

MINUTES
MORRIS COUNTY
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION TRUST FUND COMMITTEE
December 16, 2024
Held remotely via WebEx

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Chairman Jay Thomson.

Members present:

Sandi Batty, Region V – Mountain Lakes (arrived 7:09 PM)
James Freda, Region VI – Kinnelon
Douglas Gabel, Morris County Park Commission
Nita Galate, Region III – Mount Arlington
Thomas Galfo, Morris County Agriculture Development Board
Larry Gindoff, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
Tom Malinousky, Morris County Trail Program Advisory Committee
Laura Szwak, Region I – Mount Olive
Jay Thomson, Region II – Randolph
Rick Watson, Region VII – Morris Township (arrived 7:11 PM)
Stephen Williams, Region VIII – Chatham Borough

Members with excused absence:

Jennifer Cooper, At-Large
Suzanne McCluskey, At-Large
Adam Salberg, Region IV – Rockaway Township
Everton Scott, Morris County Planning Board

Also attending:

Commissioner Deputy Director Stephen Shaw, Liaison, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation (left meeting at 7:25 PM)
William Johnson, Esq., Special Counsel, Morris County Preservation Trust Fund
Joe Barilla, Director, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation
Barbara Murray, Open Space Program Coordinator

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 MEMBERS

Commissioner Deputy Director Stephen Shaw recognized departing committee members Suzanne McCluskey who was absent this evening and Jay Thomson with formal framed certificates highlighting their open space service and other public service volunteering

efforts. He praised their efforts and thanked them for their service.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular and Closed Session Minutes of September 4, 2024 meeting - On a motion by Rick Watson, second by Larry Gindoff, the committee approved the regular and closed session minutes of the September 4, 2024 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Galate, Gindoff, Malinousky, Szwak, Thomson, Watson Nay: None Abstain: Galfo, Williams
2. Regular and Closed Session Minutes of September 28, 2024 site visit meeting - On a motion by Rick Watson, second by Sandy Batty, the committee approved the regular and closed session minutes of the September 28, 2024 site visit meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Gindoff, Malinousky, Thomson, Watson, Williams Nay: None Abstain: Freda, Gabel, Galate, Galfo, Szwak
3. Regular and Closed Session Minutes of the October 16, 2024 Final Presentation and Deliberations – On a motion by Steve Williams, seconded by Rick Watson, the committee approved the minutes of the October 16, 2024 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Galate, Gindoff, Malinousky, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams Nay: None Abstain: Galfo

NEW BUSINESS

2024 Open Space Funding Round (discussion) – Ms. Murray stated a letter was received from Denville Township immediately after the Board of County Commissioner work session on November 6, at which Chairman Jay Thomson presented the committee's recommendations for grant awards in 2024. Mayor Andes of Denville advised they were able to speak with the current owners of the St. Francis property, who indicated a willingness to negotiate an agreement for preservation. Unfortunately, this news was relayed after the committee's deliberations and recommendations. The St. Francis site was not recommended for an award in 2024. Denville's letter suggests an emergency application or rolling application for the program. Logistically, this could not be in place for 2025 and requested feedback from the committee. The Board of County Commissioners was preparing a response to the letter.

There was a discussion of Denville's letter. Commissioner Shaw noted the program works well with rigid timelines. Chairman Thomson concurred applicants know the timeline of grant awards. Mr. Rick Watson agreed and was not in favor of a rolling application cycle. Ms. Laura Szwak noted municipalities have other sources of funding. Mayor Freda stated the situation was different when the committee reviewed the application. Members were not in favor of changing the grant cycle timeline.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Rick Watson, seconded by Nita Galate, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray