

**OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING
JULY 2, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

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

VOTING MEMBERS:

(Present)

Maria Connolly, Director of Planning, County Executive Representative
Haig Kasabach, Chair, Assunpink Representative
Alan Hershey, Vice Chair, Piedmont Representative
Wendy Mager, Millstone Representative
Michael Shine, Planning Board Representative
Timothy London, Urban Representative

(Absent)

Dan Benson, County Executive
Emily Blackman, Mercer CADB Representative
Anthony Cucchi, Park Commission Representative

NON-VOTING:

(Present)

Cindy Taylor, Secretary

PUBLIC:

Chris Barr, Executive Director of Ridgeview Conservancy
Patricia Shanley, Director of Stewardship, Ridgeview Conservancy
Inga Reich, Open Space Manager, Princeton Municipality

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Kasabach called the July 2, 2024 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:01 p.m.

I. STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Ms. Taylor announced that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was mailed to the Trenton Times 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 April 2, 2024 minutes. Ms. Mager seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved. Ms. Connolly and Mr. London were recused because they were not present at the previous meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

IV. OLD BUSINESS: None

V. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Ridgeview Conservancy, Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart Applications, 1128 Great Rd, Princeton, NJ 08540**
 - i. Ridgeview Conservancy submitted two applications regarding the Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart property. One is a six-acre conservation and public access easement on Block 301 Lot 3 in Princeton Municipality. This easement will be used to create a public walking trail extending from Drakes Corner Road to the northwest corner of the school's core property, where it meets the adjacent lot -- covered by mature forests, streams, and wetlands -- which Princeton is now seeking to acquire. If/when the neighboring property is acquired, the proposed 6-acre easement will function as a critical link in Princeton's Emerald Necklace by providing public access to the recently conserved 153-acre Woods on Province Line Road. The appraised value for the easement is \$295,000 and the grant request is \$118,000 (40% of the appraised value). The second application is the fee simple purchase of Block 301 Lot 3.02 in Princeton Municipality. This parcel is located immediately adjacent to the six-acre conservation/trail easement which Ridgeview is also seeking to purchase from PASH. The application proposes that Lot 3.02 will provide a parking area to facilitate public access and use of the planned walking trail. The appraised value for the fee simple purchase is \$865,000 and the grant request is \$346,000 (40% of the appraised value). After robust discussion, Mr. Hershey moved to approve the application and Ms. Mager seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.
- b. **New MCOSAP application draft and checklist draft**
 - i. Board members supported the new draft application, including the addition to request a resolution of support from the local governing body. The new application will be uploaded to the County website.

VI. DISCUSSION:

a. Project Updates

- i. Ms. Taylor noted that the County is still pursuing the PennEast property and recently assessed the cost to replace the cesspool with a septic system. Mr. Cucchi was not present to give updates on Parks projects.

b. Public Access Requirement

- i. The Board discussed the County's deed restriction requirement for public access. How to interpret this will be discussed with the new Open Space counsel.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE:

Ms. Taylor read a note from Susan Bacso, outgoing Open Space counsel, thanking the board members for their service to Mercer County.

VIII. CLOSED SESSION (if necessary): None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hershey moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Kasabach seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 pm. The next meeting will be August 6, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Taylor

Cindy Taylor, Secretary