

**Franklin Township
Open Space Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes of the June 20,2023**

Bob Puskas	<i>Chair/AAAC</i>	P	Sami Shaban	<i>Board of Education</i>	A
Arnold Schmidt-	<i>Vice Chair/Environmental Commission</i>	P	Robert LaCorte	<i>Historic Commission</i>	P
Bill Connell-	<i>Secretary/Citizen Member</i>	P	John Moon	<i>Recreation Commission</i>	P
Tara Kenyon	<i>Consultant</i>	P	David Triggs	<i>Citizen Member</i>	P
Bob Vornlocker	<i>Town Manager</i>	P	Ted Chase	<i>Planning Board</i>	P
Mark Healy	<i>Town Planner</i>	A		<i>Citizen Member</i>	P
Phillip Kramer	<i>Mayor</i>	A	John Herrling	<i>Citizen Member/Trails Advisory Committee</i>	P
Ed Potasnak	<i>Council Liaison</i>	A	Mary Lauko	<i>Shade Tree Commission</i>	P
William Byrtus	<i>Director - Recreation Department</i>	A			

1. Call to Order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6)

Chairman Puskas called meeting to order 7:04

2. Public Session 1

Triggs moved, Lacorte seconded a motion to open to public

Bob Holligton 31 Winding Road, Hillsborough

Mr. Hollington asked the Committee what the process is for acquiring open space land.

Bob Vornlocker and Tara Kenyon explained that first we need a voluntary, willing seller for the property to be considered. After the property is assessed, an appraisal is ordered to determine the value of the land. The OSAC reviews the appraisals and recommends and offers to Township Council. The offer is then submitted to the landowner, and once agreed upon, all due diligence is performed. The Township Council then gives final approval to purchase the property as open space.

Sue 43 Dorchester Court Hillsborough

How long does the process take?

Depending on the complexity of the acquisition, the process can take as little as 6-9 months to as much as 2 years.

Seeing no other members of the public, Lacorte moved, Connell seconded a motion to close to public. All agreed, and the motion carried.

3. April Minutes

Triggs moved a motion to approve as amended, Schmidt seconded. All agreed, and the motion carried.

4. Financial Report

Kenyon presented the monthly financial report.

5. New Business

a. *Naaman Williams Park \$20,000 Sustainable Jersey Grant*

The project includes assessing the need for green infrastructure along the paved path and implementing appropriate strategies to relieve ponding and flooding. The grant also covers the conceptualizing of a nature trail in the wooded area of the park. The grant funding must be used by December 2024.

b. *Hunter Summary Report*

Hunting: 94 of 158 permits replied. Total Deer taken 108. Season 1) 49 Season 2) 38 Season 3) 21

Auto Crashes: 135, down from 152 last year (2020=108. 2021=152. 2022=135)

Tara will update the Hunter Summary Report with more data once outstanding individual summaries are received.

c. *Trails open space cameras*

There are recent reports of car break ins on open space land The Township is already preparing to install cameras at Middlebush Park and Inman Park with this year's budget with plans for additional cameras on other properties. The available infrastructure dictates the final cost per camera, relative to distance and access to power. A discussion ensued regarding balancing privacy issues and public safety issues.

Chairman Puskas added that a large tree fell at the Wyckoff Garrettson House. Tara will report this to the Department of Public Works.

6. Old Business

a. *National Trails Day*

The Trails Advisory Committee hosted National Trails Day on Saturday June 3rd. A nature walk was held at the John Clyde Memorial Native Grasslands Preserve, and Disc Golf activities were held at the Bunker Hill Environmental Center Trails. Both events were well attended.

b. *County 518 Parking Lot*

Tara visited the site with DPW to identify the location of the parking lot, which will be used for 5 cars for hunting. The area for the parking lot has since been cleared. The Township is waiting for permission from Somerset County to cut and install the new curb.

c. *Offsite meeting at Meadows Property*

OSAC would like to hold the September meeting at the Hageman Barn (209 South Middlebush Road). Tara will work out the details with The Meadows Foundation and advertise the new location, date, and time.

d. *Memorial Forest*

PSEG needs to mark out site at entrance for first tree planting

Vornlocker discussed costs associated with tree plantings. For memorial trees, the agreed upon process will be that the Township will purchase the tree and be reimbursed by the donor. Once the reimbursement is complete, the DPW will plant the tree at no additional cost.

e. *Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*

Tara explained that the Open Space and Recreation Plan is due to be updated. This Update is also required to be eligible for funding through the Green Acres Program. She explained her concept for updating the data and identifying new targeted properties for open space preservation. OSAC will work closely with the Recreation Department and Committee to update the facilities and programming sections, as well as the vision and goals, for recreation in Franklin Township. A subcommittee of OSAC will be formed to help guide this update.

f. *Local Health Assessment Report*

The report is 154 pages long and includes complete Action Plan . When finalized it will be sent to Steering Committee for review, and finally a presentation will be made to the Township Council and public.

7. Consultant's Monthly Activity Report

The Committee reviewed the Report submitted by Tara Kenyon.

Arnold Schmidt discussed the need for a watering and maintenance plan for all newly planted trees on Township properties. Bob Vornlocker stated that he is meeting with CME (the Township's Engineering Firm) to come up with Tree Management and Forestry Plan

8. Committee Reports

- a. *Trails* : Tara Kenyon added paint blazes to the trails at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve, Middlebush Park, and Inman Park. Mapping has been updated to reflect these changes. The Bird Blind at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve is in disrepair. DPW is requested to mow the pond area at Negri-Nepote Native Grasslands Preserve.

Illegal Dumping at Butler Road Natural Area – Charles Martin updated that there is continuous dumping happening at Butler Road Natural Area. Bob Vornlocker reiterated that a police report must first be filed for DPW to dispose of the illegally dumped items.

- c. *Shade Tree Commission* – The annual Arbor Day Tree Planting was held at Franklin High School

9. Public Session 2

Lacorte moved, Connell seconded, a motion to open to public

Seeing no one

Lacorte moved-Connell seconded , a motion to close to public. Motion carried.

10. Executive Session

Lacorte moved, Triggs seconded , a motion go into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition matters under negotiation. All agreed and the motion carried.

11. Adjournment

Lacorte moved, and Triggs seconded a motion to adjourn. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Connell
Secretary