

**Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**Tuesday, October 16, 2007**

1. **Call to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision.** At 8:45 a quorum was present and Chairman Jones called the meeting to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law. Prior to establishing a quorum, several members of the OSAC met with representatives of the Kingston Presbyterian and the Kingston United Methodist churches and discussed their pending historic grant applications.
2. **Introductions/roll call.** Present were members LaCorte, Battin, Jones, Orsini, Triggs and Schmidt. Also present were Councilman Glicklich and Consultant Loos.
3. **Financial Report.** Loos reported that there is \$27,526,243.45 in the OSTF. Loos also reported that he had secured an additional \$1.5 million dollars in funding from the SADC toward the cost of preserving the 130 acre Suydam Associates farm.
4. **Historic grant for 2007--review.**

Joseph Kane, representing the Kingston United Methodist Church, answered several questions that the committee had regarding the historic door adjustment project. Janet Rubinstein, representing the Kingston Presbyterian Church, also responded to several questions regarding historic door adjustment. Mark Else, representing the Meadows Foundation, responded to several questions regarding bathroom installation and installing a HVAC system on the Wycoff-Garrettson property. The committee then, per the Council's request, reconsidered its previous recommendations regarding the historic grant and passed the following motions:

1. A motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by LaCorte, to consider each potential grantee in a separate motion. Motion carried.
2. A motion was made by LaCorte, seconded Schmidt, to recommend funding to the Meadows Foundation for the following projects:
  - the Wycoff-Garrettson HVAC system in the amount of \$29,750
  - the Hageman painting project in the amount of \$28,500
  - the Van Liew Suydam barn restoration project in the amount of \$39,640
  - and that the Wycoff-Garretson bathroom installation in the amount of \$29,250 not be funded in this current funding cycle.

Motion carried

3. A motion was made by LaCorte, seconded Orsini, to recommend funding to the Kingston United Methodist Church for the following projects:
  - The historic door adjustment project and the historic steeple repair projects in the amount of \$25,000.The motion carried with all voting for the motion, except Schmidt voted against.
4. A motion was made by Orsini, seconded Battin, to recommend funding to the Kingston Presbyterian Church for the following project:
  - The historic door adjustment project in the amount of \$13,000.

The motion carried with all voting for the motion, except Schmidt voted against.

A motion was made by Battin to approve \$26,110 toward the Meadows bathroom installation project. There being no second to the motion, there was no action taken on this matter.

Chairman Jones asked about the possibility of carrying over to the next grant cycle the difference between the amount that had been budgeted (\$162,000) for the historic grants and the amount to be spent (\$135,890), said difference being \$26,110. He offered for future consideration the fact that in the current year's budget (FY 08) the OSAC had only recommended \$65,000 for the historic grant, whereas in FY 07, it had budgeted \$162,000 and now is likely only to spend \$135,890. The question is: Can the OSAC take the unspent \$26,110 from the FY 07 budget and add it to the amount budgeted in FY 08 (\$65,000) and run a grant program in the amount of \$91,110 ( $\$26,110 + \$65,000 = \$91,110$ )? Loos said he would investigate.

5. **Dunn and Gunther properties.** . Barbara Lawrence, 383 S. Middlebush Road, gave a presentation on the Dunn and Gunther farms and advocated for the preservation as farms. She handed out literature that outlines her case for preservation and theses are attached hereto as Appendix A and Appendix B. Susan Goldy, 281 Abby Drive also spoke in favor of preservation of the farmstead as a farm. The committee discussed a draft resolution that Lawrence had handed out , which among other items, advocates for a process that might resolve issues of potential conflict as perceived by various interest groups in the Township. Schmidt moved and LaCorte seconded a motion to start a process of getting the Township interest groups to figure out how the property should be utilized in the future. Motion carried.
6. **Approval of the September 18 minutes.** After reviewing several minor changes to the draft minutes, Orsini made and Triggs seconded a motion to approve the September 18, 2007 minutes as amended. Motion carried.
7. **New Business—Ten Mile Run Pedestrian Bridge permitting.** The committee was advised that in order to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Ten Mile Run stream near the Cliffs, DEP needs to issue permits. The Township Engineering office obtained a proposal from CMX Engineering wherein they propose to do the work necessary to obtain the permits for a total cost of \$12,500. Loos explained that CMX has also proposed to provide bridge design services at no cost to the Township. Several members commented on the fact that there was only one proposal. After some discussion, LaCorte moved and Orsini seconded a motion to obtain two more quotes on this work. Motion carried with all except Jones voting for the motion and Jones voting against.
8. **Executive Session.** Around 10:45, upon a motion by Orsini, seconded by Battin, a motion carried to go into Executive Session to discuss negotiations and possible purchase of property. At 11:00 the committee came out of Executive Session.
9. **Adjournment.** At 11:00 PM the OSAC adjourned, upon a motion that carried.

