

Trails Advisory Committee

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Date: September 11, 2024

**Location: Franklin Township Municipal Building
Large Conference Room
475 DeMott Lane, Somerset**

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnDPagHk31A>

1. Call to Order, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) read by Chairperson VJ
2. Roll Call
 - Vanessa Jones, Chair (VJ)
 - Anne-Marie Orlusky, Vice-Chair (AO)
 - Christopher Gonda, Secretary (CG)
 - James Kuligowski (JK)
 - Jignasha Patel (JP)
 - Pravesh Lal (PL)
 - Robert Kovacs (RK)
 - Alex Kharazi, Council Liaison (AK)
3. Approval of August 8th Meeting Minutes
 - Clarification on the following items:
 - Date listed on the document
 - Planning Consultant organization name
 - Motion to Approve, JK, second by PL
 - Vote: Aye: VJ, AO, CG, JK, JP, PL
4. Public Comment:
 - Mr. Chris Kelly
 - Mr. Kelly wishes to promote Somerset County transportation and open space resources via the TAC table at Franklin Day.
 - TAC is welcome to the idea.
 - Mr. Kelly shared an overview of the County's Local Safety Action Plan.
 - Public Comment is open.
 - Mr. Kelly informed us of a safety concern at Butler Road Natural area. He discovered a yellow-jacket infestation of the "big belly" trash receptacle.
 - Motion to close public comment - RK, second AK
5. Site Plan Review
 - No Plans to review at this meeting
 - Inquiries about JFK and Easton Avenue development proposal
6. New Business

- a. Things to Do Map
 - i. Tara investigated the sources that composed the original document, ie. printing, graphics, and data.
 - ii. The original document is costly to reproduce with the same format and scale. Tara proposed an online/interactive map with ArcGIS Online.
 - 1. Members advocated for physical copies in an updated and cost-effective format.
 - iii. A small run of the original format would be valuable
 - 1. Securing a sponsor to fund printing is an option
 - iv. The committee agreed to develop a digital and updated version
 - v. Tara showed examples of the interactive ArcGIS map
- b. Printing
 - i. Tara was able to print the new trail maps. TAC may take them for distribution.
 - ii. Discussion about the aesthetics of the new maps vs outdated map documents.
- c. Franklin Day - September 28
 - i. Table Giveaways and printouts secured: Maps & Safety Whistles

7. Old Business

- a. Micromobility Plan
 - i. Final draft has been shared with TAC, Environmental Commission, Planning department, Township Manager will forward Council
- b. Therapeutic Recreation Nature Walks: Negri Nepote Grassland Preserve
 - i. Dates
 - 1. October 27th, 12 pm
 - 2. November 2nd, 12 pm - Pending
- c. Green Infrastructure and Trail Development at Naaman Williams Park
 - i. Eagle Scout Project focusing on Priority #2
 - 1. Implement landscaping materials to facilitate stormwater retention accompanied by educational signage
 - 2. Scout will present to OSAC for approval on September 17 and follow up with a presentation with the Scout Council
 - 3. Liability and insurance clarification
- d. Bird Blind Replacement
 - i. Current conditions presented with photographs by AO
 - ii. Tara is composing a proposal and seeks TAC feedback regarding the project scope and overall cost.
 - iii. Discussion about funding sources and grants - ultimately the primary funding source is the Franklin Township Open Space Trust Fund.
- e. Trail Walks & Events
 - i. Storybook Hike dates are pending
 - ii. Astronomy events at John Clyde will continue on Friday nights through November 2024

1. Interest in TAC events to coincide with the dates of astronomy nights.
 - iii. JP proposed a hike with her school staff and families at 10 am on October 5th. TAC offered considerations for hunting and registration.
 - iv. Two nature walks with NJ Audubon - Next Bird walk on October 12th
- f. Updates on Trails Conditions from TAC Members
 - i. <https://forms.gle/qDBcnBPB6ShvHczi6>
 - ii. Specific concerns include the following:
 1. Franklin Park Natural Area - questionable mowing practices from the trail to private residences, and the concern is whether this is an inconvenience to the home owner - VJ
 2. Confirmation of prioritization of Negri-Nepote for prescribed burn with fire service.
 - a. Limited rainfall may present an opportunity for vegetation to be managed at the pond and bird blind.
- g. County Route 518 Property
 - i. Township installed a new parking area and there's an opportunity to install a short trail in the short term.
 - ii. Tara proposes a preliminary mapping analysis, and an in-person site visit after hunting season ends.
- h. Discussion about Trails Committee promotional wear.

8. Adjournment