

Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee
Tuesday, October 18, 2005
Minutes

1. **Call to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision.** At 7:08 a quorum was present and the meeting was called to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law.
2. **Introductions/roll call.** Present were members Jones, Connolly, Danile, Puskas, Moon and Chase. Also present was Consultant Loos. Arriving later were Orsini, Clyde, Danile, Kanarek and Kaiser.
3. **Approval of the September 20, 2005 minutes.** Chase moved and Battin seconded a motion to approve the September 20, 2005 minutes. Motion carried.
4. **Financial Report.** There was no financial report available.
5. **1st opening of the meeting to the public.** Puskas moved and Battin seconded a motion to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried.
 - Bob Bertolatus, 282 Bennetts Lane, asked the committee to give consideration to the idea of preserving the Hilpert property, located in Block 86.01, Lot 941, 304 Bennetts Lane. He also suggested that the committee look at the adjacent property—located immediately north of the Hilpert property. He suggested that these properties might be useful as open space or as the location for a future road.
 - (At this point Kaiser arrived)
 - Connolly moved and Battin seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried.
 - (At this point Clyde and Danile arrived)
6. **Consultants report.** Loos reviewed the status of the farmland preservation program and reported that there is a new source of federal funding for this. Loos reported that the township had hired two additional public works employees and they were working on open space projects three days per week. However, one is no longer working as a result several projects have slowed. However, he did report that the driveway and parking lot in Griggstown were constructed but the recent heavy rain caused significant erosion and the contractor is returning to take corrective action. He also reported that the wetland/vernal pools area has been completed on the Negri-Nepote site and the township can now apply for reimbursement from the Federal government.
7. **Historic grant program for FY 2006.** Jones solicited volunteers for the grant review subcommittee which will need to begin its review in December. Clyde, Kaiser and Connolly all volunteered and Jones accepted them as the subcommittee. It was suggested that Sherwood (not present) might also be appointed. Clyde indicated that he would step down if Sherwood wanted to serve.
8. **November and December meeting dates.** Jones explained that Loos would not be available to attend the scheduled November OSAC meeting and suggested that the committee cancel the November meeting and reschedule the December 20 meeting to December 6—effectively combining the November and December meetings. Orsini moved and Danile seconded a motion to do that. Motion carried.
9. **NJAS contract.** Loos reviewed the status of the NJAS contract and stated that there is approximately \$10,000 left in that contract. He indicated that he thought that it would be good for the township to continue its relationship with NJ Audubon. He reviewed a

proposal from NJAS, attached, and the committee discussed this. The committee noted that it wanted “constructing and installing benches on open space” added to the list of Eagle Scout projects that NJAS would work on. Puskas moved and Connolly seconded a motion to recommend to the Council that a contract for \$25,000 in accordance with the attached proposal (including benches) be awarded, beginning when the \$10,000 in the current contract runs out. Motion carried.

10. Good and Welfare.

- Clyde reported that the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) has met on several occasions and has formed two sub-committees. One is looking at a new east-west pathway, north of Amwell Road; a second subcommittee is looking at a new north-south pathway spout of Amwell Road. .
- Clyde reported that the Environmental Commission is looking at sponsoring community clean-up days.
- Clyde asked for Loos to explain the circumstances surrounding the removal of trees at the van Lieu Suydam house. Loos explained the circumstances no one present expressed any objections.
- Battin reported on a possible new source of funding for bike paths and gave the information to John Clyde, TAC Chairman.
- Orsini asked for nominations for large and significant trees on open space.

11. (At this point Kanarek arrived.)Loos explained that Civil Solutions currently has a contract for up to \$10,000 for mapping services for open space projects. This contract has almost been exhausted. He suggested that the OSAC recommend that the Township award another contract for another \$10,000 so that this important service could continue.

12. 2nd opening of the meeting to the public. Connolly moved and Puskas seconded a motion to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried.

- Pat Leonard, Old Georgetown Road in Griggstown asked questions about equestrian use of the Griggstown open space. She stated that she and others have used this tract for over 30 years and that it is used as a way for equestrians to get to the Canal towpath. Randy Jones suggested that she attend a Trails Advisory Committee meeting and suggest that the TAC look into this matter. Clyde told her that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for 10/26/05 and also encouraged her to attend.
- Upon a motion by Puskas, seconded by Clyde, a motion carried to end the public comment period

13. Adjournment. At 9:00 PM the committee, Connolly moved and Orsini seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

John Loos
Secretary

Implementation Proposal for Habitat and Passive Recreation Plan for Franklin Township Greenways 2005-2006

In the third year of the collaborative project between the New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS) and Franklin Township, Somerset County (hereafter “the Town”), NJAS proposes to continue with implementation of the 2004 “Habitat and Recreation Management Plan for the Negri-Nepote-Leni and Griggs Park Greenway Natural Areas in Franklin Township, Somerset County”. After consultation with John Loos, consultant to the Town’s Open Space Advisory Committee, we have prioritized the following projects for this year’s proposal.

