

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

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

March 3rd, 2020

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

Wendy Mager
Kristine Walsh

NON-VOTING:

Emily Blackman
Lisa Fritzinger

REPRESENTATION:

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

Millstone Rep.
Ag. Board Rep.

Secretary
Assistant Planning Director

Chairman Kasabach called the March 3, 2020 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

Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the December 3, 2019 minutes. Mr. Shine seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Project Updates

a. **County Open Space Acquisitions:** The County is working on three open space acquisition projects. Ms. Fritzinger updated the Board about the acquisition of the Wolff property (Assunpink Greenway) – the survey is underway. There are also two potential acquisitions under negotiation adjacent to Baldpate Mountain.

b. **Park Development**

i. **Dam Site 21 (Miry Run):** Ms. Floyd and Ms. Fritzinger updated the Board on the master planning process for this park – the Park Commission approved the final plan in January. The Board commented that they thought there were good changes made based on neighbor and other stakeholder input.

- ii. **Moore Station Quarry:** Ms. Blackman updated the Board about the status of the quarry reclamation and park development. There is currently a RFP (Request for Proposals) process underway to choose a consultant to do a feasibility analysis and master plan.
- c. **2020 Stewardship Projects:** Ms. Blackman and Ms. Rogers provided a summary for the Board of some of the County's stewardship projects planned for the year, including meadow and forest restorations and the continuation of the Roebing Park wetland restoration project. Ms. Rogers also provided an update about the County's deer management program.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2020 Reorganization

- a. **Election of Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Board Attorney):** Ms. Floyd made a motion to re-elect the current officers – Mr. Kasabach as Chair, Mr. Hershey as Vice-Chair, Ms. Blackman as Secretary and Ms. Bacso as Attorney. Mr. Hershey seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- b. **Adoption of 2020 Meeting Schedule:** Ms. Floyd made a motion to adopt the draft 2020 meeting dates. Ms. Rogers seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. As in previous years, meetings will be held 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.

B. 2020 Open Space Tax and Grant Program Review

- a. **Recommendation for County Executive & Freeholder Resolution for 2020 Tax Levy:** The staff recommendation was to continue to collect the open space tax at \$0.025 per \$100 of equalized assessed value for 2020. Under the voter-approved referendum, the County has the ability to collect up to \$0.03, but \$0.025 is enough to fund needed projects for the year. Ms. Fagan made a motion to approve a resolution recommending that the tax be collected at the \$0.025 level. Mr. Shine seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- b. **Review of Grant Program Policy:** The staff recommendation was to keep the grant policy the same for 2020 – the County will fund up to 40% of CMV or purchase price (50% for urban projects) up to \$1.6 million per project. Staff recommended adding some language clarifying the County's position on funding CMV versus purchase price in cases where grantees obtain a bargain sale and purchase price is less than CMV. The County's policy is to encourage bargain sales and fund up to 40% of CMV, even if the purchase price is lower; however, in no case can the total public funding, including State, County and local funding, exceed the purchase price. The Board had some revisions to the proposed language. Ms. Blackman will make the revisions and send the final policy to the Board and post it to the County's website.

- C. **County Open Space Plan Update Discussion:** Ms. Blackman let the Board know that the County is updating the open space plan this year, as required by Green Acres. Staff will send a draft plan to the Board for review later in the year. The Planning Board will also adopt the plan as part of the County's Master Plan.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Blackman, Secretary

Date Adopted: June 2, 2020