***Respectfully submitted,***

***John Loos***  
***Secretary/Consultant***

## **Appendix A**

Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee  
October 16, 2007

### **Barbara Lawrence, Susan Goldey, Historic Preservation Commission Preserving Franklin's Agricultural and Cultural History Gunther and Dunn AKA Stoothoff and Nevius Farmsteads**

#### The Historic Value:

- 270 years of continuous farming
- Included in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, placed in the Six Mile Run Historic District, and fronting on a designated Scenic Byway
- Stoothoff is one of the most significant architectural properties in Franklin, retaining much of the historic 18<sup>th</sup> century fabric<sup>1</sup>. Both are pre-Revolutionary Dutch structures
- Extensive historic and architectural documentation exists as the basis for preservation and interpretation

#### The Situation:

- Architecturally and historically significant historic farmsteads are threatened in the heart of Franklin's most scenic viewshed
- Town owns these historic properties but has not yet planned for their future
- There is an opportunity to use historic preservation in an agricultural setting in a manner that engages our citizens in our agricultural past and present

#### The Concerns:

- Demolition by neglect
- Proximity of site to development risks vandalism
- Loss of Dutch and Lenape archeological potential
- Need for recreation facilities and proposal by Recreation Advisory Committee for development of this site
- Trails Advisory Committee proposal for trails needs coordination with other plans
- Loss of agricultural context has significant negative impact on funding potential
- Municipal encroachment on property on the State Register of Historic Places requires review by Historic Sites Council

#### The Township's Master Plan Says:

- Protect the Township's cultural heritage
- Protect the Township's cultural heritage by encouraging continuation of farming as a viable land use
- Preserve agricultural lands

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<sup>1</sup> HSR, "It is significant as one of the only remaining sites in this portion of Franklin Township to convey a sense of its 18<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> century agrarian past". "Possesses an unusual degree of integrity".

- Preserve natural resources
- Conserve open space, rural character, scenic views, scenic corridors.

#### The Township's Investment in the Historic Site:

- Accepted Preservation Deeds that restrict development of the Gunther and Dunn farms, "to protect and preserve the conservation area in existing state to the greatest extent possible".
- Purchased Catalpa farm for recreation use
- Commissioned and paid for Historic Structures Reports on Stoothoff and Nevius<sup>2</sup>

#### A Very Brief History (Stoothoff/Sudyam/Gunther):

- 1701 purchased from the Lenape as the Harrison Tract
- 1740 Stoothoff built earliest section of house
- 1745 on Franklin tax rolls
- 1800-1830 Reverend James Cannon, Six Mile Run Reformed Church and published theologian
- 1920 to Gunther
- 1931 to Ray Gunther, who kept a daily log recording weather, crops, machinery, fields plowed and more. Daughter holds the logs today.
- Ray a master plower; Florence a flower lover
- Outbuildings still standing, including two-sided privy

#### Interpretation Potential of Historic Farmstead:

- Archeology of Dutch and Lenape
- Story of Franklin's founding families and their relationships
- Ecology – especially the brook, pond and wildlife
- Story of 270 years of farming
- Role of women in the development of Franklin's settlement and agriculture
- Educate today's citizens about 20<sup>th</sup> century farming
- Engage the town in the active benefits of historic and farmland preservation