Ongoing/Continuation Projects

Interpretive Signs

Material for the trailhead maps and first interpretive signs (grassland birds and wetlands) has been submitted to the manufacturer. The designs and proofs need to be checked and approved when complete. With regards to the final two signs, the butterfly meadow sign is nearly ready for submission but the Sourlands sign awaits a background photo that will be taken this Fall by a professional photographer. The meadows sign must be submitted and the final design proofed and approved. The shooting of the Sourlands’ photo must be coordinated with the photographer then submitted with the already prepared material to the manufacturer for final design. The design proof must then also be approved. Pending completion of the eight signs (the grassland bird and butterfly meadow signs will be produced in duplicate) NJAS will work with J. Loos to select appropriate placement for each.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 10 hours.

Boy Scout Projects

To initiate these projects, NJAS recruits potential Eagle Scouts, matches Scouts with needed projects, reviews the project proposals, meets with Scouts in the field to discuss and offer guidance, and ultimately signs off on the project when it is deemed complete. Several projects are currently in the planning stages for 2005-2006 including:

Barn Swallow

This project is underway. NJAS recently met with Dan Bobev to mark the location of the barn swallow structure. Dan and his father have been in contact with Franklin Township Public Works with regard to the digging of four holes for the footings. Once the holes are prepared, the cement can be poured and the structure can be built.

Butterfly Garden

This project is currently on hold. NJAS has made contact with the Troop Leader. The Scout still intends to work on this project in Spring 2006.

Wildlife Blind

Although NJAS has had an initial meeting with the Scout regarding this project, the project is currently on hold. NJAS has attempted on several occasions, with no success, to

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determine the status of the proposal for this project. NJAS will continue to seek out information on the status of this project, or, if necessary, find another to take the project over.

Trail Construction

This will be a new project for 2006. NJAS will work to identify scouts that are interested in marking new trails.

Kiosk Griggstown

The proposal for this project is now complete and out for approval by the Eagle Scout Committee. Upon approval, NJAS will meet with the Scout to briefly review the project and identify the correct location for the kiosk.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 12 hours.

New Projects Proposed

Onsite Project Meetings

At the request of J. Loos, NJAS will retain a more constant presence onsite in 2005-2006. NJAS will meet onsite with J. Loos biweekly to provide project oversight and discuss ongoing projects. In addition, NJAS will attend a minimum of two Open Space Advisory Committee meetings to update the committee on the project status.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 66 hours.

Web Site Development

NJAS will create a web site geared towards providing general information about the two sites with reports on ongoing management activities. Some of the features offered on the website will include: directions to the parking lots, park hours, trail maps and descriptions, wildlife checklists, pictures, the implementation plan, and all other written material produced for the project. The web site will also advertise and feature information on upcoming volunteer days and public outings. Special attributes of both sites will be detailed such as interesting natural features and good birding spots. Links to both the NJAS and Franklin Township web pages will also be included. There will also be a place where visitors can report interesting sightings or discoveries.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 40 hours. NJAS will also contract with a web design expert to create the web site for \$2000.

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New Scout Projects/Public Works Projects

NJAS will attempt to solicit additional Scouts for Eagle Projects on the two sites. If unavailable, NJAS may alternatively work with J. Loos to offer guidance to Public Works personnel to complete projects. These projects may include:

1. Trail Construction

Trail construction is needed on the new Griggstown Greenway properties added in 2005.

2. Kiosk New Properties

A third kiosk is needed at the trailhead on the new Griggstown Greenway properties added in 2005.

3. Demonstration Habitats with Deer Exclosures

Small, 1-acre deer exclosures could be built in different habitats on the two properties to demonstrate the impact of local deer populations on trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation.

4. Bridge Construction

NJAS will provide information to J. Loos detailing the steps that the Town must go through to acquire permits necessary to create footbridge. After Town receives DEP approval, NJAS will oversee development of footbridge by a Scout.

5. Interpretive Trail

NJAS will oversee Scout project that identifies native trees and shrubs along a short trail segment on both properties. Alternatively, NJAS will complete this project if no Scout is available.

6. Barn Swallow Interpretive Material

NJAS will work with a Scout to develop educational material about the Barn Swallow nest structure that can be displayed on the Griggstown Site. Alternatively, NJAS will complete this project if no Scout is available.

7. Benches on the side of trails on open space--added by OSAC on 10/18/05.

This will be a new project for 2006. NJAS will work to identify scouts that are interested in making and installing benches.

Total staff time estimated until completion: Minimum of 10 hours; maximum of 28.

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Invasive Species Plan (Manual)

NJAS will develop a plan for invasive species control on targeted nuisance species on both sites. This plan will be put together into a small manual that can be used by the Town's Public Works personnel. The manual will highlight the best control techniques for targeted species including most effective chemical and non-chemical controls and provide a detailed map of the sites that prioritize areas with the worst infestation.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 32 hours.

Six-Mile-Run Management Plan

Work with J. Loos to address land management of unfarmed portions of Six Mile-Run. Attempt to instill strategy that complements work on Negri-Nepote and improves overall habitat availability for target species and controls undesirable species. Try to get the Division of Parks and Forestry to commit to at least one demonstration project on 6-Mile-Run for wildlife habitat.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 16 hours minimum.; 40 hrs. maximum.

