

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST
Thursday, September 25, 2025
Board of Trustees Annual Meeting
Howell Living History Museum - Visitor Center
(In-person and Virtual Attendance)

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Mr. Lindsay called the meeting to order at 10:10 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: Jody Alessandrine, Lisa Easton, Janet Foster, Deborah Kelly, Peter Lindsey, Dr. Katherine Marcopol (DEP), Kenneth Miller, Chris Perks, Troy Simmons (virtual), Robert Tighue (Treasury)

NJHT staff present: Judy Murphy, Stephanie Kraut, Shannon Bremer, Glenn Ceponis, Ashley Parker, Kristen Downing, Carrie Hogan, Jennifer Boggs, Tara Ritz, Olivia Chaudhury

Other attendees: Erin Gilgen, Deputy Attorney General for the New Jersey Historic Trust (virtual)

Present from the public: Pete Watson, Director of Howell Living History Farm; see attached list for additional virtual public attendees.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from June 25 were presented for approval and comment. Ms. Foster noted that the minutes were in excellent shape. Mr. Lindsey called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Simmons seconded. All voted in favor of approval.

Public Comment

Mr. Lindsey noted that public comments will be received at the end of the meeting. Mr. Ceponis introduced Pete Watson, Director of Howell Living History Farm. Mr. Watson thanked the Trust and Board for holding their annual meeting at the Howell Living History Farm. He then provided a brief overview of the history of the farm, their current programming, and thanked the Trust for their support in preserving the farm. Ms. Kelly commented that the programs at the Howell Farm were excellent.

Communications

Mr. Lindsey asked if there were any communications. Mr. Ceponis noted that all communications were included in the Board packet sent via email prior to the meeting. He also briefly summarized the provided communications.

Reports of Officers

Chair

Mr. Lindsey stated that he attended the last day the grant evaluator meetings and commented that there were a lot of great applicants. He added that the Cultural Trust is having their annual meeting on November 17th and he will be in attendance. This year the Cultural Trust is funding historical institution stabilization grants. Next fiscal year, they will be supporting arts institution stabilization grants. It will then return to capital support which is overseen by the Trust in fiscal year 2028. Mr. Lindsay noted that there have been no updates on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation since his last report. There was some discussion regarding the Advisory Council and their operations.

Vice- Chair

No report.

Treasurer

Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Hogan for putting together all of the numbers for his report. All details are available in his report which was sent out with the communications for the meeting. Mr. Miller reported that all spending last fiscal year (FY25), inclusive of our grant appropriation and our administrative budget, came to a total of about \$15.8 million. This was about \$178,000 under budget due to lower staff numbers than expected. Only two items were over budget: website updates and allocation of funds to the emergency grant program. The budget for this upcoming fiscal year (FY26) is similar to last year's spending with the exception of staffing costs which are budgeted for \$1,976,500. Mr. Ceponis added that the increase in staffing costs accounts for a temporary hire in the State Historic Preservation Office with a salary of around \$60,000. There is also an additional \$20,000 that gets allocated from our allotment of the Corporate Business Tax (CBT) to administrative costs for the Garden State Preservation Trust. This is something new that the Garden State Preservation Trust has started since they do not have an administrative budget. Mr. Miller expects that our CBT allotment for next year will be similar to this year. Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the FY26 budget request, inclusive of our grant appropriation and administrative budget. Ms. Easton seconded the motion, and all voted in favor of the FY26 budget request.

Secretary

No report.

Report of Nominating Committee

Ms. Foster presented the following nominations on behalf of the Nominating Committee: Mr. Peter Lindsay, Chair; Ms. Linda Stender, Vice Chair; Mr. Kenneth Miller, Treasurer; Mr. Troy Simmons, Secretary. Hearing no other nominations, Ms. Foster made a motion from committee

to accept the nominations. All voted in favor of the nominations. Mr. Lindsay noted that as stipulated in the Bylaws this will be his last term as Chair.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Ceponis thanked the staff for their hard work. Mr. Ceponis provided an update that the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is currently on maternity leave so Chief of Staff, Kia King, has been serving as the acting Commissioner. Mr. Ceponis added that DCA is currently working on a transition plan for the upcoming gubernatorial election. With that being said, the Trust has been asked to provide a transition document for the Governor elect outlining what we do and why it's important.

