

MINUTES
MORRIS COUNTY
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION TRUST FUND COMMITTEE
30 Schuyler Place, 4th Floor, Morristown, New Jersey
March 19, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 P.M. by Chairperson Poff.

Members present:

Julie Baron, Morris County Park Commission
Paula Danchuk, Region III – Mount Arlington
Louise Davis, Morris County Agriculture Development Board
Ted Eppel, Morris County Planning Board
Janet Foster, Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Review Board
Leon Moreau, At-Large
Kathy Murphy, Region I – Mount Olive
Diana Orban Brown, Region II – Mendham Township
Greg Poff, Region IV – Rockaway Township
Robert Purnell, Region VI - Montville
Stephen Shaw, Region V – Mountain Lakes
Laura Szwak, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
Mark Taylor, Region VIII – Florham Park

Members with excused absence:

Deborah Nielson, At-Large
Rick Watson, Region VII – Morris Township

Also attending:

Deena Leary, Director, Morris County Department of Planning & Development
Ray Chang, Director, Morris County Preservation Trust
Barbara Murray, Open Space Program Coordinator, Morris County Preservation Trust
John Napolitano, Esq., Special Counsel, Morris County Open Space Trust Fund

Members of the public:

Neil Henry, Administrator, Township of Long Hill
Guy Piserchia, Mayor, Township of Long Hill
Jerry Aroneo, Former Committee member, Township of Long Hill
William Huyler, Administrator, Borough of Florham Park

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Chairperson Poff stated that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Acts, adequate notice of the meeting had been provided and filed with the Town of Morristown, the Morris County Clerk, the Daily Record and the Star Ledger.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Deena Leary served as temporary Chairperson and took nominations for the position of Chairperson for 2013.

On a motion by Julie Baron, seconded by Ted Eppel, Greg Poff was nominated for the position of Chairperson. There being no other nominations a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Baron, Danchuk, Davis, Eppel, Foster, Moreau, Murphy, Orban Brown, Poff, Purnell, Shaw, Szwak, Taylor. Nay: None Abstain: None
Greg Poff was again elected Chairperson and chaired the meeting from this point forward.

On a motion by Julie Baron, seconded by Ted Eppel, Laura Szwak was nominated for the position of Vice-Chairperson. There being no other nominations a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Baron, Danchuk, Davis, Eppel, Foster, Moreau, Murphy, Orban Brown, Poff, Purnell, Shaw, Szwak, Taylor. Nay: None Abstain: None
Laura Szwak was elected Vice-Chairperson.

On a motion by Julie Baron, seconded by Ted Eppel, Kathy Murphy was nominated for the position of Secretary. There being no other nominations a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Baron, Danchuk, Davis, Eppel, Foster, Moreau, Murphy, Orban Brown, Poff, Purnell, Shaw, Szwak, Taylor. Nay: None Abstain: None
Kathy Murphy was elected Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Lee Moreau, seconded by Paula Danchuk, the committee approved the minutes of the December 10, 2012 meeting. A roll call vote was taken.
Aye: Baron, Danchuk, Davis, Eppel, Moreau, Orban Brown, Purnell, Szwak
Nay: None Abstain: Foster, Murphy, Poff, Shaw, Taylor

EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, pursuant to P.L. 1975 Ch. 231, the Open Public Meetings Act, the Open Space Trust Fund Committee may exclude the public to discuss matters as are provided under the Act; and

WHEREAS, said Act provided that this Committee may exclude the public from the discussion of such matters,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Open Space Trust Fund Committee hereby excludes the public in order to discuss such matters. The general nature of the subject to be discussed is as follows: Purchase, lease or acquisition of real property. On a motion by Louise Davis, seconded by Stephen Shaw, the committee entered into executive session at 7:35 P.M.

RETURN TO MEETING

The meeting reopened to the public at 8:31 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Financial Disclosure Forms – Ms. Murray stated that forms are due by April 30 and will only be available to file online this year. The form can be accessed at the DCA website.
2. Project Status Report – Ms. Murray reviewed the list of recent and projected closings with the committee.

3. Preservation Trust Fund Tax – Ms. Deena Leary stated the Freeholders set the Preservation Trust Fund tax rate at 1 and 1/8 cents at their February 27 meeting. One-quarter cent will be devoted to the Park Improvement Tax, leaving 7/8 cent devoted to the various programs. In addition, program allocations were adjusted for 2013 to dedicate a portion to the Flood Mitigation Program (FMP) created last year. The municipal/non-profit grant program will receive 35% of the funding pool. Members discussed the reduced tax rate and impact on the open space program and other programs deriving funding from the tax.
4. Report of Flood Mitigation Committee (FMC) – Ms. Louise Davis provided an update on the status of the program. There have been 92 projects to date, 78 are pending and 14 have closed. The projects encompass 7 towns and 13 project areas. A total of 4 Flood Acquisition Plans (FLAPs) have been completed.

Ms. Davis described proposed changes to the composition of the FMC. The changes will be contained in revised rules and regulations. Members shall be residents of Morris County and will serve for a 3-year term. Terms will be staggered beginning next year. Current Open Space Committee members will not be restricted from serving on the FMC. All members must be approved the by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

5. Timeline for Grant Round – Ms. Murray provided members with the grant timeline for the 2013 funding round. She stated applications and appraisals will be due on June 21. This is the first year appraisals will be due the same date as applications. The earlier deadline will allow the county’s review appraiser and applicants additional time to resolve any discrepancies prior to the committee’s review of the applications in September.

OLD BUSINESS

Open Space Element to County Master Plan – Ms. Leary provided a project background. A subcommittee was formed in 2011 to discuss indicators to permit a qualitative analysis of the trust fund goals and objectives, beyond just acres preserved. The subcommittee initiated work by selecting various key indicators. It was suggested to continue the analysis within the framework of an update to the Open Space Plan dating back to 1988. Staff met to decide the critical factors of content, manpower and timeline to produce such a document. In an effort to address many unknown factors which would determine the needs and future of the Preservation Trust Fund tax and provide guidance to the Board of Chosen Freeholders, it was decided to broaden the scope of the document to an Analysis and Strategy Report for the entire Trust Fund. Its scope would the also address the needs of the Park Commission and Municipal Utilities Authority which derive funding from the tax. The report would involve municipal outreach to assess the accuracy of mapped data of preserved lands and well as their goals and objectives. Members discussed and provided feedback on the proposed report.

ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF CLOSED SESSION

(The following votes were taken via e-mail on March 21, 2013):

1. Township of Jefferson/“Shawnee Meadow” - The committee voted to approve a first six-month grant extension for the project. Aye: Baron, Danchuk, Davis,

