

**Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee Minutes
Tuesday, November 20, 2007**

1. **Call to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision.** At 7:34 a quorum was present and Chairman Jones called the meeting to order in accordance with the Sunshine Law.
2. **Introductions/roll call.** Present were members Chase, LaCorte, Battin, Jones, Triggs and Schmidt. Also present was Consultant Loos Arriving after the meeting started were Moon and Orsini,
3. **Approval of the October 16, 2007 minutes.** After reviewing several changes to the draft minutes, Battin made and Triggs seconded a motion to approve the October 20, 2007 minutes as revised. Motion carried.
4. **Financial Report.** Loos reported that there is \$27,526,243.45 in the OSTF. LaCorte moved and Schmidt seconded a motion to approve the financial report. Motion carried.
5. **Opening of the meeting to the public.** A motion, made by LaCorte and seconded by Schmidt, was passed to open the meeting to the public.
 - Glenn Johnson, 288 Bennetts Lanes, Somerset, urged the committee to consider taking efforts to preserve the approximately 10 acres that is owned by Rachael Manor Builders on Bennetts Lane. He stated that he lives nearby and has seen a Coopers Hawk and other wildlife on or near the Rachael manor property.
 - Joe Cabanas, 264 Bennetts lane, Somerset also expressed support for preserving the land that is owned by Rachael Manor Builders on Bennetts Lane. He recently saw ring-necked pheasants near the property.

Triggs moved and Chase seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried.

- Around this point, John Moon arrived.
6. **Dunn and Gunther properties.** The committee discussed a draft resolution that Barbara Lawrence had handed out at the October meeting, which among other items, advocates for a process that might resolve issues of potential conflict as perceived by various interest groups in the Township. It was suggested that an additional "Whereas" be added to the Resolution that addresses the fact that the Township's Master Plan supports preservation. LaCorte then moved and Schmidt seconded a motion to approved the Resolution, as amended. It is attached as Appendix A.
 - Around this point, Mike Orsini arrived.
 7. **Guided walks on Township open space in 2008.** The committee reviewed a list of proposed walks that NJAS would lead in 2008. LaCorte moved and Battin seconded a motion to approve the following schedule:
 - April 5--Woodcock walk from 5:30 until dark
 - May 4--Migrant and Breeding Birds from 8 AM – 11 at the Griggstown Native Grassland Preserve
 - May 4--Migrant and Breeding Birds at 11 AM – 1PM at the Negri-Nepote Native Grassland Preserve

- Breeding birds in early June
 - Butterflies in July (later in the day)
8. **Historic grant for 2007.** At the last meeting, Chairman Jones had asked about the possibility of carrying over to the next grant cycle the difference between the amount that had been budgeted (\$162,000) for the historic grants and the amount to be spent (\$135,890), said difference being \$26,110. Loos reported that he had investigated and had been advised that the money cannot be carried over.
 9. **Historic grant for 2008.** A discussion occurred about how to administer the 2008 historic-grant-program. Jones suggested that perhaps the program applications could be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, rather than OSAC, since it was his opinion that the HPC probably had better knowledge of what should and should not be preserved. After some discussion, it was clear that those present liked the idea. Jones then suggested that the OSAC put this on the February 2008 agenda and permit those members appointed for 2008 to be the ones to decide the specifics of the program for 2008. Loos was directed to investigate the legalities of having the HPC make the recommendation on specific projects to be awarded grants, while OSAC would establish the program guidelines and application procedures and determine the budget for the grant.
 10. **New Business—Environmental Commission Overseeing an Environmental Resources Inventory.** The committee was advised that the EC is overseeing the ERI and the committee asked Loos to review certain maps that the EC's consultant, Amy Greene and Associates, would be preparing, and to provide Greene with a water re-charge map that OSAC has in its possession. It was felt that OSAC would likely be using these in the future.
 11. **New Business—Shade Tree Significant Tree Inventory.** Orsini advised the committee that the STC would be updating its Significant Tree Inventory and asked if it would be acceptable to have Loos Consulting assist with this for trees that are located on open space. STC would like to have these located with the Township's GPS system. Loos indicated that he could train Orsini in how to use the equipment and that he could show Orsini where these trees are during his regular site visits to the open space property. Orsini moved and Moon seconded a motion to have Loos assist in this project. Motion carried. Loos stated that he will make every effort to limit the time spent on this project.
 12. **Opening of the meeting to the public.** A motion, made by Orsini and seconded by Schmidt, was passed to open the meeting to the public. There being no public present, Orsini moved and Schmidt seconded a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion carried.
 13. **Executive Session.** 9:25, on a motion by Orsini, seconded by Schmidt, a motion carried to go into Executive Session to discuss negotiations and possible purchase of property. At 9:40 the committee came out of Executive Session.
 14. **Adjournment.** At 9:40 PM the OSAC adjourned, upon a motion that carried.

Respectfully submitted,

John Loos
Secretary/Consultant

Appendix A

**Resolution Regarding Planning For and Stabilization Of The Gunther/Dunn Historic Sites
Located In The Six Mile Run Historic District
Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee**

WHEREAS, The Stoothoff/Suydam/Gunther farmstead on South Middlebush Road:

- Is owned by the township and an Historic Structures Report was completed in 2004,
 - Was deeded to the Township under a Preservation Deed “intended to promote, preserve and protect certain defined natural resources and to preserve an environment for the continuance of viable agricultural and horticultural uses,,,”,
 - Is historically significant, having been built by one of Franklin’s founding families, associated with Lenape and Dutch archeological artifacts, and operated as a farm since 1740,
 - Is architecturally significant, a pre-Revolutionary home, retaining much 18th century fabric, and being well documented,
 - Is agriculturally significant, having been continuously farmed for 270 years, and being one of the last agricultural scenic vistas located on a township-designate scenic by-way,
- AND

WHEREAS, there is extensive potential for historic interpretation of the farmstead and multiple opportunities for agricultural farm and educational uses, and heritage/agri-tourism offers proven economic benefits, AND

WHEREAS, state legislation regarding encroachment of historic sites and preservation of archeological sites on publicly owned properties places limitations and requires extensive project review, AND

WHEREAS, there are both threats to site integrity and alternative township needs, such as:

- Active and passive recreation, and site proposal to meet these needs,
- The threat of demolition by neglect,
- Lack of planning for the historic buildings on the site,
- Lack of protection for the site,
- Risk of lost opportunities for funding if the site is developed beyond its agricultural context, AND

WHEREAS, there is a need to gain agreement on best use/program for the site and approval to begin detailed planning, as well as agreement on an appropriate location for recreational facilities, AND

Whereas, the Township’s Master Plan supports protecting the Township’s cultural heritage, protecting the Township’s cultural heritage by encouraging continuation of farming as a viable land use, preserving agricultural lands, preserving natural resources and conserving open space, rural character, scenic vistas and scenic corridors.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee recommend that the Franklin Township Town Council:

- Approve stabilization plans and funds for Gunther/Dunn,
- Approve a use that preserves the site in its agricultural context
- Convene a task force and public planning workshop with goals
 - To agree upon best use/program for the site
 - To propose alternative solutions to recreation needs

Approved by Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee
On November 20, 2007