#### Historic Preservation Proposed Approach:

- With a program beyond house museums
- Historic Structures Report recommended a mix of levels of preservation
- Preservation of outbuildings with interpretive signage
- Restoration of kitchen in 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of story of women
- One building to house farm equipment
- Preservation = stabilize for infrequent use
- Restoration = restore to a specific period of significance (some rooms)
- Rehabilitation = restore for adaptive use in today's world

#### Some Options for Agricultural Use:

- Continue tenant farming, with priority for row crops

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<sup>2</sup> HSR, "It is the Township's long-term intention to complete any necessary repairs and/or restoration and to make the building available in the future ...".

- Community garden
- Trails away from buildings to protect from vandalism
- Archeology
- Living history farm
- Ecology center
- *Town needs to stabilize and define use before going further*
- More ideas for agriculture-related uses from the just-released Rutgers study on the state of agritourism in NJ

#### Funding:

- Committee could work through the Meadows Foundation, *or other local history-related non-profit*, which could act as fiscal agent, or form a 501(c)3
- State, county funds
- Private foundation funds
- Residential tenant or appropriate small nonprofit tenant pays rent
- Tenant farm rent
- Fees from community garden and other programming
- Other fundraising

#### Recommendations:

- Immediately stabilize
- Defer plans for recreation development *and identify an alternative or compromise*
- Create task force with broad representation and open to the public to decide on best use
- Establish ongoing support committee and build relationship with Meadows *or other local history-related nonprofit.*
- Seek funding for further work as recommended in the Historic Preservation Reports

#### What could the Open Space Advisory Commission do?

- Resolve to preserve the Gunther and Dunn farms for agricultural use
- Resolve to work with others in Franklin *and call for Town Council to convene a planning committee to address site use for preservation and alternatives for active recreation*

**Appendix B**

**Resolution Regarding Planning For and Stabilization Of The Gunther/Dunn Historic Sites Located In The Six Mile Run Historic District**

Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee, Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS**, The Stoothoff/Suydam/Gunther farmstead on South Middlebush Road:

- Is owned by the township and an Historic Structures Report was completed in 2004,
- Was deeded to the Township under a Preservation Deed “intended to promote, preserve and protect certain defined natural resources and to preserve an environment for the continuance of viable agricultural and horticultural uses,,,”
- Is historically significant, having been built by one of Franklin’s founding families, associated with Lenape and Dutch archeological artifacts, and operated as a farm since 1740,
- Is architecturally significant, a pre-Revolutionary home, retaining much 18<sup>th</sup> century fabric, and being well documented,
- Is agriculturally significant, having been continuously farmed for 270 years, and being one of the last agricultural scenic vistas located on a township-designate scenic by-way, AND

**WHEREAS**, there is extensive potential for historic interpretation of the farmstead and multiple opportunities for agricultural farm and educational uses, and heritage/agri-tourism offers proven economic benefits, AND

**WHEREAS**, state legislation regarding encroachment of historic sites and preservation of archeological sites on publicly owned properties places limitations and requires extensive project review, AND

**WHEREAS**, there are both threats to site integrity and alternative township needs, such as:

- Active and passive recreation, and site proposal to meet these needs,
- The threat of demolition by neglect,
- Lack of planning for the historic buildings on the site,
- Lack of protection for the site,
- Risk of lost opportunities for funding if the site is developed beyond its agricultural context, AND

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to gain agreement on best use/program for the site and approval to begin detailed planning, as well as agreement on an appropriate location for recreational facilities,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that The Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee recommend that the Franklin Township Town Council:

- Approve stabilization plans and funds for Gunther/Dunn,
- Approve a use that preserves the site in its agricultural context
- Convene a task force and public planning workshop with goals
  - To agree upon best use/program for the site
  - To propose alternative solutions to recreation needs

Approved by Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee

On \_\_\_\_\_ Chair \_\_\_\_\_