

**Franklin Township
Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund
Advisory Committee
Minutes January 20, 2015**



Melba Battin-P
Robert Mettler-P
Bill Connell-P 8:15
Jack Connolly P
Bob Vornlocker-P
Mark Healy-
Randy Jones-P 8:15
Nancy LaCorte
Ted Chase-P 8:30
Fran Varacalli (Consultant)

Robert LaCorte-P
John Moon-P
Alice Osipowitz-
Bob Puskas-Vice Chair P
Arnold Schmidt-P 8:15
David Triggs -P
John Herrling P
Chris Williams-P
Phil Kramer-P 8:30

Dates to Remember:

Two **Walk and Roll's 2015** Sunday, May 17th (rain date May 31st) & Sunday, Sept 20th (Rain date Sept 27th)

Shade Tree Commission Tree Sale <http://www.franklintwpnj.org/government/boards-committees/shade-tree-commission/2015-shade-tree-sale>

Bob Puskas, Committee Co-Chair called, meeting to order at 8:05pm.
Meeting turned over to F. Varacalli, Consultant, for Committee Reorganization.

OSAC Reorganization

B. Lacorte made a motion to nominate Randy Jones as Committee Chair, Bob Puskas as Committee Vice-Chair, and Bill Connell as Secretary. J. Moon seconded the motion. C. Williams made a motion to close nominations. All members were in favor. Motion passed.
Chairman Jones resumed duties as Committee Chair.

J. Connelly made a motion to accept the November 18th OSAC minutes, not the Executive Session minutes. B. LaCorte seconded the motion to accept minutes. All members in favor. Motion passed.

2015 OSAC Meeting Dates

J. Connelly made a motion to accept the Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting dates and times for 2015. C. Williams seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Motion passed.

Financial Report – F. Varacalli working on 2015 OSTF budget and will have updated report next month. No large transactions in the OSTF this past month.

Bill Gallagher, Recreation Advisory Committee attended the meeting at 7:00pm not realizing the meeting started at 8:00pm. He left a note that he is working with Alice Osipowitz to supply information to the Open Space Committee that was requested. He hopes to have information to share at the February 17th OSAC meeting.

J. Connelly made a motion to open the meeting to the public. M. Battin seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Motion passed.

a. Pat Giannato, Chair of Hamilton Street Business District Committee, inquired about the possibility of adding a pocket park on Hamilton St. A location by the Committee has been identified but it currently is privately owned. B. Vornlocker, stated that adding a pocket park on Hamilton is in the Needs Assessment Report but Council makes the decisions regarding new parks. B. Vornlocker advised P. Gianotto to attend and speak at an upcoming Council meeting.

b. Mary Pataracey, 14 Gregory Lane.

c. Debbie Stuart, Canal Walk. Asked if there was any plans for additional park development in the school house road area. It was explained that Somerset county already owns the south west corner of Mettler and school house. In addition, other parcels in the area have approvals for building.

d. John Kerekes, 98 Magellan Way, Inquired if the Township would consider purchasing the 24 acres property on S. Middlbusch Road, near his neighborhood, as an alternate site to the planned Catalpa Park.

Puskas moved, Connelly seconded, motion to close public session. Motion Passed.

1. New Business

a. Committee Goals. At this time, Fran Varacalli asked of the committee had any goals for 2015 they would like to bring up

1. use of cameras on open space and park property for security purposes. At this time, Vornlocker gave a short dissertation on the use of cameras, costs, areas it can be used. And management of cameras.
2. Deer Census-It was suggested we do a deer census. It had been done once before. The estimate was rough 100 deer per square mile.
3. Plan OSAC meeting at one of the Township historic properties.
4. Rangers. Review the potential of a Ranger for our Open space properties
5. Grass Cutting. Review grass cutting schedule on our grassland properties.
Note. Cutting grass affects invasive species management and wildlife habitats. Weather and management of assets all affect how and when grass is cut.

b. NJ Invasive Strike Team

Stewardship training at Duke farm was attended by F. Varacalli. They discussed *emerging* invasive species, not just the usual suspects like Mugwort or Canada Thistle. It also included education of home owners to become monitors of emerging invasive species.

Schmidt added that he is trying to reschedule, through the Township Environmental Commission, the NJ Invasive Strike Team Seminar for this spring that was canceled last fall.

c. National Agriculture Day - F. Varacalli is working with the Agriculture Advisory Committee to plan events to highlight Franklin Twp. farming heritage and current agricultural operations in the township through the recognized National Agriculture day in 2015 and 2016. She will report back.

- d. Varacalli reported that the town is currently working on a formal Geo Caching Policy for placing caches on twp. open space properties
- e. Schmidt read a recent article discussing the issues with using public funds to rehabilitate historic churches . This topic is of interest to OSAC since the Township owns “historic” properties in the township.

2. Old business

- a. OSAC request for Recreation information. Vornlocker acknowledged the request by OSAC for additional information and a review of the sources of the information ensued.
- b. OSAC Letter of Support Grant – Building Better Communities Grant - we were 1 of 8 the first round , Again, in the second round we were 1 of 8 , will find out in late January if the grant is received to construct a natural play area in Middlebush Park. Varacalli requested a letter of support be drafted by the committee and to use up to 10% of matching Open Space Trust Funds if the grant is received for the project. Williams moved, Puskas seconded, a motion to draft a letter of support of the committee for this grant request. Motion Passes.
- c. Woodcock Walks at Negri Nepote 2015 dates: March 6th , March 20th
- d. Canal Rd. Walk and Roll 2015 dates : Confirmed dates as previous

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- e. Franklin Twp. Hunting Program update
Hunting program going well. Bow season ends February 21st. All permits filled.

Chase reported a new bill to allow hunting on Sundays on state land. New County owned trap rock property needs a good wild life management property.

Harvest Statistics will be collected. Hunters who don't respond lose there spot and go back into the lottery.

- f. Kingston School – the Lease agreement has been going back and forth for review and changes.

Lease agreement includes a community room for citizen use.

- g. Hutcheson Memorial Forest fence – update

Rutgers Looking to put fence in February-March

- h. Middlebush Park Improvements and Trails - update

MP Trails completed with in 6-8 weeks. Subject to weather. The project is 3 plus miles and is Handicap accessible. It is lined with crushed stone similar to that on the Towpath of the canal

Note: The materials cost of this project was subsidized by a grant with labor supplied by the township

Inman Park. The trails inside Inman Park now have gps coordinates. The trail includes the wooded area on the east side of the park that starts at the upper ball field parking and comes out north side lower ball field.

i . Native grasslands sub-committee

Committee is working on management plan for both preserves. Committee will meet in the next couple of weeks.

9. Consent Agenda

- a. Open Space consultant's work-log
Deferred till next month

10. Announcements, reports from other Committee's
None

11. 2nd opening of the meeting to the public

Puskas moved, Connell seconded, motion to open to public, Motion Passes

No one wanted to speak.

Puskas moved, Connell seconded , motion to close to public. Motion passes

12. Puskas moved, Moon seconded motion to go into executive session, Motion Passes

13. Mettler moved, Moon seconded motion to Adjourn Motion Passes 9:50 pm

Respectfully submitted

Bill Connell

Secretary

Post