

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING

McDade Administration Building
640 South Broad Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08650-0068

June 6, 2017

PRESENT:

Leslie R. Floyd
Haig Kasabach, Chair
Alan Hershey, Vice Chair
Michael Shine
Jennifer Rogers
Gary Mount

REPRESENTATION:

County Executive
Assunpink Rep.
Piedmont Rep.
Planning Board
Park Commission
Ag. Board Rep.

NON-VOTING:

Lisa Fritzinger

Acting Secretary

Chairman Kasabach called the meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:00 PM

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Ms. Fritzinger announced that pursuant to the Sunshine Law, notice of this meeting was mailed to the Trenton Times and the Trentonian, and was posted in the County Clerk's Office and the County Administration Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hershey made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2017 meeting. Mr. Shine seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD BUSINESS

6/6/2017 Rails to Trails

Mrs. Fritzinger reported that negotiations are still ongoing with Conrail.

12/6/2016 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

Mrs. Fritzinger reported that the Park Commission is evaluating the house and buildings to determine the future uses. A house inspection is also to be done.

10/4/2016 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton

Ms. Fritzinger reported that the agreements are still with the sellers for their execution. The sellers are working on the removal of UST and have indicated that once that is completed they will contact the County regarding the agreement. Ms. Floyd expressed that the County is very enthusiastic about acquiring this property.

8/2/2016 Hughes Drive Property, Hamilton (corrections made 6/6/2017 changing Hughes to Viteritto)

Ms. Fritzinger described that the property is five acres and connects to Dam Site 21. Mr. Viteritto came to the County a few years ago and was interested in having the County purchase the property for preservation. The County had the property appraised and an offer was made. However, Mr. Viteritto got ill and passed away and the acquisition was put on hold. His two sons are now the owners of the property and want to honor their father's commitment to preserving the property. This parcel is in a good location because it will provide a way to get into the dam site. Ms. Floyd reported it will create a nice street entrance.

Ms. Fritzinger reported that the County sent draft agreements to the brothers. An agreement was made between the two parties. The County is now waiting on the brothers to sign and return the agreements.

New Grant Assistance Program

The Board was reminded that the August meeting will be the final opportunity for applications seeking the 50% funding. Applications after that meeting is concluded will be under the new 2017 funding level.

NEW BUSINESS

Schwinn Property, Hopewell Township D&R Greenway Land Trust Inc. request

Mrs. Fritzinger reviewed the application. The Greenway is requesting a \$500,000 county grant. Additional funds are \$400,000 from the Green Acres program and \$159,200 in private donations for a total of \$1,059,200. The \$500,000 grant is less than the certified fair market value (CFMV) but the maximum grant amount.

The property is located near the Hunterdon and Somerset County lines and has connections to the Sourlands Mountains and the Highfields property owned by the State. There are many potential as well as existing connections to a large network of trails in the Sourlands, connecting to preserves in Hunterdon and Somerset County. The property 126 acres; 96 acres are proposed for the conservation restriction, 10 acres for a residential exception area and 10 acres with public access trails along the perimeter of the property as shown on the application map. There was a discussion on the 10 acres exception area. In the farmland preservation program there is a size limit placed on the residential structure. The Board recognized that this conservation easement limits future housing on 96 acres, and that the flexibility in the exception area can be beneficial to negotiating and obtaining the easement from the landowner.