application

8.5 acres (open space fee), 79 Zieglers Lane, Block 1722, Lot 107

Grant Request: 40% CMV (\$156,000)

Status: Approved

Ms. Blackman presented the Brown property application for the Board's consideration. Hamilton Township applied for 40% of CMV (\$156,000) to preserve the 8.5 acre Brown property at 79 Zieglers Lane in Hamilton Township (Block 1722, Lot 107) in fee. The Township has obtained a Green Acres CMV for the property for \$390,000. The property is adjacent to the Township-owned Sayen Gardens and Park and primarily consists of forested wetlands, with a branch of the Miry Run on the property. There is an existing residence and sheds on the property, which the Township plans to demolish

after preservation. They plan to extend trails from Sayen Gardens into the property, with no significant infrastructure due to the wetlands. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application for 40% of CMV. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. The application was unanimously approved.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Blackman, Secretary