

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

December 15, 2022

Held remotely via WebEx:

<https://morriscountynj.webex.com/morriscountynj/j.php?MTID=md9d07aec7057f5644ff472552ae1652>

Phone In: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 234 011 24634

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 P.M. by Chairman Jay Thomson.

Members present:

Jacqueline (Jaki) Albrecht, Region III – Roxbury
Patrick Antonetti, Region VI – Lincoln Park (arrived 7:02 P.M.)
Astri Baillie, Region VIII – Madison
Betty Cass-Schmidt, Morris County Park Commission
Jennifer Cooper, Region I – Chester Borough
Nita Galate, Morris County Planning Board and Trail Program Advisory Committee
Larry Gindoff, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
David Kaplan, Region V – Parsippany-Troy Hills
Suzanne McCluskey, At-Large
Mohamed Seyam, At-Large
Jay Thomson, Region II - Randolph

Members with Excused Absence:

Thomas Galfo, Morris County Agriculture Development Board
Thomas “Ace” Gallagher, Region VII – Hanover
Robert Norton, Region IV – Wharton

Also attending:

John Napolitano, Esq., Morris County Counsel
William Johnson, Esq., Special Counsel, Morris County Preservation Trust Fund
Barbara Murray, Open Space Program Coordinator, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation

Members of the Public:

None

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

There was no public comment.

RECOGNITION OF DEPARTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Murray recognized departing committee members Jaki Albrecht, Jennifer Cooper, Robert Norton and Mohamed Seyam with formal framed resolutions highlighting their open space service and other public service volunteering efforts. She praised their efforts and thanked them for their service.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1) Regular and Closed Session minutes of September 7, 2022 meeting - On a motion by Astri Baillie, second by Nita Galate, the committee approved the regular and closed session minutes of the September 7, 2022 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Cass-Schmidt, Cooper, Galate, Gindoff, Kaplan, McCluskey, Seyam, Thomson Nay: None Abstain: None
- 2) Regular and Closed Session minutes of October 1, 2022 site visits - On a motion by Astri Baillie, second by Jennifer Cooper, the committee approved the regular and closed session minutes of the October 1, 2022 site visits. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Baillie, Cass-Schmidt, Cooper, Galate, Gindoff, McCluskey, Seyam, Thomson Nay: None Abstain: Antonetti, Kaplan
- 3) Regular and Closed Session minutes of October 19 final presentations and deliberations - On a motion by Jaki Albrecht, second by Betty Cass-Schmidt, the committee approved the regular and closed session minutes of the October 19, 2022 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Cass-Schmidt, Cooper, Galate, Gindoff, Kaplan, McCluskey, Seyam, Thomson Nay: None Abstain: None

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) Morris County Open Space Master Plan
 - a. Goals and Objectives – discussion. Ms. Murray stated the County is developing a new Open Space Element of the Morris County Master Plan. Part of this task involves a review of the Goals and Objectives for any updates and revisions. She stated members were previously provided with a list of the current goals and objectives and thanked them for their input. Ms. Murray used a list compiled by Astri Baillie as the basis of discussion points. She stressed the goals and objectives are still in draft form and would still be subject to further revision.

Ms. Murray noted even the terminology could be updated, and Ms. Baillie thought a vision of future open space was more appropriate than the term ‘principles’. Members discussed the various revisions to the original goals and objectives. Important points to include in the goals that were discussed include the preservation of unique and fragile natural features especially water supply sources and aquifer recharge areas; the protection of open space in perpetuity; providing adequate recreational facilities to all residents throughout the county; to encourage open space facilities provided by all levels of government and the private sector; and the maintenance of existing preserved lands, particularly those with significant investments/improvements. There was also discussion on the definition of open space for the purpose of this element update.

Although the old document commented on development and redevelopment efforts, Ms. Murray noted the significant change in development patterns that have occurred, namely the density and type of residential units. Large lot subdivisions have been replaced by high density multi-family units. This shift has been accompanied by a change in demographics. Ms. Betty Cass-Schmidt provided comments noting these high-density developments do not necessarily provide amenities for their residents, so they seek recreational opportunities from the facilities do exist, either County or privately owned. The existing facilities may not match the needs of the new residents. She noted there have been more requests for cricket in recent years and baseball diamonds cannot accommodate that type of field. The Wharton project this funding round provided an example of redevelopment for open space instead of a more intense use.

Under the objectives section, there was considerable discussion over whether recreational facilities and programs should be accessible to all Morris County residents. The term “accessible” could be interpreted meaning distance and also physically, also the distribution and availability of types of recreational facilities throughout the county. It was suggested that this statement be removed or reworded. Members discussed the age of the original document and suggested eliminating some objectives.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Betty Cass-Schmidt, seconded by Nita Galate, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray