

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

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

September 3rd, 2019

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

Jennifer Rogers
Kristine Walsh

NON-VOTING:

Lisa Fritzinger

REPRESENTATION:

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

Park Commission Rep.
Ag. Board Rep.

Assistant Planning Director

Chairman Kasabach called the September 3, 2019 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:05 PM.

I. STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Ms. Fritzinger 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 July 2, 2019 minutes. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **Assunpink Greenway – Wolff Property:** Ms. Fritzinger reported that one of the two appraisals has been completed and the second appraisal is expected soon.

7/2/2019 Assunpink Greenway – Wolff Property Ms. Fritzinger 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. Fritzinger reported that we are continuing to work with Rails – to Trails and they have recommended an attorney with experience negotiating with Conrail to help us with an approach to address the liability issues.

7/2/2019 Rails –to Trails 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. Fritzingler 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. 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 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. 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.

- C. Dam Site 21 Park Development:** The Master Planning process is continuing. During the summer there were interviews with residents both in favor and in opposition to the park development. The online survey is available into October.

7/3/2019 Dam Site 21 Park Development Ms. Floyd and Ms. Fritzingler provided an update for the Board – 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. Fritzingler 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.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Grant Applications

a. Bennet 641 Etra Rd East Windsor – East Windsor Township applicant

11.23 acres (open space fee), Block 32, po/Lot 22

Grant Request: 40% CMV (\$96,000)

Status: Approved

Ms. Fritzinger presented the property application for the Board’s consideration. The property is to be preserved in fee. A one acre residential lot is to be subdivided out for the purchase. The property is adjacent Disbrow Hill Park and will expand open space acreage for this area and also provides additional access to Disbrow Hill Park via Etra Road. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application for 40% of CMV. Mr. Shine seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

b. Padalino 144 Harbourton-Woodsville Road – Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space applicant

31 acres Block 51 Lot 43

Grant Request: \$200,000

Status: approved

Mr. Fritzinger presented the property application for the Board’s consideration. The property is to be preserved in fee and is 31 acres that adjoins 146 acres of preserved open space known as the Woosamonsa Ridge Preserve. This property will provide additional acres to the trail network of the Ridge and be available for passive recreation. Ms. Fritzinger reported that the application request of \$200,000 is based on 40% of the contract purchase price. The appraised values have just been provided this afternoon, (\$527,000 and \$737,800) and they are not within 10% of each other. The board was hesitant to approve a grant of 40% of CFMV since the higher value was so much higher than the contract price. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the \$200,000 as requested in the application and if they need more funding they have the option to come back to the Board. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. 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,

Lisa K. Fritzinger, Acting Secretary