

**Franklin Township
(Virtual)
Open Space Advisory Committee
Minutes of the October 19, 2021 Meeting**

Bob Puskas	<i>Chair/AAAC</i>	P	Melba Battin	<i>Citizen Member</i>	P
Arnold Schmidt-	<i>Vice Chair/Environmental Commission</i>	P	Robert LaCorte	<i>Historic Commission</i>	
Bill Connell-	<i>Secretary/Citizen Member</i>	P	John Moon	<i>Recreation Commission</i>	
Tara Kenyon	<i>Consultant</i>	P	David Triggs	<i>Citizen Member</i>	P
Bob Vornlocker	<i>Town Manager</i>	P	Vacant	<i>Planning Board</i>	
Mark Healy	<i>Town Planner</i>		Deana Luchs-	<i>Citizen Member</i>	P
Phillip Kramer	<i>Mayor</i>	P	Chuck Martin	<i>Citizen Member/Trails Advisory Committee</i>	P
Ted Chase	<i>Council Liaison</i>	P	Chris Williams	<i>Shade Tree Commission</i>	P
William Byrtus	<i>Director - Recreation Department</i>	P	Mike Smith	<i>Board of Education</i>	A

1. CALL TO ORDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) 7:01

Chairman Puskas called meeting to order 7:04

2. ROLL CALL

See Above

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting will be opened to the Public to provide time for comments and/or questions related to the agenda

As there were no members of the public present, Public Comment session was not opened at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Arnold Schmidt made a motion to approve the September 21, 2021 meeting minutes, which was seconded by David Triggs. All agreed and the motion carried.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Stewardship at Grasslands i. Mowing and Prescribed Burn

a1: Equipment needs -Rotary mower 10-foot machine. \$12,000-\$15,000 estimate. Bat wing mower/brush hog
David Triggs made a motion asking Tara Kenyon and Franklin Township Staff to research options for purchasing, renting and/or sharing the needed equipment for grasslands management and stewardship. The motion was seconded by Chris Williams. All agreed and the motion carried.

a2: Mowing - completed by DPW at both Negri Nepote and John Clyde Native Grasslands

a3: Prescribed Burn – the Burn Plans have been approved by the Township and the State. The dates of the Burn are dependent on weather conditions but will occur between mid-December and the end of April.

A4.: Herbicide Application - Recommendation from 2019 *Grasslands Management Plan*, prepared by the New Jersey Audubon Society for Franklin Township, is to apply herbicide after mowing and burning to treat invasive species. Chuck

Martin arranged a meeting with Michael Hanson, Manager of Curtis Prairie (one of the nation's oldest and largest grasslands preserves), to discuss these options. Mr. Hanson confirmed that this is the standard of practice for the treatment of invasive species. Carl Hauck, Franklin Township DPW, obtained a quote from one of our State Contractors to perform the herbicide application, which came to approximately \$100,000 for 2 applications. The Committee wants to review this option after more research is performed.

b. Route 518 Hunting Property

No current update and there was not official outing to review property.

Bob Vornlocker will work with Staff and Committee to review areas away from house for viable for parking options for future use of the property. Arnold Schmidt mentioned that the hunting signage needs to be removed from the property.

c. Land Stewardship Roundtable – _October 12, 2021

On site meeting at Negri-Nepote with professionals in open space management and stewardship from all around area, was hosted by Middlesex County Open Space Department.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Comments on Somerset County Preservation Plan

Tara Kenyon reviewed the Plan and provided written feedback to the Committee. Committee suggested adding Canal access in the Plan. Chris Williams made a motion to submit the written comments to Somerset County, which was seconded by Bill Connell. All agreed and the motion carried. Tara Kenyon will submit the written comments ahead of the deadline.

b. Application grant program Catalpa \$360,000 for all the playground equipment

Bob Vornlocker reported that Franklin Township received \$360,000 grant from Somerset County for Catalpa Park. This funding will be used for playground equipment and development of a parking lot. It was also reported that The Meadows Foundation received \$160,000 in grant funding for the Van Liew-Suydam House from the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Department.

7. CONSULTANT'S MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Tara Kenyon provided the monthly Consultant's Activity Report ahead of the meeting.

8. UPDATES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Bob Pukas reported that the Agriculture Advisory Committee and Trails Advisory Committees have also reviewed and provided recommended comments for the *Somerset County Preservation Plan*.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chuck Martin moved, and Arnold Schmidt seconded a motion to open to public. Motion Passes. No public were present. Chris Williams moved, and Deana Luchs seconded a motion to close to public. Motion Passes.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None required

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chris Williams moved, and David Triggs seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passes, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Connell – Secretary, Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee