

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****

February 1, 2022

PRESENT:

Leslie R. Floyd
Haig Kasabach, Chair
Alan Hershey, Vice Chair
Tricia Fagan
Anthony Cucchi

REPRESENTATION:

County Executive
Assunpink Rep.
Piedmont Rep.
Cultural Heritage
Park Commission Rep.

ABSENT:

Michael Shine
Kristine Walsh
Wendy Mager

Planning Board Rep.
Ag. Board Rep.
Millstone Rep.

NON-VOTING:

Acting Board Secretary
Lisa Fritzingler

Assistant Planning Director

PUBLIC:

Chairman Kasabach called the February 1, 2022 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:02 PM.

I. STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Ms. Fritzingler 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 December 7, 2021 minutes. Ms. Floyd seconded the motion. Mr. Cucchi and Ms. Fagan abstained. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

IV. OLD BUSINESS: None

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Reorganization:

Ms. Floyd made a request for nominations for chair. Mr. Hershey made a motion to continue with the existing officers. Ms. Fagan seconded the motion. The following slate was unanimously approved. Mr. Kasabach, Chair, Mr. Hershey Vice Chair, Ms. Fritzingler Acting Secretary, and Ms. Bacso Attorney.

B. Project Updates

1. **County Open Space/Farmland Acquisitions:** Ms. Fritzinger reported the following:

Fiddlers Creek Property, Baldpate Mountain

The agreement of sale on the Fiddlers Creek property is on the next Commissioners agenda. This property is located adjacent to the summit trail entrance and will provide improved access and trail connections on the Mountain.

Rt 29 Baldpate Mountain

This property was under contract but the title and survey could not determine the property boundaries. The appraised value for the land was very low. The Seller have agreed to donate the portion of the property that they have clear title on. The property has a small connection to the Mountain to the north and will provide increase habitat as well as potential connection to other land that may be available for future preservation.

Conrail Rail Line

This 5-mile abandoned rail line is located in Hamilton and Robbinsville. The County has been negotiating for over 2 decades and the owners terminated negotiations 2 years ago. In the past 2 years we have worked with a consultant on the issues that were of concern to Conrail. The County remains committed to this project. Conrail has new leadership and the County has written to Conrail expressing our continued interest.

Hamiton YMCA

The Hamilton YMCA, due to financial reasons, desires to sell the property and lease it back from the new owner. The County holds the easement and it is restricted for outdoor recreation and day camp. The County had looked at purchasing the land but decided that it wasn't in the County's best interests. Hamilton Township is interested and the County is working with them will get additional land for the Crosswicks Greenway and shared parking. The County has agreed to provide a 50% grant to help facilitate the preservation and to get the additional land and parking. The County will also do the survey for the new expanded steam corridor.

Ms. Floyd reported the following:

Kerr Farm

This 400 aces farm is to be divided into 4 smaller farms. There is a public access trail along the Jacobs Creek. The subdivision has been approved by the County and Hopewell Township. Closing should be by the end of this year. Mr. Hershey commented that the parking for the trail of just 2 cars is very small, as it is an attractive connection to many other trails. Ms. Floyd responded that the grade and the space for parking is very limited.

2. **Park Development:** Mr. Cucchi reported the following:

Dam Site 21

Preliminary Phase I improvements are being developed and will be presented to the local Planning Boards in the next few months. Phase I includes boardwalk and trails, a canopy trail, parking and rest rooms. The design and permitting for the lake dredging is also underway.

Fishing Wharf, Trenton

The Fishing Pier near the Stadium in Trenton fell into the Delaware River around 15 years ago. The County is working with DOT to re-establish the pier as part of the DOT flood control project on Route 29.

Morres Station Quarry

The lease on the Quarry with Trap Rock Industries will be up in April of 2023. The Master Plan was adopted in 2021 which has many phases over many years. Trap Rock is preparing the reclamation plan as required on the site before TR leaves. They are no longer mining. The reclamation is required so they leave the quarry safe and will reflect the vision of the Master Plan.

3. **2021 Stewardship Projects:**

Mr. Cucchi reported that deer management is currently active in the park system. The prescribed burn program will again be at Mercer Meadows and Baldpate Mountain. The Roebeling Park Phragmites eradication continues and funding for the Living Shore line and boat launch have been funded by the OS Trust, Green Acres and National Fish & Wildlife Fund. The Park Commission is also working with a museum curator on exhibits for the Tulpehaking Nature Center.

C. Tax Levy

The staff has proposed to levy \$.025 for year 2022. The current rate of .025 is sufficient to continue all open space programs. Mr. Hershey made a motion to approved the resolution from the Open Space Preservation Board recommending the tax levy for 2022 at \$.025. Ms' Fagan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

D. 2022 grant program

The Municipal and No-profit Assistance Program policy was review by the Board. It was agreed that the existing Policy should continue without any changes. Mr. Hershey made a motion and Mr. Kasabach seconded the motion to adopt the 2022 policy without changes. The motion was unanimously approved.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa K. Fritzinger, Acting Secretary

