

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

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

****Meeting via Zoom online platform due to Covid-19****

October 6th, 2020

PRESENT:

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

REPRESENTATION:

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

ABSENT:

Jennifer Rogers

Park Commission Rep.

NON-VOTING:

Emily Blackman
Lisa Fritzingler

Secretary
Assistant Planning Director

PUBLIC:

Dan Pace

Chairman Kasabach called the October 6, 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 on the County Planning Department’s website, including a public zoom meeting link and instructions.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Shine made a motion to approve the June 2nd, 2020 minutes. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

IV. OLD BUSINESS: None

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Grant Applications

1. Singh property, Hopewell Township – D&R Greenway Land Trust application

Fee, 10 acres, 151 Lambertville-Hopewell Road (Block 22, Lot 6);
Grant request: \$36,000 (40% Appraised Value)

Status: Approved, \$36,000

Ms. Blackman presented the Singh property application from D&R Greenway Land Trust for the Board's consideration. The property is approximately 14 acres, 10 of which are proposed to be subdivided and preserved as open space in fee, with the remaining 4 retained by the landowner. The property is located at 151 Lambertville-Hopewell Road (Block 22, Lot 6) and almost entirely forested with wetlands and branches of the Stony Brook, a C-1 stream. Preservation of the property will provide floodplain protection for the Stony Brook and protect wildlife habitat. Public access will be provided from Stony Brook Road and the property is adjacent to other D&R Greenway-preserved land. D&R Greenway obtained one appraisal for the 10 acres to be preserved valued at \$90,000 and requested a 40% grant, or \$36,000 from the County. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application, which was seconded by Mr. Shine. The application was unanimously approved.

2. Cifelli property, Hopewell Township- D&R Greenway Land Trust application

Easement, 50.16 acres, 299 Pennington-Harbourton Road (Block 50, Lot 7);

Grant Request: 40% CMV (estimated at \$243,700)

Status: Approved, not to exceed \$248,520 (40% of higher appraisal)

Ms. Blackman presented the Cifelli property application from D&R Greenway Land Trust for the Board's consideration. The property is 50.13 acres, 48 of which are proposed to be preserved with a conservation easement, with the remaining 2 acres in a non-severable exception area around the existing house. Of the 48 acres preserved, 16 would have public access that would allow part of a trail connection from the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space's (FOHVOS) Jacobs Creek Trail to the south to the Woosamonsa Ridge Preserve to the north, managed by D&R Greenway and FOHVOS. The property contains mature forest, high quality wildlife habitat according to NJDEP data and a portion of Jacobs Creek, which is classified as a C-1 stream. D&R Greenway obtained two appraisals for the conservation easement, valued at \$621,300 and \$597,200 and are awaiting a Green Acres CMV. Their grant request was for 40% of CMV.

Ms. Blackman explained that the Board could consider approving a grant for 40% of CMV using 40% of the average of the two appraisals (\$243,700) as an estimate and the grant agreement would not be finalized until the CMV is finalized. Ms. Floyd suggested that rather than using the average for an estimate, the Board could consider approving a grant for 40% of CMV not to exceed 40% of the higher appraisal, or \$248,520 in the event that Green Acres certifies the higher value. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application, not to exceed 40% of the higher appraisal, which was seconded by Ms. Mager. The application was unanimously approved.

VI. DISCUSSION

A. Project Updates

1. County Open Space/Farmland Acquisitions: Ms. Blackman reported that two County farmland preservation projects are under contract that include public access components for trail connections. Ms. Fritzingler updated the Board about current County open space acquisition projects. The property off of Route 29 adjacent to Baldpate is under contract and negotiations continue with the owners of the property off of Fiddlers Creek Road, also adjacent to Baldpate. Three other open space projects are currently under negotiation.

2. Park Development

a. Dam Site 21 (Miry Run): There are no updates at this time.

b. Moores Station Quarry: The contractor for the feasibility analysis and master plan has begun work. There have been internal meetings and a schedule of public meetings proposed.

3. 2020 Stewardship Projects: Some projects have been delayed due to Covid-19, but meadow seeding is in progress this fall at a number of sites, including adjacent to the new section of LHT in Mercer Meadows. Also, the Park Commission planted 1,400 native trees and shrubs near Rosedale Lake in Mercer Meadows with

volunteers in September through a Roots for Rivers Grant from The Nature Conservancy. Two fencing projects planned for this fall will be postponed until next year.

4. County Open Space Plan Update: Ms. Fritzinger reported that work on the open space plan update is ongoing and a draft will be ready early next year.

5. Return on Environment Study: Ms. Fritzinger reported that the County has contracted with a consultant through the DVRPC to do a Return on Environment Study for all of the preserved land in the County. The study will quantify all of the benefits of the preserved land – including monetary benefits, public health, the environment and others.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VIII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hershey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Shine seconded. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Blackman, Secretary

Date Adopted: April 6, 2021