Mr. Ceponis then provided updates on the state ethics review and noted that the Trust is in substantial compliance. Mr. Ceponis added that some of the members of the board have not provided him with their outside employment form yet and some were also missing certificates for their ethics training. He asked that those missing those items submit them as soon as possible. New copies of the overall code of ethics and the plain language code of ethics are going to be distributed to all board members as well.

Mr. Ceponis stated that Trust staff has been very busy. He announced that Ms. Downing was being promoted to Historic Preservation Specialist. Mr. Ceponis also announced a new staff hire, Ms. Nan Wakefield. She is scheduled to start on October 29th. He also announced that Ms. Paula Lassiter, the Trust's secretary, would be retiring at the end of the year. Ms. Foster asked if another person would step into that position. Mr. Ceponis explained that instead of filling the position, it would become more of a technical assistant position similar to Ms. Downing's previous position. Some discussion ensued regarding how the board could honor Ms. Lassiter's years of service to the Trust and celebrate her retirement.

Mr. Ceponis announced that the 2026 History and Historic Preservation Conference is going to be held in Morris County at St. Elizabeth University on June 17 and 18. He explained that the date is a little later than normal due to the school's availability and not wanting to overlap with AIA or AICP conferences that are held around the same time. The new conference website is currently in development with the hopes that it will be up and running later in the fall. Because of the later conference date, the June 2026 board meeting will now be held on June 3.

Mr. Ceponis added that "Keep it Green" will be meeting on October 1. He asked if any members of the board received an invitation. Ms. Foster noted that she thought the meeting was today; however, Dr. Marcopul confirmed that it was going to be on October 1 at Prallsville Mill in Stockton. Mr. Lindsay stated that he would try to attend.

Mr. Ceponis stated that the Trust would be presenting at the League of Municipalities in November again. Since the Trust has a booth, Mr. Ceponis asked if any board members would like to volunteer to staff the booth. Several board members volunteered to attend and help staff the booth. He added that the Trust will also have a booth at the Tourism Conference in December. Ms. Kelly encouraged attending more conferences like the League and Tourism conferences because it increases our visibility and allows staff to talk about our programs.

Finally, Mr. Ceponis stated that he has been working with Ms. Boggs on managing the mitigation grants for the off-shore wind projects. The Empire Wind project continues to move forward; however, the projects located further south along the coast have been put on hold due to federal permitting and other factors.

Report of Department of Community Affairs

No report.

Report of Department of Environmental Protection

Dr. Marcopul stated that she would like to start off with good news and reported that the Historic Preservation Fund, which is federal preservation funding, for FY25 was released to state historic preservation offices on July 1. She expressed gratitude for those that reached out to convey the importance of federal funding to state historic preservation offices. Dr. Marcopul added that she will be keeping an eye on FY26 as appropriations for that funding have not occurred. There is strong congressional support for funding the Historic Preservation Fund.

Dr. Marcopul provided updates from her time at the National Conference for State Historic Preservation Offices. She stated that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) was represented at the Conference. Currently, there are four vacancies on the council, but the administration has put forward nominations. The ACHP has gone through massive reductions in staff from 26 staff members to 11. Dr. Marcopul stated that a number of federal bills have been presented regarding the review process for the National Environmental Protection Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which are closely related.

Dr. Marcopul added that SHPO is also in the process of preparing transition documents for the new governor. Dr. Marcopul detailed an agreement the HPO has made with the Office of Emergency Management to conduct windshield surveys of areas that have seen repetitive property loss due to storms. She explained that the Office of Emergency Management is concerned that FEMA will not be able to keep pace with the emergencies, so HPO was enlisted to help expedite review. Further discussion continued regarding the importance of historic significance and integrity of historic resources in the high-loss areas.

Report of Department of Treasury

Mr. Tighue echoed Dr. Marcopul's sentiments regarding the preparation of transition documents. He also reached out to the construction manager for several state projects and he is hopeful that projects will be completed for 2026.

Reports of the Standing Committees

- **Executive Committee**

No Report.

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

Ms. Foster presented the following extension requests which are further detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee report:

Grantee: City of Trenton
Project: Trenton City Hall
Grant Award No.: 2021.2058

Grantee: Newton Monthly Meeting
Project: Newton Friends Meeting
Grant Award No.: 2021.1021

Grantee: Princeton
Project: Princeton Ice Company
Grant Award No.: 2021.2076

Grantee: Haddonfield Friends School
Project: Haddonfield Friends School
Grant Award No.: 2021.2059

Grantee: Millstone Township Historic Preservation Commission
Project: Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church
Grant Award No.: 2023.H027

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Hearing none, Ms. Foster presented a motion to accept the requests for extension. Ms. Eason seconded the motion, and all voted in favor of extension.

Ms. Foster then presented the following recommendations for the Discover NJ History License Plate Fund which are further detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee Report:

Project: 2025.D007 - Washington's Landing
Applicant: Washington Crossing Park Association

Project: 2025.D009 - Morris County Historical Society website upgrades
Applicant: Morris County Historical Society

Project: 2025.D011 - Merchants and Drovers Tavern =- website upgrades
Applicant: Merchants and Drovers Tavern Museum

Project: 2025.D - Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society –marketing plan
Applicant: Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Hearing none, Ms. Foster presented a motion to fund all four projects. Mr. Alessandrine seconded the motion, and all voted in favor of funding. Ms. Foster explained that during the License Plate Fund subcommittee meeting, the subcommittee proposed that the maximum request for these grants be

raised from \$5,000 to \$7,500 since costs have continued to rise, but the maximum request amount has not. Mr. Alessandrine asked if this was a matching grant. Ms. Foster responded no and then briefly explained the License Plate Fund. Already having the approval of Grants & Loans, Mr. Lindsay motioned to raise the cap of requests for the License Plate Fund from \$5,000 to \$7,500. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and all voted in favor of raising the cap.

At 11:06 AM, Mr. Lindsay requested a short break. The meeting resumed at 11:19 AM. Mr. Ceponis explained the 2025 application process including an overview of funding and a breakdown of the applications. Ms. Parker presented the 2025 Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund Recommendations. The Grants & Loans Committee recommends funding sixty-seven applications totaling \$12,239,484. The committee also recommended funding for the existing multiphase grant for Passaic County Court House and United States Custom House and Post Office Historic District for \$750,000 as well as the existing multiphase grant for Case-Dvoor for \$750,000. They also recommended adding \$100,000 to the Emergency Intervention Fund. In total, including the multiphase commitments and the funds added to the Emergency Intervention Fund, the recommendations totaled \$13,839,484.

Historic Site Management

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the HSM recommendations. Mr. Lindsay recused from voting and discussion for 101 Second Ave. (Roebling Historic District) since he serves on the Board of the Roebling Museum. Mr. Alessandrine recused from voting and discussion for the Emlen Physick Estate (Cape May Historic District) since he is the Director/CEO of Cape May MAC. Ms. Easton motioned to accept the recommendation for funding for 101 Second Ave (Roebling Historic District). Mr. Tighue seconded the motion and all except Mr. Lindsay voted in favor.

Then, Mr. Tighue made a motion to accept the recommendation for funding for the Emlen Physick Estate (Cape May Historic District). Mr. Miller seconded the motion and all except Mr. Alessandrine voted in favor.

Mr. Simmons motioned to accept all the other HSM projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report, excluding 101 Second Ave. (Roebling Historic District) and Emlen Physick Estate (Cape May Historic District). Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Municipal, County, and Regional Planning

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the MCRP recommendations and there were none. Ms. Easton made a motion to accept the MCRP projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Heritage Tourism

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Heritage Tourism recommendations and there were none. Mr. Tighue made a motion to accept the Heritage Tourism projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants and Loans Committee's formal report. Mr. Perks seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Capital Level 1

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Capital Level 1 recommendations. Mr. Linsday recused from voting for 101 Second Ave. (Roebling Historic District) since he serves on the Board of the Roebling Museum. Mr. Miller made a motion to accept the recommendation for funding for the Capital Level 1 projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report, excluding 101 Second Ave. (Roebling Historic District). Ms. Easton seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Then, Mr. Tighue made a motion to accept the recommendation of funding for 101 Second Ave. (Roebling Historic District). Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and all except Mr. Lindsay voted in favor.

Capital Level 2

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Capital Level 2 recommendations. Mr. Tighue recused from voting and discussion for the West Pavilion (Atlantic City Convention Hall), USS New Jersey (BB-62), and Old Eagle Tavern since he is a Board member for the USS New Jersey and has involvement at Atlantic City Convention Hall and Old Eagle Tavern. Mr. Perks recused from voting and discussion for Benjamin Cooper Ferry and Tavern and Ebenezer Hopkins House (Cooper River Park Historic District) since he is the President and a Trustee with the Camden County Historical Society.

Mr. Lindsay made a motion to accept the recommendation of funding for the Capital Level 2 projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report, excluding West Pavilion (Atlantic City Convention Hall), Benjamin Cooper Ferry and Tavern, Ebenezer Hopkins House (Cooper River Park Historic District), USS New Jersey (BB-62), and Old Eagle Tavern. Ms. Easton seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Then, Mr. Perks made a motion to accept the recommendation of funding for West Pavilion (Atlantic City Convention Hall), USS New Jersey (BB-62), and Old Eagle Tavern as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and all except Mr. Tighue voted in favor.

Mr. Alessandrine made a motion to accept the recommendation of funding for Benjamin Cooper Ferry and Tavern and Ebenezer Hopkins House (Cooper River Park

Historic District) as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. Mr. Tighue seconded the motion, and all except Mr. Perks voted in favor.

Capital Level 3

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Capital Level 3 recommendations and there were none. Mr. Simmons made a motion to accept the Capital Level 3 projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants and Loans Committee's formal report. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Multiphase Commitments and Additional Funding Commitments

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the multiphase and additional funding commitments and there were none. Ms. Kelly made a motion to accept the multiphase and additional funding commitments as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants and Loans Committee's formal report. Ms. Easton seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

- **Acquisitions and Easements**

Donation of a Perpetual Easement

Mr. Miller presented the following applications for the donation of perpetual easements:

Applicant: *Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA)*

Property: *Former Parade Ground (Greely Field)*

Applicant: *Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA)*

Property: *Cowan Park*

Mr. Miller explained that these are two plots of land within the boundaries of Fort Monmouth Historic District. The Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority (FMERA) would like to place a perpetual easement on both lots to protect the open space and ensure that anything built there in the future will meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards. The Former Parade Ground (Greely Field) is contributing to the resource while Cowan Park is not. Mr. Miller asked if there were any questions or recusals. Hearing none, he made a motion from committee to accept the donations. Ms. Foster seconded the motion, and all voted in favor of accepting the donations.

Mr. Miller then discussed a potential perpetual easement for a structure on Hamilton Avenue in Princeton. He stated that the property is not on the register nor is it contributing to the historic district. Mr. Ceponis stated that he and Ms. Boggs would be going to the property to see the conditions and speak with the owner. They hope to have updates on this topic at the December meeting.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Ceponis stated that Salem City is also proposing easements on some of the properties within their historic district. Discussions are ongoing. Mr. Miller added

that the easement being purchased for Point Breeze should be closed by the end of the year with Green Acres and the D&R Greenway.

- **Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning**

Mr. Ceponis stated that there are still two pieces of legislation under review. The piece of legislation that statutorily moves the Trust from Department of State into Department of Community Affairs is one of those bills. Mr. Ceponis asked the members of the board to reach out to the assembly speaker's office to ensure it gets voted on before the end of the year. Ms. Foster asked if they would be writing letters as board members or independent citizens. Mr. Ceponis said it was up to them, but he would confirm with DCA's legislative liaison which is best approach. The second bill would require annual training for historic preservation commission members passed in both the House and Senate and is awaiting the governor's signature. Discussion regarding the bill and what would be required ensued.

Mr. Ceponis also stated that there are still outstanding board appointments; however, those still need to wait for the Senate Judiciary to vote. Discussion regarding the board appointments ensued.

- **Education and Outreach**

No report.

- **Fiscal Oversight**

No report.

Unfinished Business

No Report.

New Business

Mr. Ceponis mentioned that he will be working on scheduling meetings for next year and he will bring those dates to the December board meeting. He added that the December meeting will likely be hybrid to celebrate Ms. Lassiter's retirement.

When determining if there should be any changes to the committees, Mr. Lindsey stated that he believed committees should stay as is. He asked if anyone wanted to change committees, but no changes were made.

Public Comment

At this time, members of the public were invited to speak. Mr. Andrew Zangle of Monmouth Boat Club thanked the Trust and expressed that he looked forward to working with the staff. John Veteri of the Little Falls Historical Society thanked the Trust for their grant award and for recognizing their commitment to helping those with intellectual disabilities. Ms. Kelly Brakewood of the Tewksbury Library thanked the Trust for supporting their small-town library.

Adjournment

Mr. Lindsey, hearing no more public comments, motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. Mr. Simmons seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 12:20pm.