Targeted Outreach to Landowners

The DEP recently completed a statewide grassland analysis that identifies a portion of the Town as one of the most significant grasslands in New Jersey. From this analysis, the state has designated the central part of the Town that includes Six-Mile-Run and the Negri-Nepote Preserve. To expand upon the habitats created at Negri-Nepote and the western Ten-Mile-Run Greenway, NJAS will target landowners within the focal area and contact them to let them know about landowner incentive programs that could improve habitat for wildlife. This will improve the overall attractiveness and viability of existing habitats for target species and eco-tourism opportunities.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 40 hours minimum; 120 hours maximum. If 40 hours are spent on this project, NJAS will review with J. Loos to evaluate the outcomes and discuss the efficacy of continuing.

Trail Marking and Mapping

NJAS will map, mark, and develop trails on the eastern 10-Mile-Run Greenway. Maps will be created for the trailhead kiosk and for a trail brochure highlighting the eastern end of the Greenway.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 28 hours.

Facilitated Experiences

Stewardship Days – NJAS will plan and supervise two volunteer stewardship days. The goals for the stewardship days will be to perform needed work on the properties using volunteers and to get local residents engaged and interested in the properties. These events will be

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advertised on the web site, in the Town newsletter, and through a direct mailing to neighbors of Middlebush and Ten-Mile-Run Greenways. A press release will also be sent to local media.

Outings – NJAS will continue to lead interpretive outings on the properties. In 2005-2006, NJAS will lead four outings, two to each property. These outings also will be publicized via the web site, in the Town newsletter, and through a direct mailing to neighbors of Middlebush and Ten-Mile-Run Greenways. A press release will also be sent to local media.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 32 hours including preparation for outings.

Neighbor Outreach – Database Creation

As previously mentioned, NJAS will do targeted mailings to neighbors and nearby landowners to inform them of upcoming events, outings, and projects. To do this, NJAS will create a database with addresses of neighbors to the two greenways, individuals who attended past outings, and NJAS members in the Town. Mailings will be sent out prior to each event for with a minimum of six.

Total staff time estimated until completion: 64 hrs.

Budget Narrative

Attached is a proposed budget document for 2005-2006. NJAS has reworked the contracted hourly rate for 2005-2006 to better reflect real costs. This includes a new, tiered structure for billable hours that better assigns the applicable hourly wage to the individual actually working on the task. The budget details an hourly rate increase by NJAS from the standard \$48/hr of 2004-2005 to \$53/hr for the Project Coordinator in 2005-2006. The increase in the hourly rate accounts for increases in healthcare costs, salaries, and the Federally recognized mileage reimbursement rate and reflects NJAS' true costs. In addition to the standard rate of \$53/hour for the Project Coordinator, NJAS is offering two additional hourly rates: \$63/hour for the Project Administrator and \$13/hour for the Project Technician. The majority of hours will be billed at the rate of Project Coordinator.

The Budget also includes line items for mailings, printing, and contracted services. These are to print the postcards and brochures for the mailings as well as the actual postage. NJAS will submit these receipts to the Town. The contractor will be used to design the web page.

The totals at the end of the Budget document list minimum and maximum bottom-lines that will be billed to the Township. The minimum number reflects the cost of the project if all hours are billed to the Coordinators rate. The maximum lists the amount billed to the Township if all hours were charged to the administrator's rate, including 157 hours of supplemental time listed in the Budget. As most hours will be charged at the Coordinator's rate, the real number should fall closer to the minimum or else between the two.

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| Task | Hours (Minimum) | Hours (Maximum) | Other |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| I. A. Completion of Four Interpretive and Two Trailhead Signs | | 0 | |
| B. Boy Scout Projects (In Progress) | | 12 | |
| II. A. Project Meetings | | 30 | |
| B. Web Site Development | | 40 | *\$2000 * contractor to design web page |
| C. Boy Scout/Volunteer Projects (New) | | 10 | 18 |
| D. Invasive Species Manual/Plan | | 32 | |
| E. Six Mile Run Management | | 16 | 24 |
| F. Targeted Outreach to Landowners | | 40 | 80 |
| G. Trail Marking and Mapping (New Properties) | | 28 | |
| H. Facilitated Experiences | | 32 | |
| I. Neighbor Outreach, Database Creation | | 64 | #\$1500 #postage for mailings |
| J. Miscellaneous | | | 35 |
| Total Hours | | 304 | 157 |

NJAS will charge base rates of \$53/hr for the Coordinator, \$63/hr for the Project Administrator and \$13/hr for a project technician. As was the case in 2004-05, a project technician will be used, when possible, for basic tasks associated with the project.

| | Minimum (304 hours billed at Coordinator's Rate including) | Maximum (507 Hours billed at Administrator's Rate) |
|--------------------|--|--|
| SUBTOTAL | \$16,112 | \$29,043 |
| Postage | \$1,500 | \$1,500 |
| Website Contractor | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| Printing | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| TOTAL | \$21,612 | \$34,543 |