

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

March 17, 2025

Hybrid Meeting held remotely via Webex and in person:
Second Floor Conference Room, 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown NJ

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Jay Thomson.

Members present:

Sandi Batty, Region V – Mountain Lakes
James Freda, Region VI – Kinnelon (remote)
Nita Galate, Region III – Mount Arlington (remote)
Thomas Galfo, Morris County Agriculture Development Board (remote)
Larry Gindoff, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority
Marta Longo, Region II – Mendham Township (remote-audio only)
Tom Malinousky, Morris County Trail Program Advisory Committee
Adam Salberg, Region IV – Rockaway Township
Everton Scott, Morris County Planning Board (remote)
Laura Szwak, Region I – Mount Olive
Jay Thomson, At-Large
Rick Watson, Region VII – Morris Township
Stephen Williams, Region VIII – Chatham Borough (remote)

Members with excused absence:

Jennifer Cooper, At-Large
Douglas Gabel, Morris County Park Commission

Also attending:

Commissioner Deputy Director Stephen Shaw, Liaison, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation (remote, left meeting at 7:47 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

Mr. Jay 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.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Deputy Director Stephen Shaw introduced himself as liaison to the Office of Planning and Preservation, and the committee. He welcomed the membership and thanked them for their volunteer service on the committee. All members of the 2025

committee introduced themselves including their representation on the committee.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Murray served as temporary Chairperson and took nominations for the position of Chairperson for 2025.

On a motion by Tom Galfo, seconded by Rick Watson, Jay Thomson was nominated for the position of Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, Salberg, Scott, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams Nay: None Abstain: None
Jay Thomson was elected Chairperson and chaired the meeting from this point forward.

On a motion by Larry Gindoff, seconded by Sandy Batty, Laura Szwak was nominated for the position of Vice-Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, Salberg, Scott, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams Nay: None Abstain: None
Laura Szwak was elected Vice-Chairperson.

On a motion by Laura Szwak, seconded by Larry Gindoff, Rick Watson was nominated for the position of Secretary. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, Salberg, Scott, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams Nay: None Abstain: None Rick Watson was elected Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1) Minutes of December 16, 2024 meeting - On a motion by Stephen Williams, second by Nita Galate, the committee approved the minutes of the December 16, 2024 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Galate, Gindoff, Malinousky, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams Nay: None Abstain: Galfo, Salberg, Scott

STAFF REPORT

- 1) Morris County Policies and Procedures – William Johnson, Esq. reviewed the Conflict of Interest policy for members. Members residing in or representing the municipality in which an application is located should recuse themselves.
- 2) 2025 Preservation Trust Fund Tax Rate – Mr. Joe Barilla stated the overall tax rate was set by the Board of County Commissioners at 5/8 cent, with the Municipal/Non-Profit grant program being allocated 1/8 cent. This translates into approximately \$2.0 M available for grants this year.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) 2025 Open Space Application – Ms. Murray stated the application was released on the county website and a press release was issued announcing its availability.
- 2) Timeline for Grant Round – Ms. Murray reviewed the grant timeline and process with the Committee. Applications and appraisals will be due on June 19. Ms. Murray stated the committee will receive a presentation on the applications by staff in closed session at the September 16 meeting, which will be hybrid in format. Site visits will tentatively occur in person the morning of Saturday, September 27. All applicants will be required

to submit videos for their sites. Final presentations by the applicants, and the committee's deliberations on grant recommendations, will occur on October 15. Ms. Murray stated the recommendations of the Committee would be presented to the Board of County Commissioners at their work session on November 5th. Action on the awards will tentatively occur at the second Commissioner meeting that month on November 17th. The Committee's last meeting of the year will be December 16th.

- 3) Open Space StoryMap – Ms. Murray presented the Open Space StoryMap prepared by staff to highlight over 30 years of successful preservation stories through the municipal/nonprofit grant program. The StoryMap will be formally presented to the public at the Board of County Commissioner work session on April 5.
- 4) Preservation Trust Review Committee – Joe Barilla stated a committee has been working since last year to consider the expansion of trust fund uses to include stewardship and enhancement of preserved properties. The committee has met seven times and prepared a recommendations report which will be presented to the full Board of County Commissioners for consideration of a ballot question later this year.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 7:00 PM for the committee's review of the 2025 applications. The meeting location will be forwarded to all members and posted on the website.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Rick Watson, seconded by Sandy Batty, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray