

**Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee Minutes
September 16, 2008**

1. **Call to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision.** At 7:30 a quorum was present and Chairman Jones called the meeting to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law.
2. **Introductions/roll call.** Present (P) were members:

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| Melba Battin-P |
| Ted Chase-P |
| Bill Connell-P |
| Jack Connolly-P |
| Kenneth W Daly |
| Mark Healy |
| Randy Jones-P |
| Gene Unger |
| Vandana Khurana |

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| Robert LaCorte-P |
| John Moon |
| Mike Orsini |
| Alice Osipowitz |
| Bob Puskas-P |
| Arnold Schmidt-P |
| David Triggs-P |

Also present was Consultant Loos.

3. **Approval of the May 20, 2008 OSAC minutes.** Battin moved and Triggs seconded a motion to approve the 6/17/08 minutes. Motion carried.
4. **Financial Report.** Loos reported that there is \$18,389,479.35 in the OSTF. Connolly moved and Puskas seconded a motion to approve the financial report. Motion carried.
5. **Opening of the meeting to the public.** Puskas moved and Schmidt seconded a motion to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried. Jack Otterbein, 310 Skillman Lane, told the committee that his nursery business is adjacent to the Negri-Nepote Native Grassland Preserve and that, on occasion, people have strayed from the trail and trespassed on his property. Loos said that he would arrange to erect "Private Property-No public Access" signs along the border and would meet Mr. Otterbein on site to agree upon appropriate locations. LaCorte moved and Puskas seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried.
6. **Consultant's report.** The committee reviewed the consultant's report. They also discussed a request from an Eagle Scout candidate, Alex Criscione, for money to complete his project. The project is constructing a kiosk on the Middlebush Park site. Chase moved and Triggs seconded a motion to approve an amount not to exceed \$400. Motion carried on a 6-2 vote.
7. **Open Space budget for FY 2009.** The committee was advised of the status of the FY 09 budget. Included therein will be money to replace the roof of the open space property known as the Kingston School. The committee was advised that the OSTF receives \$1000 per month in rental income from the party leasing the building. The committee was also advised that the cost of the roof could approach \$110,000. There were many questions about this and Loos was asked to obtain more information about this and report back to the October meeting.
8. **Scott property.** A subcommittee that had conducted a site visit of this property reported on their inspection and the full committee reviewed their recommendations. There was considerable discussion of the proposed site plan and the committee took no formal action. They asked Loos to find out the anticipated cost of creating a driveway entrance on Van Cleef Road and the cost of a parking lot. They also asked Loos to find out the Police Department's thoughts on a driveway entrance on Van Cleef. Chase made it clear that he thinks the plan should include the Trail Committee's recommendation for a bike path through the property. Puskas, (who was advised by Loos that, because he leases the property and has an economic interest in the property, should recuse himself from voting on this matter) told the committee that he does not think there should be trails on the property. Puskas also discussed several small fields closest to Amwell Road and thought that the committee should plant white oak trees in one and consider wildflowers in several

