

**Franklin Township
Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund
Advisory Committee
Minutes May 21st, 2013**



Melba Battin-P
Robert Mettler-P
Bill Connell-P
Jack Connolly-P
Bob Vornlocker-P
Mark Healy-
Randy Jones-P
Julia Presley-
Ted Chase-P
Fran Varacalli-Consultant-P

Robert LaCorte-EA (sub)
John Moon-
Alice Osipowitz-
Bob Puskas-7:30
Arnold Schmidt-EA
David Triggs -P
John Herrling-EA
Chris Williams-EA
Phil Kramer-P

Call to order Meeting was called to order by Chairman Jones in accordance with the Sunshine Law at 7:05pm Members present indicated above by (P). .

1. Approval of Minutes; Mettler moved, Herring seconded, motion to approve March and April Minutes with corrections. Motion Passes
2. Financial Report: The Current balance of the OSTF is \$10,803,361.26
Connell moved, Connolly second motion to approve financial Report
Motion Passes
3. Open first opening to public: Mettler Moved, Connolly seconded motion to open first open session.
Seeing no one.

Triggs moved, Connolly Seconded motion to close to the public

4. New Business
 - a. Varacalli reported meeting with Tom Mechino, Open Space County Open Space Coordinator. Various things were discussed but the key part is Somerset County's future emphasis is in the southern portion of Franklin Township. Also, the issue of the Township divesting itself of historic properties on open space land was discussed. The option of 4

to 1 was discussed. Simply put, when selling a property it must be offset by a township contribution equivalent to 4 times the value of the property being divested

- b. Varacalli reported Liz Nelson, who lives adjacent to Negri Nepoti, once again expressed her concerns over the use of pesticides. It was suggested we give Ms. Nelson a clear explanation of pesticides vs. herbicides, and what is used on open space land and why. This may ease her concerns

In addition, it was discussed that the use of herbicides is not real problem as it relates to Ms Nelsons concerns regarding the bees. NJ fish and Wildlife has even stated that there is no direct evidence that herbicides affect the bee population

- 5. Second opening to public: Puskas Moved, Connolly seconded motion to open first open session.

Tom Gale, Historic Commission: Made the comment that the Dunn and Gunther houses predate the Open Space Committee but still would be on the ROSI.

Gene Gerlich, 42 Como Drive. Expressed concern that there has been no agriculture activity on the Memorial Forest property. It was pointed out that the front of the property is leased with tillable land and the back is just mowed. A discussion ensued to confirm what is happening on the property.

Puskas moved, Connolly Seconded motion to close to the public
Motion Passes

- 6. Old Business.

- a. In an earlier motion the OSAC committee recommended paying for Middlebush Park directly out of the Open Space Trust. As the last phase of Middlebush Park is approaching the committee was ask to confirm or modify this opinion. After discussion it recommended the final \$3,200,000 be bonded

Puskas moved, Herrling seconded, motion to go to bond for \$3,200,000 for Middlebush Park, to be refunded by open space revenue. Motion Passes

- b. Varacalli reported the subcommittee for the revised Open Space plan met on April 29th. The Draft of the report will be submitted to the full committee at June meeting
- c. Native Grass Lands. Tuff Green updating?
- d. Middlebush Pink trail will be completed in June
- e. Audubon is sponsoring a walk October 23rd

- f. Varacalli reported the signage in the parks are being cleaned up and painted
- g. Deer Report: Varacalli reported an updated number. The new number is 182, from 175 with 135 of 195 permits reporting.
- h. Eastern Coyote seminar was well attended with at least 70 people
- i. Dunn Gunther walk hosted by Township Manager Bob Vornlocker. Varacalli reported the condition of the house The Dunn House is beautiful inside but the condition of the roof is bad. The committee is encouraged to have the roof repaired to protect the integrity of the house. In addition, it was suggested the OSAC committee/Historic committee partner to find a use and tenant for the house.
- j. Middlebush Park: Vornlocker reported the status of the Middlebush Park Concession stand. The core users are reviewing the plans and making suggestions. At this time Connell expressed concern about the communication of status of Middlebush Park. It was suggested to Connell that he encourage the Rec Committee liaison to Open Space to give a more full reporting. Liaisons are in committees for a reason and his comments are misdirected.
- k. Puskas moved, Connolly seconded a motion to open to public Motion passes.
Tom Gale, Historic Commission. He encouraged the committee to support roof repairs at Dunn house.
Being a very involved community member and parent, he also provided his own insights to the concession stand discussion.

Puskas moved, Connell Seconded, Motion to close public session. Motion Passes

7. Consent Agenda

Mettler moved, Connell seconded, motion to approve. Motions Passes

8. Committee Reports

9. Executive Session Puskas Moved, Herrling Seconded motion to go into executive session

Connell Moved, Triggs seconded, motion to adjourn, Motion Pass 9:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Bill Connell
Secretary