

**The NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2024**

**Virtual**

**<https://zoom.us/j/95656834047>**

**10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lindsay called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

**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: Peter Lindsay, Janet Foster, Kenneth Miller, Deborah Kelly, Lisa Easton, Linda Stender, Chris Perks, Katherine Marcopul (DEP), Bob Tighue (Treasury)

NJHT staff present: Glenn Ceponis, Carrie Hogan, Judy Murphy, Ashley Parker, Vito Scocozzo, Alexis Alemy, Jennifer Boggs, Stephanie Kraut, Shannon Bremer, Kristin Downing

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the December 13 meeting were presented for approval and comment. Ms. Easton noted that there was a spelling error in the name of the location for the December meeting and asked that it be corrected.

Mr. Miller moved and Ms. Easton seconded the motion to approve both the closed minutes and the general minutes from December 13 with the spelling correction. All voted in favor of approving the minutes with the spelling correction.

**Public Comment**

No public present.

**Communications**

Mr. Ceponis noted that all communications were included in the Board packet sent via email prior to the meeting. This included one article.

**Reports of Officers**

*Chair*

Mr. Lindsay reported that Lobby Day was cancelled last minute. Only the New Jersey delegation cancelled their lobbying efforts in person. Ms. Kelly asked if any staff knew why everything was

cancelled. Ms. Alemy reported that the coordinator for the New Jersey meetings was ill and had to reschedule all in person meetings; however, she is not sure if the coordinator completed meetings virtual on her on.

Mr. Lindsay added that Preserve New Jersey was hosting a virtual program called “Q+A with PNJ”. The February installment featured Mr. Ceponis representing The Historic Trust and Dr. Marcopul representing the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Lindsay recommended that all board members watch the recording of the presentation.

Mr. Lindsay also reminded the board to submit their sponsorships for the annual conference.

*Vice-Chair*

No report.

*Treasurer*

Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Hogan for compiling all the Trust’s financial records and information for the report. He stated that we appear to be under budget at the present time and look to remain that way for the rest of the fiscal year. Overall, Mr. Miller reported that the Trust was doing well financially and administratively. Mr. Miller referred to the bottom of the first page of his memo regarding the fiscal requests for FY23. He stated that the governor did sign the appropriations bill and everything was included that was requested.

Ms. Foster asked if the appropriations were a one year use it or lose it or if they roll over to the next fiscal year. Mr. Miller responded and stated that it should roll over because it’s defined in legislation how much we receive. Mr. Ceponis added that because it’s a dedicated account, it should all remain because of the way the CBT funding was set up.

Mr. Perks moved and Mr. Lindsay seconded the motion to approve the treasurer’s report as presented. All voted in favor of approval.

*Secretary*

Ms. Stender did not have a report; however, she did extend her gratitude to the staff for preparing and collecting all the information for the meeting.

**Executive Director’s Report**

Mr. Ceponis reported that both his report and the staff report were included in the Board packet for the meeting. Mr. Ceponis also stated that a new excel document was also included to track any progress staff has made towards reaching our goals as listed in the Strategic Plan. Ms. Kelly noted that the format of the new sheet was very helpful.

Mr. Ceponis stated that Ms. Kim Holmes, our liaison with the Commissioner’s office, retired from DCA. Our new liaison is Deputy Commissioner Kate McDonnell. He provided some background information about the Deputy Commissioner and stated that she was very supportive of the Trust and its mission.

Mr. Ceponis introduced our most recent hire, Ms. Downing, to everyone. He then stated that he is working towards hiring someone to fill the vacancy for a Historic Preservation Specialist and hopes to have a candidate soon.

Legislatively, the appropriations bill for the most recent grant round was signed in January by the governor. The bill cleaning up our enabling legislation, however, did not get passed in lame duck. Mr.

Ceponis stated that he was working with the Deputy Commissioner to get the bill reintroduced and then passed forward to the committees. The revolving loan regulations are currently under review and need to remain under comment for 60 days before they can be approved and finalized.

Mr. Ceponis met with the chair of the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT), Mr. Alex Rivera. Mr. Ceponis provided him with information about our grant program and offerings since Mr. Rivera is new to GSPT and was not familiar with the Historic Trust. Mr. Ceponis added that they spoke at length about the possibility of the percentage of funds that go to the Trust being increased in the future.

Mr. Ceponis further reported that staff has been extraordinarily busy formulating grant agreements, holding grantee and applicant workshops, hosting office hours for the current applicants, and preparing for the annual conference. Mr. Ceponis explained that the goal of the office hours is to allow potential applicants to ask the staff questions as they fill out their applications. Mr. Ceponis spoke briefly about the offerings for this year's conference.

Mr. Ceponis reminded the board that they need to fill out their financial disclosure forms as well as their ethics paperwork as soon as possible. He stated that there are financial penalties for any late paperwork. Ms. Kelly asked about the online ethics training and Mr. Ceponis responded that he would investigate it and get back to the board with an answer. Some brief discussion about the requirements and trainings occurred.

#### **Report of Department of Community Affairs**

No report.

#### **Report of Department of Environmental Protection**

Dr. Marcopul reported that the State Historic Preservation Office is continuing their scanning project and have been continuously making information and material available digitally. Presently, they are working on digitizing National Register nominations. They are also in the process of creating an archaeology EGO app that would be accessible via subscription to professional archaeologists, allowing them to access archaeological site data from the state.

Dr. Marcopul attended the NCSHPO board meeting as a part of the advocacy events in Washington DC. She provided information and details regarding a recent report from the Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and encouraged everyone to read it or watch any presentations on it. Dr. Marcopul also added that while she was in Washington for the NCSHPO board meeting, an Interior appropriations bill for FY24 was passed that included an extension of the authorization of the Historic Preservation Fund for one year, making the expiration date September 2024. The State Historic Preservation offices did not receive cuts; however, some other programs covered by the fund did.

#### **Report of Department of Treasury**

Mr. Tighue reminded the Board that the USS New Jersey would be having their dry-docking ceremony on March 21. Some discussion and conversation occurred related to the dry-docking and the ceremony.

#### **Reports of the Standing Committees**

- **Executive Committee**

Mr. Lindsay stated that within the board packet, he included a resolution related to the Cultural Trust. The chair of the Trust sits as an ex-officio board member for the Cultural Trust. Presently, there is no

information or policy dictating who would replace the chair if he/she is unable to attend a meeting. Mr. Lindsay drafted a proposed resolution stating that if the Chair of the Trust is not able to vote or attend the meeting, he/she will be able to designate a replacement. Priority designation would be to existing board members then to the Executive Director of the Trust. Ms. Foster agreed that this is a great idea to ensure that someone is always able to attend the meetings.

The resolution was recommended by the Executive Committee and seconded by Ms. Foster. All voted in favor of adopting the resolution.

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

Ms. Foster provided an update from the Grants & Loans Committee, including the following extension requests which are further detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee formal report. Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Hearing no recusals, Ms. Foster recommended that the extensions be approved.

*Requests for Extension: \**

Grantee: Millstone Township Historic Preservation Commission  
Project: Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church  
Grant Award No.: 2021.H008

Grantee: Crossroads of the American Revolution Association  
Project: Palisades Interstate Park  
Grant Award No.: 2021.H028

Grantee: Rutgers University  
Project: Queen's Campus  
Grant Award No.: 2020.H080

Grantee: Borough of Hopewell  
Project: Hopewell Railroad Station  
Grant Award No.: 2020.2055

Grantee: Borough of Manasquan  
Project: Squan Beach Life Saving Station  
Grant Award No.: 2017.1039

Grantee: City of Burlington  
Project: William R. Allen School  
Grant Award No.: 2019.2037

Grantee: 1759 Vought House  
Project: Christoffel Vought Farmstead  
Grant Award No.: 2019.1065

Grantee: Mercer County Park Commission  
Project: Howell Living History Farm (Phillips Farm)  
Grant Award No.: 2020.0044

The committee recommended the approvals, and they were seconded by Mr. Miller. All voted in favor of approving the extensions.

#### *Discover New Jersey History License Plate*

Ms. Foster reported that the committee met and decided not to recommend any projects for funding at this time. She added that some of them have strong potential; however, their applications needed some revisions at the present time.

#### *Revolving Loan Fund*

Ms. Foster asked Mr. Ceponis if he had any updates on the Revolving Loan Fund. Mr. Ceponis stated that the changes are currently under review and will be posted for comment. Once the comments are addressed, everything will be good to go. The current expiration date is November 11, 2024, but Mr. Ceponis stated that he hopes everything will be approved before then.

After Ms. Foster finished presenting the Report of the Grants & Loans Committee, Mr. Ceponis stated that he spoke with the Executive Director of the Cultural Trust and we are behind on the amount of money we are awarding due to being skipped one year during the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that even though we expended about \$800,000, we are still behind \$300,000. As a result, the Cultural Trust presented two scenarios:

- 1) Hold another grant round next year (FY25) and limit the types of projects we would fund
- 2) Add the amount to our next scheduled round (FY27)

There was some discussion related to the pros and cons of each scenario. Mr. Scocozzo added that according to the Cultural Trust regulations, planning documents that go towards capital projects would also be eligible for funding such as preservation plans and structural analysis. Ms. Kelly concurred with Mr. Ceponis's suggestion that we add the difference to the next scheduled round so we can fund more projects. Ms. Stender asked why the next scheduled round was so far off and Mr. Ceponis explained how the rotation works with the three organizations that run grant rounds (The Council on the Arts, The NJ Historical Commission, and NJHT). Mr. Ceponis stated that the board has until the July meeting of the Cultural Trust to make their decision. Ms. Foster asked if the Grants & Loans Committee could discuss it at the next Grants & Loans meeting and present the decision to the board at the June meeting. Mr. Ceponis agreed and promised to send the board all the related information in writing for their review.

- **Acquisitions and Easements**

Mr. Miller stated that there were no new developments related to the Point Breeze easement. Mr. Ceponis added that their board seems to be in favor of it; however, they are making sure they can get the supplementary fund from Green Acres before making a final decision.

- **Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning**

Ms. Stender reported that she has been in touch with Assemblyman Kennedy's office and things seem to be particularly slow due to retirements. A draft legislation was presented and we requested amendments. She also mentioned that she got to meet Deputy Commissioner Kate McDonnell and thinks she will be great to work with.

- **Education and Outreach**

Ms. Easton stated that there was no report. Mr. Lindsay added some information and insight into why the commissioner training was cancelled early in the spring. Mr. Lindsay stated that he and Mr. Ceponis had discussed the possibility of offering either hybrid or virtual training to cut back on the costs associated with in-person trainings. Mr. Ceponis agreed that he would like to see a live webinar offering as well as an in-person training to encourage more attendees from across the state. Ms. Stender asked if we could

offer it as a part of the conference. Mr. Ceponis and Ms. Easton stated that it would require adding a third day to the conference. There was some discussion on how the conference is meant to encourage people to become more involved in preservation as well as attend MARCH classes through Rutgers Camden.

Ms. Easton asked Ms. Stender what the likelihood of getting a bill that requires training for HPC members passed is and what the timeline would look like. Ms. Stender replied that the delay of getting things out of OLS is the biggest hurdle. She stated that the goal would be to get it out by June to committee, but it may be a tough feat. Mr. Ceponis asked if it was too premature to talk to the Deputy Commissioner about it. Ms. Stender stated that it would be fantastic if it did because it would show that there is interest beyond just us. Mr. Ceponis said that realistically, it could take years for everything to be accomplished because even when it is passed, there is still more work to be done regarding writing rules and regulations. Mr. Ceponis asked if we may receive negative feedback because it would make people pay for training. Ms. Stender and Ms. Easton both stated that it shouldn't create too much backlash because Planning Boards and Zoning Boards require training for their members as well.

- **Fiscal Oversight**

No report.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Ms. Kelly mentioned that the National Trust has a grant funding program for historic restaurants. She asked if we could promote this on social media for any historic restaurants that may need grant funding. Ms. Foster asked for clarification on whether it was for restaurants that have been open for a long period of time or for restaurants in historic resources. Ms. Kelly stated that it seemed like both would qualify for funding.

Ms. Easton asked if there were any updates on board appointments. Mr. Ceponis stated that he has brought it up to the Deputy Commissioner and will be asking about it often. Some discussion occurred related to how board members might be able to assist in making new appointments happen.

### **Public Comment**

No public present.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Miller moved and Ms. Stender seconded a motion to adjourn at 11:22 AM. The motion passed.