

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

**March 3, 2021**

Held remotely via WebEx:

<https://morriscountynj.webex.com/morriscountynj/j.php?MTID=m28be0743ed039b6cc57bb0c1e1e4fb04>

Phone In: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 129 485 7039

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

Members present:

Jacqueline (Jaki) Albrecht, Region III – Roxbury  
Patrick Antonetti, Region VI – Lincoln Park  
Astri Baillie, Region VIII – Madison  
David Bloom, Region II – Mine Hill  
Jennifer Cooper, Region I – Chester Borough  
Nita Galate, Morris County Planning Board and Trail Program Advisory Committee  
Thomas “Ace” Gallagher, Region VII – Hanover  
David Kaplan, Region V – Parsippany-Troy Hills  
Suzanne McCluskey, At-Large  
Robert Norton, Region IV - Wharton  
Mohamed Seyam, At-Large  
Laura Szwak, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority  
Jay Thomson, Morris County Agriculture Development Board

Members with excused absence:

Matthew Tal, Morris County Park Commission

Also attending:

Commissioner Director Stephen Shaw, Liaison, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation  
John Napolitano, Esq., Morris County Counsel (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, Morris County Office of Planning & Preservation

Members of the Public:

Michael Pilarski (left meeting at 7:13 PM)

**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.

## **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Commissioner Director Shaw introduced himself as liaison to the committee. He welcomed the membership and thanked them for their volunteer service on the committee. All members and staff introduced themselves.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Ms. Barbara Murray served as temporary Chairperson and took nominations for the position of Chairperson for 2021.

On a motion by Nita Galate, seconded by Laura Szwak, Jay Thomson was nominated for the position of Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Cooper, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan, McCluskey, Norton, Seyam, Szwak, Thomson   Nay: None   Abstain: None  
Jay Thomson was elected Chairperson and chaired the meeting from this point forward.

On a motion by Jaki Albrecht, seconded by Nita Galate, Laura Szwak was nominated for the position of Vice-Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Cooper, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan, McCluskey, Norton, Seyam, Szwak, Thomson   Nay: None   Abstain: None  
Laura Szwak was elected Vice-Chairperson.

On a motion by Laura Szwak, seconded by Nita Galate, Suzanne McCluskey was nominated for the position of Secretary. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Cooper, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan, McCluskey, Norton, Seyam, Szwak, Thomson   Nay: None   Abstain: None  
Suzanne McCluskey was elected Secretary.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Jaki Albrecht, second by Suzanne McCluskey, the committee approved the minutes of the December 30, 2020 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Cooper, McCluskey, Norton Seyam, Szwak, Thomson   Nay: None  
Abstain: Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan

## **STAFF REPORT**

- 1) Morris County Policies and Procedures - John Napolitano, 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) 2021 Preservation Trust Fund Tax Rate – Ms. Murray 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 \$1.3 M available for grants this year.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- 1) 2021 Open Space Application – Ms. Murray stated the application would be posted on the county website in the next few weeks.
- 2) Timeline for Grant Round - Ms. Murray reviewed the grant timeline and process

with the Committee. Until further notice and as was implemented last year, all meetings would occur remotely via WebEx; this includes site visits and final presentations. Applications and appraisals will be due on June 11. Ms. Murray said application summary books would be mailed to members in advance of the September 14 meeting. Site visits will also occur remotely, utilizing a video submitted by applicants. Applicants will have a WebEx “site visit” conference with the committee on October 2 during which members can ask questions on the video or any application materials. Final presentations by the applicants, and the committee’s deliberations on grant recommendations, will occur on October 19. Ms. Murray stated the recommendations of the Committee would be presented to the Board of County Commissioners at their work session on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Action on the awards will occur at the second Commissioner meeting that month on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. If needed, the committee’s last meeting of the year will be December 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **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 Nita Galate, seconded by Jennifer Cooper, the committee closed the open portion of the meeting and voted to conduct a closed session at 7:35 PM.

### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

The meeting reopened to the public at 7:50 PM.

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

- a. Township of Chester/“Black River Fields” – on a motion by Nita Galate, seconded by Astri Baillie, the committee recommended approval of a first grant extension. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan, McCluskey, Norton, Seyam, Szwak                      Nay: None  
Abstain: Cooper, Thomson
  
- b. Township of Mount Olive/“Turkey Brook Extension” – on a motion by Jaki Albrecht, seconded by Suzanne McCluskey, the committee recommended approval of a first grant extension. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Albrecht, Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Cooper, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan, McCluskey, Norton, Seyam, Thomson                      Nay: None                      Abstain: Szwak
  
- c. Township of Roxbury/“Veterans Park Addition” - on a motion by Laura Szwak, seconded by Astri Baillie, the committee recommended approval of a first grant extension. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Antonetti, Baillie, Bloom, Cooper, Galate, Gallagher, Kaplan, McCluskey, Norton, Seyam, Szwak, Thomson  
Nay: None                      Abstain: Albrecht

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### 1) Diversions Rules – Formation of Subcommittee

Ms. Murray stated at the December 30, 2020 meeting, the committee discussed the reevaluation of the Trust Fund Rules pertaining to the Diversion of Preserved Lands (Section 3.3.8.). The goal is to strengthen them to bring them more in line with the requirements of the more detailed NJ Green Acres program rules on diversions. Member Laura Szwak provided comments which were incorporated into the present rules by Special Trust Fund Counsel Bill Johnson. At the December 30 meeting, it was decided to form a subcommittee of three (3) members to continue this task, and bring a revised set to the full committee for consideration at a later date. Ms. Murray requested two additional volunteers to serve on the subcommittee with Laura Szwak. Nita Galate and Jennifer Cooper volunteered. Ms. Murray would coordinate with the subcommittee members and Special Trust Fund Counsel for meeting dates.

### 2) Glen Alpin Diversion, Harding Township – update

Ms. Murray referred to the public hearing notice for the Glen Alpin diversion on the Green Acres webpage. She stated the first set of final public hearings was held on January 28, which combined five different hearings for the disposal/diversion of the property into one. The Glen Alpin diversion dates back to 2008. It involves the historic Glen Alpin mansion and property, which was funded by both the county's Open Space and Historic Preservation programs, in addition to Green Acres funds to the Township of Harding and Harding Land Trust. The information for the public hearing, including PowerPoint presentation, is posted on Harding Township's website. The diversion is now at final application stage after multiple revisions to the proposal. Ms. Murray explained the next step would be a presentation before the Open Space Committee, and an additional separate public hearing before the county's Historic Preservation Trust Fund Review Board. She said she would advise the committee with any updates and the meetings would likely occur in the April – June timeframe. Each board would make their independent recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners who would take the formal action.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM via WebEx for the committee's review of the 2021 applications.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Suzanne McCluskey, seconded by Jennifer Cooper, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray