

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

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

December 3rd, 2019

PRESENT:

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

REPRESENTATION:

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

NON-VOTING:

Emily Blackman

Secretary

Chairman Kasabach called the December 3, 2019 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

Ms. Blackman noted that Ms. Mager sent a correction for the September minutes. Mr. Shine made a motion to approve the September 3, 2019 minutes with the correction. Mr. Hershey seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved. Ms. Rogers abstained because she was not present at the meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Assunpink Greenway – Wolff Property:** Ms. Floyd updated the Board about the acquisition of the Wolff property. The agreement of sale is under negotiation.

9/3/2019 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. Floyd reported that negotiations are continuing – based on a recommendation from an attorney who has worked on this type of project, the County is hiring a consultant to begin a title investigation.

9/3/2019 Rails-to-Trails, Hamilton/Robbinsville: Ms. Fritzing 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. 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 updated the Board on the master planning process for this park – an updated draft master plan was released in November after multiple public meetings. After the public comment period, the plan will be finalized and presented to the Park Commission for a vote.

9/3/2019 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. Fritzing 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. 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.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Draft 2020 Meeting Schedule: The Board agreed to continue to hold meetings on the first Tuesday of every other month at 5 pm in the planning office. There will continue to be the possibility of meeting on alternate months if needed. The schedule will be formally adopted at the February 4th, 2020 reorganization meeting.

B. Grant Applications:

a. Padalino - Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space applicant

31 acres, 144 Harbourton-Woodsville Road; Block 51, Lot 43, Hopewell Township
Amended Grant Request: \$295,120 (40% CMV)
Status: approved

Ms. Blackman presented the amended property application for the Board's consideration. The property's purchase price is \$500,000, with appraised values of \$527,000 and \$737,800. At the time of application, the Board approved a grant for 40% of the purchase price (\$200,000) rather than the CMV because of the large difference in the two appraisals. However, since the September meeting, Green Acres certified the higher \$737,800 value and therefore FOHVOS requested a grant for 40% of CMV (\$295,120) from the County so that they can use less of their Green Acres funding of this project. They have already identified another project for their remaining Green Acres funds. Mr. Shine made a motion to approve the grant for \$295,120 as requested. Mr. Hershey seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

b. Riggerbach – East Windsor Township applicant

15.7 acres, 949 Perrineville Road; Block 31, Lot 21, East Windsor Township
Amended Grant Request: \$121,540 (40% CMV)
Status: approved

Ms. Blackman presented the Riggerbach property application for the Board's consideration. The property's purchase price is \$225,000, with a CMV of \$303,850. East Windsor Township requested a grant for 40% of CMV, or \$121,540. The property is 15.7 acres and is approximately half forested wetlands. The other half is an agricultural field. A tributary of the Rocky Brook runs through the property. The preservation of this property will add to the significant block of preserved land in this part of the Township – it is adjacent to 174 acres of preserved farmland. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the grant for \$121,540 as requested. Ms. Mager seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Blackman, Secretary