

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

**March 4, 2024**

Held remotely via WebEx:

<https://morriscountynj.webex.com/morriscountynj/j.php?MTID=m90275e1699491950e0f477de8b54e501>

Phone In: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 234 468 78282

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Barbara Murray.

Members present:

Sandi Batty, Region V – Mountain Lakes  
Jennifer Cooper, At-Large  
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  
Suzanne McCluskey, At-Large (arrived 7:06 PM)  
Adam Salberg, Region IV – Rockaway Township  
Laura Szwak, Region I – Mount Olive  
Jay Thomson, Region II – Randolph  
Rick Watson, Region VII – Morris Township  
Stephen Williams, Region VIII – Chatham Borough

Members with excused absence:

Everton Scott, Morris County Planning Board

Also attending:

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

Ms. Murray 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 2024 committee introduced themselves.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Ms. Murray served as temporary Chairperson and took nominations for the position of Chairperson for 2024.

On a motion by Tom Galfo, seconded by Nita Galate, Jay Thomson was nominated for the position of Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Cooper, Freda, Gabel, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, McCluskey, Salberg, 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 Jay Thomson, seconded by Jennifer Cooper, Nita Galate was nominated for the position of Vice-Chairperson. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Cooper, Freda, Gabel, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, McCluskey, Salberg, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams    Nay: None    Abstain: None  
Nita Galate was elected Vice-Chairperson.

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

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Minutes of September 6, 2023 meeting - On a motion by Tom Galfo, second by Larry Gindoff, the committee approved the minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Malinousky, McCluskey, Szwak, Thomson    Nay: None    Abstain: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Gindoff, Salberg, Watson, Williams
2. Closed Session minutes of September 6, 2023 meeting - On a motion by Suzanne McCluskey, second by Tom Galfo, the committee approved the closed session minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Malinousky, McCluskey, Szwak, Thomson    Nay: None  
Abstain: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Gindoff, Salberg, Watson, Williams
3. Minutes of September 30, 2023 site visit meeting - On a motion by Tom Galfo, second by Laura Cooper, the committee approved the minutes of the September 30, 2023 site visit meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, McCluskey, Szwak, Thomson    Nay: None    Abstain: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Salberg, Watson, Williams
4. Closed Session minutes of September 30, 2023 site visit meeting - On a motion by

Suzanne McCluskey, second by Tom Galfo, the committee approved the closed session minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Malinousky, McCluskey, Szwak, Thomson Nay: None Abstain: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Gindoff, Salberg, Watson, Williams

5. Minutes of the October 12, 2024 Final Presentation and Deliberations – On a motion by Tom Galfo, seconded by Larry Gindoff, the committee approved the minutes of the October 12, 2023 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, McCluskey, Salberg, Szwak, Thomson Nay: None Abstain: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Watson, Williams
6. Closed session minutes of the October 12, 2024 Final Presentation and Deliberations – On a motion by Tom Galfo, seconded by Suzanne McCluskey, the committee approved the closed session minutes of the October 12, 2023 meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Cooper, Galate, Galfo, Gindoff, Malinousky, McCluskey, Salberg, Szwak, Thomson Nay: None Abstain: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Watson, Williams

#### **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) 2024 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 \$2.5 M available for grants this year.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- 1) 2024 Open Space Application – Ms. Murray stated the application would be released on the county website in the next two weeks and a press release would be issued when it is available.
- 2) Timeline for Grant Round – Ms. Murray reviewed the grant timeline and process with the Committee. Applications and appraisals will be due on June 14. Ms. Murray stated the committee will receive a presentation on the applications in closed session at the September 4 meeting, which is anticipated to be hybrid in format. Site visits will tentatively occur in person the morning of Saturday, October 5; site visits may also be spread across different nights during the week. Virtual site visits have proved helpful for the committee to ask questions of the applicant and will likely be continued this year. All applicants will be required to submit videos for their site visits, regardless of hybrid or in person meeting. Final presentations by the applicants, and the committee's deliberations on grant recommendations, will occur on October 16. Ms. Murray stated the recommendations of the Committee would be presented to the Board of County Commissioners at their work session on November 6<sup>th</sup>. Action on the awards will tentatively occur at the second Commissioner meeting that month on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The Committee's last meeting of the year will be December 16<sup>th</sup>, not the 11<sup>th</sup>

as previously announced due to scheduling conflicts.

- 3) Preservation Trust Review Committee – Commissioner Deputy Director Shaw stated a committee was formed to review use of the trust fund for stewardship of preserved lands literally the day the pandemic shutdown transpired. It never had the chance to meet with the administration of tasks related to the pandemic. The committee has been started up again, with a new name and objective to evaluate the trust fund and make recommendations to the commissioners if there should be any potential changes. Depending on what the committee recommends, it may or may not have to go back to the voters to be approved.

### **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 Rick Watson, seconded by Douglas Gabel, the committee closed the open portion of the meeting and voted to conduct a closed session at 7:38 PM.

### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

The meeting reopened to the public at 7:45 PM

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

On a motion by Laura Szwak, seconded by Rick Watson, the committee recommended approval of a first grant extension for the “Historic Turntable Adjacent to Grace Lord Park” project in the Town of Boonton. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Batty, Freda, Gabel, Galate, Galfo, Malinousky, McCluskey, Salberg, Szwak, Thomson, Watson, Williams  
Nay: None Abstain: Cooper, Gindoff

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 7:00 PM for the committee’s review of the 2024 applications.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Laura Szwak, seconded by Rick Watson, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Murray