

Franklin Township Trails Advisory Committee

November 8, 2023

7:00 PM

1. Call to Order in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act(N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) Committee Chair Vanessa Jones called the meeting to order 7:08 pm.
2. Roll Call Vanessa Jones (VJ); Chair, Anne-Marie Orlusky(AMO), Vice-Chair, Jignasha Patel(JP), Jim Kuligowski(JK),
3. Minutes review tabled and will be reviewed at our next meeting.
4. Move to open the meeting to the public made by AMO seconded by JK.
5. Public comment presented by Charles Martin. Chuck stated that he cleaned out the 12-14 Holly trees, so now they are free of vines and shrubs, at Negri-Nepote. These hollies were planted on the left side of the trail leading to the blind. Path to the bird blind still in bad shape, getting overgrown. In the bird blind the floor and ramp need repair. Invasive vegetation blocks the view from the blind and the ramp.
He suggested a volunteer effort to renovate, perhaps getting materials through Open Space, either rebuild or make it usable.
Pond is becoming overgrown with cattails which will eventually fill in the pond and obscure views from the Blind and trail path.
The pollinator gardens by the entrance are overgrown with invasive plants particularly spotted knapweed.
There are large potholes at the entrance to the parking lot.
Tara mentioned that the Township has resubmitted request for control burn.
Questions were asked regarding mowing Negri-Nepote, what is the mowing schedule and what are the next steps?
6. AMO moved to close the meeting to public comments, seconded by JK.
7. Tara announced that John Herrling has resigned for the Committee. Discussion ensued about recruitment and Township Networking.
8. Pathways and Trails Plan. Reviewed Bunker hill map for finalization. Reviewed all the other maps that were complete. She stated that the text for the P&T Plan are complete the only outstanding piece was the maps. Mark Heely would be reviewing.
9. Tara reported no Site plans for review at this meeting.
10. New Business Tara read resolution of support for the extension of the Corporate Business Tax (see attached). AMO made a resolution that we support that resolution, JK seconded all were in favor, no nays and no abstentions.
11. Tara reviewed the Naanam Williams green structure options, under drains porous pathways, Priority #1 and priority #2. Tara mentioned free courses on Green Infrastructure.
12. Tara and Vanessa will pass along the info to Open Space. There is a meeting 11/17 8:30 at Naaman Williams to discuss Green Structure options.
13. Tara discussed a Micromobility Study as part of the Community Energy Plan. \$10,000 can be used to study gaps in Micromobility. Tara requested a second quote and will bring that back to the committee.

14. Question was asked regarding status of the Catalpa Park, and intersection with trails. VJ reported damage to the trail. Tara will follow up with Bob Vornlaker.
15. TAC member vacancies, discussed drafting something for the Township newsletter to recruit new members, Facebook social media, information posted at the kiosks.

Old Business

- A. Security cameras at Negri-Nepote. Was brought up at Open Space and IT will be reached out to to see how much it would cost and will funding be utilized for the expenses? Dawn Flanders was outreach officer, reaching out to her for more guidance on safety.
- B. Graffiti an issue, covering signs at Negri.
- C. Memorial Plaque for Melba no new updates waiting for quotes.
- D. Trail walks and events-should highlight other trails in the system, other than Griggstown.
- E. Trail updates JP reported that No maintenance was done on John Clyde. AMO, VJ and JK had no additional updates.
- F. Meeting adjourned motion made by AMO seconded by JK at 8:55 pm.

Submitted by Anne-Marie Orlusky.

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT BY THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUPPORTING CONTINUATION OF THE CORPORATE BUSINESS TAX (CBT)
AT 2023 RATE TO FUND CRITICAL OPEN SPACE, FARMLAND, HISTORIC
PRESERVATION AND HAZARDOUS SITE CLEANUP FUNDING**

WHEREAS, in 2014 sixty-five percent (65%) of New Jersey voters approved amending the New Jersey Constitution to provide long term sustainable funding for open space (Green and Blue Acres), farmland and historic preservation by dedicating a portion of the Corporate Business Tax (CBT) to those programs; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey voters' high approval on every New Jersey open space ballot question since 1961 reflects their dedicated support for farmland, open space, and historic preservation; and

WHEREAS, Franklin Township residents and businesses value open spaces, parks, forests, farms, and historic preservation yielding significant progress in preserving these critical assets in the municipality with over 35% of our lands preserved thus far; and

WHEREAS, the Trails Advisory Committee, working with Franklin Township's Agricultural Advisory Committee, Open Space Advisory Committee, Environmental Commission, and other stakeholders have identified numerous priority parcels for preservation; and

WHEREAS, agriculture plays an integral role in the prosperity, agri-businesses, and well-being of "The Garden State" along with providing a fresh and abundant supply of food for its residents; and

WHEREAS, in the most densely populated state in the nation, the Covid-19 pandemic proved the high value of New Jersey's open space and recreational areas to the health and well-being of residents throughout New Jersey, especially those in urban towns and minority communities; and

WHEREAS; Governor Murphy stated on Earth Day 2023 during final adoption of New Jersey's Environmental Justice Rules, "we have worked incredibly hard to ensure that all people – regardless of income, race, ethnicity, or national origin – can enjoy their right to live, work, learn and recreate in a clean and healthy environment"; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey is one of the original thirteen colonies, its historic preservation is significant to our nation's history; and

WHEREAS, open space is essential to protecting New Jersey residents and businesses from storm related flooding that results in loss of life and property and is increasing at an alarming rate due to climate change; and

WHEREAS, continuation of New Jersey’s CBT provides important and necessary funding for the acquisition, preservation and stewardship of open space, farmland and historic sites in New Jersey that protects and enhances the character and beauty of “The Garden State” while providing its citizens with opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and education; and

WHEREAS, CBT funding provides long-term, sustainable funding to support communities with the remediation of hazardous sites known as brownfield, the cleanup of leaking underground storage tanks, and funds cleanups of hazardous spills; and

WHEREAS, the proposed reduction in the CBT included in the 2024 New Jersey State Budget would slash approximately \$60 million annually from vital open space, farmland, historic preservation, and remediation of hazardous sites known as brownfield, the cleanup of leaking underground storage tanks, and funds cleanups of hazardous spills; and

WHEREAS, funding from the constitutionally dedicated funding has played and will be a critically important part of preserving the remaining parcels in Franklin Township when combined with the municipal and county open space funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Trails Advisory Committee of the Township of Franklin, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, that:

1. The Franklin Township Trails Advisory Committee strongly urges the Legislature to maintain the current 2023 level of Corporate Business Tax funding without reduction to provide continuous level funding for critical environmental and public health programs including critical investments in open space preservation; and
2. A copy of this resolution will be forwarded to the Franklin Township Council, Governor Phil Murphy, State Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio, State Senator Bob Smith, State Assemblymembers Joe Danielsen and Joe Egan, New Jersey Senate President Nick Scutari, and New Jersey Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin.

**Passed Unanimously by the Franklin Township Trails Advisory Committee
November 8, 2023**