

**MINUTES
MORRIS COUNTY
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION TRUST FUND COMMITTEE**

October 12, 2023

Hybrid Meeting held remotely via WebEx:

<https://morriscountynj.webex.com/join/bmurray>

Phone In: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 712 349 680

In person: Knox Room, Administration and Records Building, 10 Court Street,
Morristown NJ 07960

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chairman Jay Thomson.

Members present:

Patrick Antonetti, Region VI – Lincoln Park
Betty Cass-Schmidt, Morris County Park Commission
Jennifer Cooper, At-Large
Nita Galate, Region III – Mount Arlington
Thomas Galfo, Morris County Agriculture Development Board
Thomas “Ace” Gallagher, Region VII – Hanover
Larry Gindoff, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
Tom Malinousky, Morris County Trail Program Advisory Committee
Suzanne McCluskey, At-Large
Adam Salberg, Region IV – Rockaway Township
Everton Scott, Morris County Planning Board
Laura Szwak, Region I – Mount Olive
Jay Thomson, Region II - Randolph

Members with excused absence:

Astri Baillie, Region VIII - Madison
David Kaplan, Region V – Parsippany-Troy Hills

Also attending:

Joe Barilla, Director, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation
Barbara Murray, Open Space Program Coordinator, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation
Alyssa Ercan, Planning Aide, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation
William Johnson, Esq., Special Counsel, Morris County Preservation Trust Fund
Robert G. Schwarz, MAI, Review Appraiser, Morris County Preservation Trust

Members of the Public:

Janet Horst, Mountain Lakes
Ken Dolsky, Parsippany
Kristin Ace, Morristown
Catherine Keim, Morristown
Cathy Wilson, Morris Township
Luiza Vaskins Lima, Summit

FLAG SALUTE

Chairman Thomson led the flag salute for attendees.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Chairman Thomson 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Jay Thomson recognized the continued community support and public interest in Madison's Drew Forest application. He stated Madison would make a presentation on the application tonight to the Open Space Trust Fund Committee in closed session. The Committee would remain in closed session after the presentation for their deliberations on the recommended grant award. The Committee would return to open session after deliberations for the vote on the recommendation; however, the dollar figure on the recommended amount would be revealed at the Board of County Commissioner's work session scheduled for November 8 at 5 PM. Due to time limitations on the use of the building and to allow the Committee and Madison officials the greatest extent of time in closed session to discuss the Drew Forest application, Chairman Thomson stated public comment would be limited to three (3) minutes per person with a maximum duration of 15 minutes total for all public comments.

Janet Horst, Mountain Lakes stated she serves as the Chair of the Green Team in Mountain Lakes and in 2016-2020 served as a Mountain Lakes Borough Council member. She referenced figures of the open space trust fund. She described a property in Mountain Lakes that received two county open space grants, but was not preserved and subsequently developed since the Borough Council would not provide additional financing.

Ken Dolsky, Parsippany firmly supports the purchase of the forest and Madison's \$10 million grant request. He referenced an article stating the value of forests on wellbeing, clean water and habitats. He referenced Drew Forest as a source of aquifer recharge.

Kristin Ace, Morristown stated she was the present chair of Morristown Environmental commission. She stated trees are the most important factor on our way to a solution to global warming and other environmental disasters. The forest is needed to help mitigate pollution.

Catherine Keim, Morristown, stated the forest was a unique habitat supporting rare and endangered species. It provides invaluable benefits to all and once lost is lost forever.

Cathy Wilson, Morris Township stated she has served on the township governing body since 2018. One of her long-standing responsibilities is to serve as liaison to the environmental commission. Morris Township passed a resolution of support for preserving Drew Forest in February 2022. She stated preserving the environmental integrity of the site and protecting it from the disturbance that would result from development is of key importance to Morris Township.

Luiza Vaskins Lima, Summit is a Drew University student and stated she was present

tonight to represent the voice of the College of Liberal Arts. Students from freshman to seniors support the preservation of the forest with its benefits for both physical and mental health. She stated the community has a responsibility to protect the forest resource.

Ms. Murray stated written public comments in support of the Drew Forest application were received from John Landau, Morristown and Sharon Sigethy-Coughlin, Boonton Township.

NEW BUSINESS

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 Thomas Galfo, seconded by Betty Cass-Schmidt, the committee closed the open portion of the meeting and voted to conduct a closed session at 6:22 PM.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The meeting reopened to the public at 8:30 PM

- **Action as a Result of Closed Session-**

2023 Grant Recommendation for Borough of Madison / “Drew Forest” - on a motion by Betty Cass-Schmidt, seconded by Adam Salberg, the committee voted to recommend the grant award for the Drew Forest application as discussion in closed session. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Antonetti, Cass-Schmidt, Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Gallagher, Gindoff, Malinousky, McCluskey, Salberg, Scott, Szwak, Thomson
Nay: None Abstain: None

FUTURE MEETINGS

Ms. Murray stated the schedule of future meetings would be as follows:

1. Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:00 PM – presentation of the Open Space Trust Fund Committee award recommendation at the Board of County Commissioners work session. Committee member attendance is optional.
2. Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 7:00 PM – Open Space Trust Fund Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Suzanne McCluskey, seconded by Tom Malinousky, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray