

**MINUTES
MORRIS COUNTY
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION TRUST FUND COMMITTEE
30 Schuyler Place, 4th Floor, Morristown, New Jersey
March 27, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 P.M. by Chairperson Rick Watson.

Members present:

John Andrus, Region II – Mendham Borough
George Coogan, Region VII – Morris Plains
Nita Galate, Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Review Board
Robin Jones, Region VI - Pequannock
Joyce Kanigel, Region IV – Rockaway Borough
Annabel Pierce, Morris County Planning Board (arrived 7:41 P.M.)
Guy Piserchia, At-Large
Don Richardson, Region VIII – Long Hill
Elliott Ruga, Region V – Town of Boonton
Laura Szwak, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
Matthew Tal, Morris County Park Commission
Jay Thomson, Morris County Agriculture Development Board
Rick Watson, At-Large

Members with excused absence:

Marcia Asdal, Region I – Chester Twp.
Joseph Nametko, Region III - Netcong

Also attending:

Christine Marion, Director, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation
Barbara Murray, Open Space Program Coordinator, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation

Members of the Public:

None

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Chairperson Watson stated that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, 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.

INTRODUCTIONS

Chairperson Rick Watson introduced himself and invited all members and staff to introduce themselves as well.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Christine Marion served as temporary Chairperson and took nominations for the position of Chairperson for 2017.

On a motion by George Coogan, seconded by Guy Piserchia, Rick Watson was nominated for the position of Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Andrus, Coogan, Galate, Jones, Kanigel, Pierce, Piserchia, Richardson, Ruga, Szwak, Tal, Thomson, Watson Nay: None Abstain: None Rick Watson was elected Chairperson and chaired the meeting from this point forward.

On a motion by Annabel Pierce, seconded by Don Richardson, Guy Piserchia was nominated for the position of Vice-Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Andrus, Coogan, Galate, Jones, Kanigel, Pierce, Piserchia, Richardson, Ruga, Szwak, Tal, Thomson, Watson Nay: None Abstain: None Guy Piserchia was elected Vice-Chairperson.

On a motion by Guy Piserchia, seconded by Don Richardson, Annabel Pierce was nominated for the position of Secretary. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Andrus, Coogan, Galate, Jones, Kanigel, Pierce, Piserchia, Richardson, Ruga, Szwak, Tal, Thomson, Watson Nay: None Abstain: None Annabel Pierce was elected Secretary.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ms. Barbara Murray stated the 2018 open space application form was released in March and is available on the program website.
2. Timeline for Grant Round - Ms. Murray reviewed the grant timeline and process with the Committee. Both applications and appraisals will be due on Friday, June 15. A licensed appraiser will review each appraisal submitted and resolve any discrepancies with the applicants prior to the committee's review at the September meeting. This will be the eighth year of formal appraisal review by the licensed appraiser for all applications. In August, staff prepares materials for an application summary booklet for members to use on the site visits, which are scheduled for September. Final presentations by the applicants will occur in October, as will the committee's final deliberations on grant recommendations. Ms. Murray stated the recommendations of the Committee will be presented to the Board of Chosen Freeholders at their work session on November 7th. Action on the awards will occur at the second Freeholder meeting that month on November 19th.

STAFF REPORT

1. Ms. Murray reviewed the County's policies governing conflict of interest and attendance at meetings with the committee.
2. 2018 Preservation Trust Tax Rate - Ms. Murray stated on February 28, the Board of Chosen Freeholders set the 2018 tax used to fund all Preservation Trust programs at 5/8 cent. Of this amount, the municipal/non-profit grant program was allocated 13/62 cent. Further information on the tax allocation is available on the preservation trust fund website.
3. Morris County Trail Construction Grant Program – Ms. Murray provided a presentation on the status of the Morris County Trail Construction grant program.

The second year of the program was completed in 2017. The program operates as a collaborative effort of the Morris County Park Commission and Office of Planning & Preservation. Grants are awarded for the construction of trails on permanently preserved public parkland or private land with dedicated recreational trail easements. Applications are reviewed by the County's Trail Program Advisory Committee based on criteria including connectivity, constructability, access, and demand; construction documents and cost estimates are also evaluated. All projects require a 20% match and the average award for 2017 was approximately \$96,483. Ms. Murray highlighted features from the applications from both Hanover and Jefferson townships. A total of 6 applications from 6 municipalities were awarded grants totaling approximately \$578,899 with a total of 4.11 miles of proposed new recreational trails of various surface and user types. Program statistics to date: 19 municipalities awarded a total of \$1,239,899 in grant funds to construct 10.288 miles of new recreational trails.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 5, 2018 in the 2nd Floor Conference Room, located at 30 Schuyler Place, Schuyler Annex Building, in Morristown, New Jersey at 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by George Coogan, seconded by Guy Piserchia, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:18 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray