

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST

Thursday, December 18, 2025

Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting

10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

In-Person: William Trent House, Trenton, NJ

Virtual: Zoom link

<https://zoom.us/j/944408512962?pwd=0QWdoT2NG8WwpmYkE8IboiakDy3oX2a.1>

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Mr. Lindsay called the meeting to order at 10:06AM

Open Public Meetings Act

Mr. Ceponis notified the Board that public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call

Mr. Ceponis called the roll and confirmed the meeting had quorum.

Trustees present: Jody Alessandrine (virtual), Lisa Easton (virtual), Gina Fischetti, Janet Foster, Deborah Kelly, Peter Lindsay, Dr. Katherine Marcopul (DEP), Kenneth Miller (virtual), Meme Omogbai, Chris Perks, Linda Stender (Secretary), Robert Tighue (Treasury)

NJHT staff present: Glenn Ceponis, Judy Murphy, Alexis Aley, Ashley Parker, Jennifer Boggs, Shannon Bremer, Olivia Chaudhury, Kristen Downing, Carrie Hogan, Stephanie Kraut (virtual), Paula Lassiter, Tara Ritz, Nan Wakefield

Public: Sam Stephens Executive Director of the William Trent House

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from September 25 were presented for approval and comment. Mr. Lindsay motioned for approval, Ms. Foster seconded. All voted in approval.

Public Comment

Sam Stephens, Executive Director of the William Trent House, welcomed board and staff, thanked them for hosting the NJHT meeting here, thanked the Trust for previous grants, and went on to discuss the history of the Trent House and surrounding area of Trenton.

Communications

Mr. Ceponis stated that the communications were all placed within the Board Memo.

Reports of Officers

- **Chair**

Mr. Lindsay recapped his attendance at the League of Municipalities Conference and stated that the Trust had a good presence and received a good number of visitors. Mr. Lindsay thanked the Trust staff who attended the League of Municipalities. Mr. Ceponis thanked the Department of Community Affairs for allowing the Trust to present at the League of Municipalities Conference. Mr. Lindsay summarized the Cultural Trust meeting which he attended via zoom. Mr. Lindsay spoke about the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and updated the Board on their public meetings. Some discussion ensued about the “History Girl” and her New Jersey-centric posts.

- **Vice-chair**

Ms. Stender provided an update on legislation that is moving through the legislature and stated that the Trust's appropriations bill is up for a vote. Ms. Stender reminded the Board that there will be some changes as the new governor takes office. Ms. Foster asked if the legislation to move the New Jersey Historic Trust to the Department of Community Affairs was officially passed. Mr. Ceponis said that he would touch on that in his report later in the meeting. Ms. Stender addressed the New Jersey Historic Trust staff and thanked them for their presence at the League of Municipalities and stated that it is great that the Trust attends conferences like that.

- **Treasurer**

Mr. Miller stated that the administrative budget is on target, the Corporate Business Tax expectation is about \$13 million and it has leveled out to be about \$13 million a year. Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Carrie Hogan of the New Jersey Historic Trust staff for her help and updates with the Treasurer's report.

- **Secretary**

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Ceponis stated that the bill to move the New Jersey Historic Trust to the Department of Community Affairs is finally through the assembly. 16 voted against while 59 were in favor. Now that it has passed it is awaiting the Governor's signature. The second bill that the Trust is watching is our appropriations bill, which will be heard this afternoon in the appropriations committee. Mr. Ceponis stated that there are two more assembly and senate sessions scheduled before the end of 2025. Mr. Ceponis summarized the Historic Preservation Commission training bill and stated that the Association of Professional Planners approached the Trust inquiring about the training. Some discussion continued about how to make the training more accessible to Historic Preservation Commission members and how to host the training. For example, offering in person sessions, virtual classes, or some combination were considered. Some discussion ensued about hosting the training at the League of Municipalities since there are so many municipalities present. Mr. Ceponis stated that the Trust staff and the State Historic Preservation Office staff have met to discuss curriculum for this course. The Board congratulated Mr. Ceponis on this achievement.

Mr. Ceponis provided an update on the state audit and stated that the Trust and Board are in compliance. Again, Mr. Ceponis reminded the Board to complete ethics training. Mr. Lindsay asked if the ethics training is once a year and Mr. Ceponis stated that it must be completed once every three years. The Board's ethics training is available online but can be in person if the Board would like to attend. Some discussion about the training and presentation of the learning material ensued.

Mr. Ceponis welcomed and introduced the newest New Jersey Historic Trust staff member, Ms. Nan Wakefield. Mr. Ceponis thanked Ms. Paula Lassiter for attending the Board meeting and congratulated her on her retirement of over 30 years as a staff member at the Trust.

Discussion about Green Acres and farmland programs compared to the Historic Trust ensued. Ms. Kelly reminded the Board that the Trust needs additional funding. Mr. Ceponis stated that he is meeting with Green Acres to discuss their acquisition of property containing historic sites and how to preserve the historic structures. Discussion about how to get additional funding for the New Jersey Historic Trust ensued.

Mr. Ceponis thanked the Board and staff members for their attendance at the League of Municipalities conference and stated that over 17,000 people attended. Since the New Jersey Historic Trust has moved out of a shared Department of Community Affairs booth at the League and now has its own booth, there have been many more people approaching the booth. More discussions about the League of Municipalities conference ensued. Mr. Ceponis mentioned that Senator Andy Kim's staff sought out the Trust's booth and told the Trust that they would like to advertise the Trust to their constituents and that they will be attending the Trust's applicant workshop to learn more about the Trust's grant program. Senator Kim's office noted that they are aware of threats to federal funding and how that can affect Historic Preservation statewide.

Mr. Ceponis updated the board on the federal Covid Relief funding the Trust has received and how staff is handling those monies.

Mr. Ceponis announced that the new website for the annual New Jersey History and Historic Preservation Conference is up and live, and that session proposal applications are live. This year the conference is being held later in June on June 17-18, 2026 so as not to conflict with American Institute of Architects and New Jersey Professional Planners conferences. Mr. Ceponis reminded the Board that the June meeting will be moved to early June to accommodate the Conference. Discussion about the conference then ensued.

No additional questions or comments

Report of Department of Community Affairs

Ms. Fischetti stated that Mr. Ceponis covered a lot of topics she intended to speak on and did a thorough job. Ms. Fischetti stated that Main Street has nine new districts and that Main Street presented a program at the League of Municipalities conference. Ms. Fischetti reported that the Main Street contract expires in February 2026, as their funding was cut in half this past budget cycle. Ms. Fischetti wants to speak further with Mr. Ceponis about ways to coordinate between Main Street and the Historic Trust. Ms. Fischetti also pointed out that the Downtown Business Improvement Support Fund is an additional source of funding to assist these districts through long-term interest-free loans. Ms. Foster asked how many of the 29 Main Street districts include Historic Districts. Ms. Fischetti estimated more than half do include Historic Districts. Discussion about the Main Street districts and their designations as Historic Districts or areas encouraging community development ensued.

Ms. Kelly stated now that the incoming Governor may appoint a new commissioner to the Department of Community Affairs; this may give the Board an opportunity to discuss these concerns and new ideas with the Commissioner.

No additional questions or comments.

Report of Department of Environmental Protection

Dr. Marcopul addressed the previous discussion about Green Acres and the Garden State Preservation Funds stating that the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office works with Green Acres to ensure that historic assets within Green Acres land are accounted for and preserved. The Historic Preservation Office has a good working relationship with Green Acres. Dr. Marcopul summarized the U. S. Senate Committee hearing on energy and natural resources that took place at the end of October 2026; the hearing included discussion on efficiencies and possible improvements to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Dr. Marcopul stated that no one in the hearing said that they were looking to get rid of Section 106. The hearing included expert witnesses from the State Historic Preservation Office of Utah, a representative from the National Association of Tribal Preservation, and representatives of

the Montana Power Company. Dr. Marcopul and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office is keeping up with discussions about improving Section 106 and will monitor further hearings.

Dr. Marcopul reported that the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office has an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to fund positions within the Historic Preservation Office that would enable continued surveying of areas experiencing repetitive flooding in New Jersey. The surveys are aimed at expediting Section 106 and Federal Emergency Management Agency reviews. The Historic Preservation Office is hoping to kick off field review in January.

The Department of Environmental Protection is preparing transition documents for the anticipated newly appointed Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner. Ms. Omogbai asked how the discussion on disaster recovery came about. Dr. Marcopul explained that, following Hurricane Sandy, the State Historic Preservation Office reviewed damage around the state and documented historic properties. Dr. Marcopul stated that FEMA saw the benefit of the previous surveying effort and the value of conducting new surveys. Some discussion about disaster recovery ensued.

No additional questions or comments

Report of Department of Treasury

No report.

Reports of Standing Committees

- **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee met on December 10th to discuss the legislation that Ms. Stender and Mr. Ceponis previously presented.

- **Report from the Grants & Loans Committee**

Ms. Foster reviewed the Grants and Loans meeting memo included in the packet to the Board. There were 15 requests for extension and all 15 were recommended for approval by the Grants and Loans Committee. Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Mr. Tighue stated that he would recuse from discussion and voting on the Morven application because the property is owned and managed by the Department of Treasury.

Ms. Foster moved to approve Morven. Ms. Kelly seconded. All remaining Board members voted in favor of the extension.

Ms. Foster moved to approve the remaining extension requests. Mr. Tighue seconded. All were in favor.

Before presenting the applications for the Discover New Jersey License Place Grant applications, Ms. Foster mentioned that many applications that came in for consideration were for markers

on the New Jersey Historical Commission's Black Heritage Trail which would strain the limits of the License Plate Grant Fund. Ms. Foster stated she would like to save further discussion on that issue for after voting.

Ms. Foster went over the two Discover New Jersey License Place Grant applications recommended by the Committee for funding. Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Mr. Alessandrino stated that he would recuse himself from discussion and voting on the Cape May Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts & Humanities application because he is the Executive Director of the organization.

Ms. Foster moved to vote on the Cape May Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts & Humanities without Mr. Alessandrino. Mr. Lindsay seconded. All remaining members voted in favor of the application.

Ms. Foster moved to vote on the Liberty Hall application. Ms. Stender seconded. All were in favor of the application.

*Requests for Extension: **

Grantee: Friends Meeting House and Community Association of Randolph Twp.

Project: Friends Meeting House

Grant Award No.: 2021.2053

Grantee: NASW Foundation

Project: Hangar #1

Grant Award No.: 2021.2051

Grantee: Township of Livingston

Project: Theophilus Ward/Thomas Force House and Condit Family Cook House

Grant Award No.: 2021.2086

Grantee: Palisades Interstate Park Commission

Project: Palisades Interstate Park

Grant Award No.: 2022.0075

Grantee: Historic Morven

Project: Morven

Grant Award No.: 2023.H049

Grantee: Rowan University

Project: Red Bank Battlefield

Grant Award No.: 2023.0082

Grantee: Friends of Van Ness House, Inc.

Project: Van Ness House
Grant Award No.: 2023.0030

Grantee: Little Falls Historical Society
Project: Little Falls Old Towns Hall
Grant Award No.: 2023.0101

Grantee: Allaire Village, Inc.
Project: Deserted Village of Allaire
Grant Award No.: 2019.1020

Grantee: Newark Performing Arts Corporation
Project: Newark Symphony Hall
Grant Award No.: 2020.2098

Grantee: City of Jersey City
Project: Reservoir No. 3
Grant Award No.: 2019.2056

Grantee: City of Jersey City
Project: Reservoir No. 3
Grant Award No.: 2021.2047

Grantee: Liberty Hall Museum, Inc.
Project: Liberty Hall
Grant Award No.: 2021.1015

Grantee: Alice Paul Institute, Inc.
Project: Paulsdale
Grant Award No.: 2021.2012

Grantee: Save Ellis Island, Inc.
Project: Ellis Island South Side
Grant Award No.: 2020.2057

*Discover NJ License Plate Grants**

Applicant: Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts & Humanities
Project No.: 2025.D018
Award Amount: \$7,500

Applicant: Liberty Hall Museum, Inc.
Project No.: 2025.D017
Award Amount: \$7,500

Ms. Foster reminded the Board that the Preserve New Jersey Grant Applications will open in about two weeks. Ms. Foster reminded the Board of the upcoming applicant and grantee workshops and encouraged Board members to attend to refresh themselves on the grant process.

Ms. Omogbai thanked the Trust and Board for their efforts in approving and denying grants as it takes a lot of work.

Mr. Ceponis addressed the issues with the License Plate Grant applications for markers on the Black Heritage Trail. Mr. Ceponis spoke with Ms. Sara Cureton, the Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Commission, about this issue and encouraged Ms. Cureton to consider the Trust's Preserve New Jersey Grant program rather than the License Plate program as the latter's budget is smaller. Discussion about different funding options with the Trust and what funds the Black Heritage Trail program can legally use based on its enabling legislation ensued. Differences between designation standards for National and State Registers, and designation standards for the Black Heritage Trail ensued. Ms. Kelly mentioned that the Trust should clarify this on the website, and Mr. Ceponis stated that he is working on that with Ms. Cureton. Ms. Foster stated that none of those applications addressed emergency issues and that the Trust clarified with the applicants why they were not eligible to receive Trust funding under the program at this time.

