

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

McDade Administration Building
Planning Department (4th Floor)
640 South Broad Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08650-0068

July 2nd, 2019

PRESENT:

Leslie R. Floyd
Haig Kasabach, Chair
Tricia Fagan
Wendy Mager
Michael Shine

REPRESENTATION:

County Executive
Assunpink Rep .
Cultural Rep.
Millstone Rep.
Planning Board Rep.

ABSENT:

Alan Hershey, Vice Chair
Jennifer Rogers
Kristine Walsh

Piedmont Rep.
Park Commission Rep.
Ag. Board Rep.

NON-VOTING:

Emily Blackman
Lisa Fritzingler

Secretary
Assistant Planning Director

GUESTS:

Mike Pisauro, The Watershed Institute

Chairman Kasabach called the July 2nd, 2019 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:05 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

Ms. Mager noted a minor correction needed in the March 5th, 2019 minutes. Ms. Blackman thanked her and will make the correction. Ms. Mager made a motion to approve the March 5th, 2019 minutes. Mr. Shine seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Assunpink Greenway – Wolff Property: Ms. Fritzingler updated the Board about the preservation of the Wolff property. The property is one of the missing links in the Assunpink Greenway and the County is currently in negotiations with the owner for open space preservation.

B. Rails-to-Trails, Hamilton/Robbinsville: Ms. Floyd reported that the negotiations are continuing. There are no substantive updates at this time.

3/5/2019 Rails-to-Trails, Hamilton/Robbinsville Ms. Floyd reported that the negotiations are continuing with Conrail.

10/2/18 Rails to Trails 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.

6/5/18 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.

- C. Dam Site 21 Park Development:** Ms. Floyd and Ms. Fritzing provided an update for the Board ó there have been recent public meetings to discuss the park development with the public and get input. Feedback has been both positive and negative, with neighbors worried about traffic impacts among other issues. The process will continue this fall.

3/5/2019 Dam Site 21 Park Development Ms. Floyd and Ms. Fritzing introduced the Board to this project – the County is undertaking a planning process with a consultant to determine the future development of the ~275 acre park. Currently, the County is hosting meetings with a steering committee made up of local stakeholders, as well as multiple public meetings to get input from the community about what they want to see at the park.

- D. County Stewardship Projects:** Ms. Blackman updated the Board about the County's Roots for Rivers stream reforestation projects. With the help of hundreds of volunteers, the County planted ~4,000 native trees and shrubs at two sites along Moores Creek in Hopewell near Baldpate Mountain and along the Stony Brook in Mercer Meadows this spring. The County partnered with the Sourland Conservancy and the Watershed Ambassadors for the Moores Creek project. Funding came from a grant program funded by The Nature Conservancy, The Watershed Institute and Sustainable Jersey.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Grant Applications

- a. Princeton Ridge Property, Princeton – The Watershed Institute application**
3 acres (open space fee), 394 Ridgeview Road, Block 2001, Lot 22
Grant Request: 40% CMV (~\$222,200)
Status: Approved

Ms. Blackman presented the Princeton Ridge property application for the Board's consideration. The Watershed Institute applied for 40% of CMV, estimated at \$222,200 (CMV estimate: \$555,500 based on two appraisals), for the ~3 acre Princeton Ridge property on Ridgeview Road in Princeton. The property contains significant wetlands and the headwaters of the Mountain Brook, which drains to the Mountain Lakes Preserve and the Stony Brook, a C-1 stream that is a regional recreational asset and drinking water source. The Nature Conservancy's Conservation Blueprint mapping ranks this property as among the highest priority for the preservation of headwaters in natural cover. The Friends of Princeton Open Space (FOPOS) are partners on this project. Mr. Pisauro of The Watershed Institute added that recent testing on site and immediately downstream show that the stream has very high water quality. He also added that the property owner was proposing developing the property for residential use, but has signed an option agreement for preservation. In addition, the property has steep slopes, which adds to the argument for preservation to protect water quality from erosion. Mr. Shine made a motion to approve the application for 40% of CMV. Ms. Fagan seconded the motion. Ms. Mager recused herself because she is the President of the FOPOS Board. The motion was unanimously approved.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Blackman, Secretary