9. **Naming the Scott property the “Phil Marden Preserve.”** The committee discussed the fact that Phil Marden was a driving force behind the adoption of the Open Space tax and the establishment of the Open Space Trust Fund. Triggs moved and Connolly seconded a motion to recommend to the Council that the Scott property be named the “Phil Marden Preserve.” Motion carried. Loos was asked to contact Mr. Marden and so advise him.
10. **Southern Park Task Force.** Jack Connolly and Randy Jones reported on their attendance at the Southern Park Task Force meetings. They reported that there seemed to be developing a consensus to preserve the historic Gunther house and there was discussion of including some active recreation on a portion of the Dunn property. Catalpa has not yet had much discussion. Loos reported that he had met with Anne Suydam and she has requested a community garden be given consideration for the Gunther property.
11. **NJ Audubon Society.** Puskas moved and Connell seconded a motion to recommend to the Township that the NJAS be awarded another contract, per the attached “**New Jersey Audubon Society Proposal for Services.**” Motion carried.
12. **Hageman property survey.** The committee reviewed a request from the Township Manager to have the OSTF pay for a survey of the Hageman property, as there appears to be a disagreement over the property line between the Meadows Foundation, (which leases the Six Mile Run Reservoir Site property from the township), and Bob Puskas who leases adjacent property from the State. The Meadows wants to construct parking on the disputed land. The committee had a lot of questions regarding this, including whether or not the State should pay for the survey, whether or not there are environmental constraints on the property that would prohibit the parking lot and associated uses. Bob Puskas was advised that he should not vote on this matter as he was in a conflict of interest. Connolly moved and LaCorte seconded a motion to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried. Bob Puskas spoke as a member of the public and stated that the Meadows Foundation would need a use variance from the Zoning Board in order to utilize it the way they intend (renting out the barn for meetings) and that he would likely oppose such a variance being granted in the Agricultural Zone. Triggs moved and Connolly seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried. After some discussion, LaCorte moved and Connolly seconded a motion as follows: That paying for a survey out of the OSTF not be considered until the OSAC is provided all current documentation of the leased land that the Township has (copy of lease and any associated documents); and that the Meadows Foundation provide the OSAC with DEP environmental approval of their plans. Motion carried with Puskas abstaining.
13. **Application to purchase from the township Block 522, Lots 19-21—Leona Street.** The committee reviewed a request from the Township Clerk to review the request to purchase from the township Block 522, Lots 19-21, on Leona Street. After reviewing maps and associated documents, LaCorte moved and Puskas seconded a motion to make no decision until and/or unless they knew what the applicant was willing to pay for the lots. Motion carried.
14. **Application to sell land to the township Block 194, Lot 40—120 Green Street.** The committee reviewed a request from the Township Clerk to review the request to sell land to the township Block 194, Lots 40—120 Green Street. LaCorte moved and Puskas seconded a motion that stated that the OSAC was not interested in purchasing this lot. Motion carried.
15. **Second opening of the meeting to the public.** A motion was passed to open the meeting to the public. No member of the public wanted to speak, so a motion to close the meeting to the public passed.
16. **Adjournment.** At 9:45 PM the OSAC adjourned, upon a motion that carried.

Respectfully submitted,
John Loos, Secretary/Consultant

New Jersey Audubon Society Proposal for Services

September 2, 2008

Mr. John Loos
Loos Consulting
39 Fisher Drive
Franklin Park, NJ 08823

Dear John:

With record turnout for the facilitated experience tours and completion of a deer enclosure at the Bunker Hill Natural Area we have come a long way in educating the public on the local natural resources in their community and how the proper management of those resources can make significant changes to wildlife communities. There are already obvious differences in the deer enclosure as compared to the surrounding habitat. As we move toward 2009, we should consider additional habitat management activities and continuation of the Facilitated Experiences program.

Changes in the NRCS programs make Franklin Township ineligible for WHIP program support, however, the US Fish & Wildlife Partners Program remains a viable option. That being said, this might be an excellent time to consider invasive species management, wetland and pond restoration and other potential habitat restoration activities. New Jersey Audubon Society would be interested in helping Franklin Township with stewardship activities as well as continued consultation to wildlife and wildlife habitat issues as it relates to management and restoration, and leading educational program tours at Griggstown Native Grassland Preserve, the Negri-Nepote Native Grassland Preserve, and the Bunker Hill Natural Area. In particular at Bunker Hill I am thinking of a program that is specifically oriented towards landscape health (i.e. forest health, importance of managing open fields, non-native plant invasives, invasive wildlife).

I see the following potential activities (with cost) for 2009:

| Activity | Cost |
|--|-------------------|
| Educational program tours at Griggstown (4 program tours) | \$450.00 |
| Educational program tours at Negri-Nepote Native Grassland Preserve (3 program tours) | \$340.00 |
| Educational program tour at Bunker Hill Natural Area (focus is on landscape health) (1 program tour) | \$480.00 |
| Educational program administration (advertising, report generation) | \$160.00 |
| Wildlife and wildlife habitat consultation as it relates to wildlife and habitat management and restoration | \$1,060.00 |
| Engage USFWS Partners in habitat restoration: invasive species management/wetland restoration/pond restoration | \$1,060.00 |
| TOTAL PROJECT PROPOSAL | \$3,550.00 |

In the above budget I have factored in 20 hours for wildlife and wildlife habitat consultation and 20 hours of working with USFWS on habitat restoration, including assistance with meeting in-kind project match.

I look forward to continuing to work with Franklin Township and Loos Consulting.

Sincerely,

Gylla A. MacGregor
Conservation Ecologist
cc: T. Ettel, Director of Conservation and Stewardship