Mr. Ceponis brought up the Wind Farm grant program and how the federal government shut down has affected the timeline of that process. Trust staff Ms. Boggs is working with Mr. Ceponis on this initiative. It remains to be determined if the Trust will be handling this initiative beyond the current \$365,000 in funds. Some discussion about the Wind Farm and the Mitigation Fund ensued.

Mr. Ceponis updated the Board on the Revolving Loan application from the Monmouth Boat Club, who applied for a loan to fund a project beyond their Preserve New Jersey Grant award. Discussion about funding opportunities beyond just Revolving Loans, the loan breakdowns, and the application process ensued. There was discussion about how the Monmouth Boat Club has some public programming but is still a membership organization. There was consideration for whether the Boat Club meets the intent of the public benefit aspect of the loan program or if they would need to increase their efforts to bring in more of the general public.

- **Acquisitions and Easements**

- Perpetual Easement Applications**

- Three votes required.

- Residence 2 Hamilton Avenue, Princeton

Mr. Miller presented 2 Hamilton Avenue for approval and asked if there were any recusals. There were none. Ms. Foster asked if an easement can be granted to a property that is not listed on the New Jersey or National Registers of Historic Places. Mr. Ceponis stated that the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office has said there is an eligible historic district in this neighborhood, but it is not registered at this time. Mr. Miller stated that there is no Register stipulation required for easements. Mr. Miller made a motion to accept an easement on 2 Hamilton Avenue. Ms. Omogbai seconded. Ms. Foster opposed, but all others voted to accept the easement. Motion passed.

- o The Association of Exempt Firemen Bldg., 244 Bay St., Jersey City

Mr. Miller presented 244 Bay Street for approval and asked if there were any recusals. There are no recusals. Mr. Miller made a motion on behalf of the Committee for the Trust to hold an easement on 244 Bay Street. Mr. Tighue seconded the motion to approve. All were in favor. Motion passed.

- o Property at 262 N. Main Street, Lambertville (part of former Holcombe Farm)

Mr. Miller presented 262 North Main Street for approval and asked if there were any recusals. Ms. Easton and Ms. Kelly recused themselves from discussion and from voting because they sit on the local Historic Preservation Commission. Ms. Stender seconded the motion. All remaining members were in favor and the motion passed.

Discussion about the property and designation ensued and Mr. Miller provided updates.

Mr. Miller provided brief updates on easements that have been recorded and mentioned that the easement for Point Breeze is still in the works.

No additional questions or comments.

- **Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning**

Ms. Stender relayed her conversations with Janine Bower on existing laws for Historic Preservation Commissions within Municipal Land Use laws. Ms. Stender thinks that revisions to the Municipal Land Use Law may be needed to close a potential loophole in the law that could exclude preservation commission's input in decisions.

- **Education and Outreach**

Ms. Easton stated that she is happy to stay on the committee but cannot lead as Chair anymore. Mr. Lindsay will appoint her replacement.

- **Fiscal Oversight**

No report.

Unfinished Business

No report.

New Business

Discussions about how to host the 2026 Board meetings ensued. Board members are encouraged to attend at least one meeting in person a year. The 2026 Board meeting schedule is proposed as:

March 18- virtual

June 3- hybrid

September 30 (Annual Meeting)- hybrid

December 16- virtual

Mr. Lindsay asked for the approval of the upcoming meeting dates. Mr. Tighue made a motion to approve the vote. Ms. Omogbai seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Omogbai asked if there would be a Board retreat in the upcoming summer. Ms. Foster suggested a Board retreat to revisit the Trust's Strategic Plan since there have been many accomplishments in the past few years. The Board agreed to continue the discussion in the future.

The Board recognized Ms. Paula Lassiter for over 30 years of service with the Historic Trust. Mr. Perks thanked Ms. Lassiter for her service and discussed how the Trust did not always have such a large staff, but Ms. Lassiter was always professional and a real parter to the Executive Directors and that it has been an absolute pleasure to work with her. Ms. Kelly thanked Paula and loved the sense of humor she has brought to the Trust.

Ms. Lassiter thanked Glenn, Judy and Carrie for being her longest standing coworkers and thanked the rest of the Trust and all those she has seen come and go.

Public Comment

No comment.

Adjournment

Mr. Lindsay moved to adjourn. Ms. Stender seconded. All were in favor.

Next Meeting Date & Location:

March 18, 2026 (Virtual)