

## OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

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

***\*\*Meeting via Zoom online platform due to Covid-19 County facility closure\*\****

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

### PRESENT:

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

### REPRESENTATION:

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

### ABSENT:

Kristine Walsh

Ag. Board Rep.

### NON-VOTING:

Emily Blackman  
Lisa Fritzingler

Secretary  
Assistant Planning Director

### PUBLIC:

Dan Pace

Chairman Kasabach called the June 2, 2020 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:07 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 on the County Planning Department's website, including a public zoom meeting link and instructions.

## II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the March 3, 2020 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:** Ms. Fritzingler updated the Board about current County acquisition projects. The survey is in progress for the Wolff property (Assunpink Greenway) and it should close this month or soon after. The two projects near Baldpate are under negotiation – the property off of Route 29 has an agreement of sale in progress and the County is in discussions about the appraisals with the owners of the property off of Fiddlers Creek Road.

**b. Park Development**

- i. Dam Site 21 (Miry Run):** There are no updates at this time.
- ii. Moore's Station Quarry:** A contract for a feasibility analysis and master plan was recently approved by the Park Commission with Simone Collins, the firm who did the master plan for Dam Site 21. They plan to begin fieldwork this summer.

- c. 2020 Stewardship Projects:** Ms. Blackman and Ms. Rogers discussed the County's stewardship projects for the year. Spring meadow seeding projects will take place this fall, with some projects likely to be pushed back until next spring. There are two forest restoration projects planned that will involve new deer fencing, with the goal of encouraging native forest understory growth in relatively undisturbed forest (land that has not been recently farmed). The Board asked some questions about the cost of fencing, materials to be used and protocols for monitoring fence breaches. Ms. Blackman will share the fence cost for the projects once quotes are received. Ms. Rogers shared some lessons learned about fence monitoring and materials from other projects. The Board also asked whether there are any studies comparing the understory between fenced and non-fenced areas in the same forest. Ms. Rogers stated that the Park Commission will be collecting data to monitor this for both new projects and that there are studies from other projects (especially from Raritan Valley Community College) showing significant native forest regrowth with deer fencing in place in forests that have not been recently disturbed.

The Board also asked what the Park Commission's policy is regarding volunteer events, given the Covid-19 public health guidelines. Ms. Rogers stated that there is no formal policy yet; currently events are being considered on a case by case basis. Social distance must be maintained, participants must wear a face covering and equipment cannot be shared.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Grant Applications**

- a. Vagnozzi property, Hamilton Township – Hamilton Township application (NJCF partner)**  
17.88 acres, 337 Merrick Road (Block 2714, Lot 22);  
Grant request: \$39,320, 40% CMV  
**Status: Approved**

Ms. Blackman presented the Vagnozzi property application for the Board's consideration. It is 17.88 acres at 337 Merrick Road (Block 2714, Lot 22), entirely forested and almost 100% wetland. It is part of the floodplain for Back Creek, which drains to Crosswicks Creek and is adjacent to the Lord Estate property, preserved by Hamilton in 2018 as open space. The CMV is \$98,300 and the grant request was for 40%, or \$39,320. The applicant is Hamilton Township and they are partnering with the NJ Conservation Foundation for the project. The Board asked what the Lord Estate property's current use is. Ms. Blackman did not know, but believes it is likely continuing to be farmed. The Township plans to have very limited public access on the Vagnozzi property because of the wetlands. Ms. Mager made a motion to approve the application, which was seconded by Mr. Hershey. The application was unanimously approved.

- b. Disbrow Hill Road property, East Windsor Township- East Windsor Township application**  
3.64 acres, 104 Disbrow Hill Road (Block 32, Lot 5);  
Grant Request: \$38,000 (40% CMV)  
**Status: Approved**

Ms. Blackman presented the Disbrow Hill Road property application from East Windsor Township for the Board's consideration. It is 3.64 acres at 104 Disbrow Hill Road (Block 32, Lot 5) and is currently being used as a farm field. It is adjacent to the Township's Etra Lake Park and Disbrow Hill Park. The Township plans to continue leasing the property to a farmer for now. The CMV is \$95,000

and the grant request was for 40%, or \$38,000. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application, which was seconded by Mr. Kasabach. The application was unanimously approved.

- B. County Open Space Plan Update Discussion:** Ms. Fritzinger updated the Board about the status of the County's Open Space Plan update. She is looking at some online data sources for information, such as the state's Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) project and the NJ Blueprint project.

**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: October 6, 2020**