

**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\*\***

**December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**PRESENT:**

Leslie R. Floyd  
Haig Kasabach, Chair  
Alan Hershey, Vice Chair  
Wendy Mager  
Jennifer Rogers

**REPRESENTATION:**

County Executive  
Assunpink Rep.  
Piedmont Rep.  
Millstone Rep.  
Park Commission Rep.

**ABSENT:**

Tricia Fagan  
Michael Shine  
Kristine Walsh

Cultural Rep.  
Planning Board Rep.  
Ag. Board Rep.

**NON-VOTING:**

Emily Blackman  
Lisa Fritzingler

Senior Planner/ Board Secretary  
Assistant Planning Director

**PUBLIC:** Chris Barr, Patricia Shanley – Ridgeview Conservancy

Chairman Kasabach called the December 7th, 2021 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:02 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 October 5, 2021 minutes. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**IV. OLD BUSINESS: None**

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Open Space Grant Applications**

- a. Chebotarev Property Conservation Easement, Princeton – Ridgeview Conservancy application  
1267 Great Road, B401, L1  
**Application Status:** Approved for \$146,000 (40% Appraised Value)

Ms. Blackman introduced the Chebotarev property application from the Ridgeview Conservancy for the Board’s consideration. The Chebotarevs own an approximately 11-acre property with one house and have agreed to place a conservation easement on 8.7 acres of the property. They had preliminary approvals from Princeton to subdivide their lot to build a second house but have instead agreed to an option agreement with Ridgeview Conservancy for the easement. Preservation of the property will protect mature wooded wetland habitat and a stream corridor – and will add to the trail

network planned in this area. There are also historic resources of note on the property – namely a Lenni Lenape camp and a part of the homestead of Paul Tulane. Preservation of the property will contribute to Princeton’s “Emerald Necklace” initiative to preserve a greenbelt around the town’s borders. Ridgeview Conservancy obtained an appraisal for \$365,000 and applied to the County for a 40% grant (\$146,000). They do not need to obtain a second appraisal because they are not using Green Acres funding. Ridgeview and D&R Greenway will provide the balance of funding through fundraising.

Mr. Hershey asked for clarification about a discrepancy between the 8.7-acre preservation area shown on the easement survey plan provided with the application and the 6.7-acre area shown for the second lot in a survey provided in the appraisal. Ms. Mager and Mr. Hershey also asked for clarification about whether the Chebotarevs had obtained subdivision approval or not and how that was accounted for in the appraisal. Mr. Chris Barr and Ms. Patricia Stanley were present representing the Ridgeview Conservancy and Mr. Barr answered these questions. Mr. Barr stated that the Chebotarevs had obtained subdivision approval from the town, conditioned upon obtaining NJDEP permits. The DEP was going to require a different driveway placement than originally shown and rather than continue to pursue the subdivision, the Chebotarevs decided to enter into the agreement for the easement. The 6.7-acre area shown on the appraisal survey was the area that was going to be subdivided to create the second lot. The 8.7-acre area on the easement survey plan is the area that will be preserved. The proposed building lot for the second house is included in the easement area to ensure that no development can ever take place on the property. The appraisal’s value takes into account the fact that the property could have received development approvals for the additional house. Mr. Hershey also asked for an explanation of the planned trail network in the area. Mr. Barr walked the Board through the existing preserved land in the network and the plan to connect it in the future.

Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the application for 40% of appraised value, seconded by Ms. Mager. The application was unanimously approved.

## VI. DISCUSSION

**A. 2022 Meeting Dates:** Ms. Blackman shared the proposed 2022 meeting dates with the Board and asked Board members to let the Planning Department know if they have conflicts with any dates. Ms. Blackman noted that reorganization is scheduled for Tuesday, February 1, 2022. In past years, reorganization has been pushed back until April if there are no applications for February or March meetings. The April date would be Tuesday, April 5, 2022.

### B. Project Updates

- 1. County Open Space/Farmland Acquisitions:** Ms. Blackman and Ms. Fritzing reported that the County’s current open space and farmland preservation projects are ongoing. The Chowdhury property farm preservation and trail connection project should close soon and the Kerr farm project subdivision will be before the Hopewell Township Planning Board this month. The Gallagher property open space preservation project that will be an addition to Baldpate is now underway again after a long period of negotiation with the landowner. It will allow for a new trail connection between Baldpate and the Fiddlers Creek Preserve across the road.
- 2. Park Development:** Ms. Floyd provided an update about park development projects – the Park Commission recently adopted the final quarry master plan and initial planning and construction is underway for the Dam Site 21 park development project. Ms. Floyd also mentioned that the voter referendum passed recently to reallocate the Open Space Trust Fund to allow more funds for park development and stewardship. These funds will help pay for these large park development projects. Finally, the County is working with the NJDOT and the City of Trenton on plans to rebuild a wharf in Trenton as part of a road stabilization project.
- 3. 2021 Stewardship Projects:** Ms. Rogers provided the following update on recent County stewardship projects:
  - The Stewardship Department has obtained funding for a community deer management program on Baldpate and Mercer Meadows. Through the program, County agents (hunters) will be allowed to hunt deer outside of the state’s regular season and outside of the state’s regular regulations (e.g., County agents will be allowed to hunt at night). The venison will be donated. This hunting program will result in some additional trail closings in March for three-day periods.

- 2021 meadow seeding projects are complete, including ~32 acres at Mercer County Park.
- The Stewardship Department has obtained funding for a Forest Stewardship Plan for Mercer Meadows.
- There is a public symposium on December 8, 2021 about the living shoreline restoration project at Roebling Park. Ms. Rogers noted that the Department has obtained funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Fund for this project.

**VII. CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**VIII. CLOSED SESSION** (if necessary): None

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Blackman, Secretary

**Date Adopted: February 1, 2022**  
**Acting Secretary Lisa K. Fritzing**

