

Phil Murphy
Governor

Tahesha Way
Lt. Governor

TRUSTEES

Alex Rivera, Chair
Daniel Harris
Greg Romano
Elizabeth Maher Muoio, State Treasurer
Dept. of the Treasury
Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner
Dept. of Environmental Protection
Edward Wengryn, Secretary,
Dept. of Agriculture
Jacquelyn Suárez, Acting Commissioner
Dept. of Community Affairs

Garden State Preservation Trust



Saving New Jersey's Open Spaces, Historic Places and Farmland

140 East Front Street
P.O. Box 750
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-940-9768
gspt@treas.nj.gov

CERTIFICATION OF CHAIRMAN OF GARDEN STATE PRESERVATION TRUST

I, Alex Rivera, certify that the attached copy of the minutes of the Garden State Preservation Trust is a true and correct copy of the substantial minutes of the May 13, 2024, meeting of the Trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Rivera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Rivera
Chair

Phil Murphy
Governor

Tahesha Way
Lt. Governor

TRUSTEES

Alex Rivera, Chair
Daniel Harris
Greg Romano
Elizabeth Maher Muoio, State Treasurer
Dept. of the Treasury
Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner
Dept. of Environmental Protection
Edward Wengryn, Secretary,
Dept. of Agriculture
Jacquelyn Suárez, Acting Commissioner
Dept. of Community Affairs

Garden State Preservation Trust



Saving New Jersey's Open Spaces, Historic Places and Farmland

140 East Front Street
P.O. Box 750
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-940-9768
gspt@treas.nj.gov

Garden State Preservation Trust Meeting Agenda Monday, May 13, 2024 @ 10:30 am

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 276 776 918 450

Passcode: NPqv2v

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 856-338-7074](tel:+18563387074), [278484554#](tel:+1278484554) United States, Camden

Phone Conference ID: 278 484 554#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

- 1) Call to Order
 - A. Chairman Rivera called the meeting to order at 10:33 AM.

- 2) Open Public Meetings Act Notice
 - A. Rivera read the following OPMA notice:
 1. Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., adequate public notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and, to the extent known, the agenda. At least 48 hours in advance, this notice has been distributed to the Newark Star-Ledger, The Times of Trenton, the Camden Courier-Post, and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

- 3) Roll Call
 - A. All members of the Trust were present at the roll call.
 1. Alex Rivera

2. Daniel Harris
 3. Greg Romano
 4. Susan Payne
 5. Martha Sapp
 6. Ryan Feeney
 7. Glenn Ceponis
- 4) Review of Executive and Closed Session Minutes of January 11, 2024
- A. The open session minutes of January 11, 2024, were approved. Susan Payne made the motion, which was seconded by Daniel Harris. The vote passed unanimously.
- 5) Report of the Chairman
- Rivera thanked board members for participating in the process that led to Executive Director Everett's hiring. He expressed appreciation and praise for Everett's work so far and is hearing positive things from many conservation stakeholders.
- 6) Report of the Executive Director
- A. Partner Outreach
- Everett stated he had met with a wide variety of stakeholders and attended many meetings since he first started in the position and that it was important to listen to constituents.
- B. Strategic Plan
- Everett expressed his thanks for being selected to lead GSPT. He referenced that additional information about his report could be found in the meeting packet members received.
 - Everett stated that GSPT needed a strategic plan and referenced NJCF's Nature for All report as initiating important conservation discussions. He stated he does not believe GSPT has ever had a strategic plan and asked if this is something the board wants to undertake.
 - Martha Sapp discussed that NJDEP recently completed its Outside Together plan as part of its requirement for National Park Service funding and that it is a guide for Green Acres's future work. She asked for clarity on what the GSPT plan would cover.
 - Everett asked about strategic plans for other GSPT-funded entities and provided examples of conservation finance strategies that might be covered in a GSPT strategic plan.
 - Glenn Ceponis shared that NJ Historic Trust has a strategic plan he will share with Everett.
 - Payne stated that a GSPT strategic plan would be specific to its functions and not to usurp any other agency's strategic plan. She supports the effort.
 - Greg Romano indicated the strategic plan would specify how GSPT supports its programs and that he does not believe GSPT has ever had a strategic plan. Romano felt the job description for the Executive Director position was the start of figuring out what GSPT can be.
 - Everett answered a question from SADC Deputy Director Chuck Roohr regarding the

strategic plan supporting agency collaboration. Everett agreed with that as a priority.

- Rivera stated that the process would start with Everett becoming familiar with the current plans of agencies, and there would be further discussion about the GSPTs process for a strategic plan.
- C. NJCF Nature for All Report
- Everett commended NJCF for the effort put into their report and sought board comment.
 - Payne stated she is not ready to endorse the report fully but supports the effort. She detailed her perspective on how land lost, and remaining land is calculated.
 - Rivera stated that he also commends the effort and, in public comments, made it clear that GSPT has not endorsed the report but considers it important reference material that informs its direction and strategic planning process.
- D. Susan Payne Retirement
- Everett acknowledged Susan's announcement of her retirement as SADC Executive Director and congratulated her on her illustrious career in farmland preservation.
 - Payne commented that she has enjoyed working in government and is privileged to have had the career she has.
 - Sapp thanked Payne for her partnership and commitment.
 - Greg acknowledged his support for Payne to become SADC Executive Director and felt NJCF's success in farmland preservation while he was with the organization was thanks to Susan.
 - Payne said she is looking forward to seeing the next era of farmland preservation in NJ.
 - Rivera stated he hopes to connect with Susan in the next stage of her career.

7) Open Session

- A. Resolution #24-002: Grant Agreement with Rowan University GEOLAB
1. Everett initiated the discussion about this resolution by stating his hope that GSPT can help transform the Conservation Blueprint into a modeling tool that can communicate about the future of conservation in NJ. But Blueprint shouldn't be only a tool but also a paradigm for partnerships.
 2. John Hasse, Director of the GEOLAB, discussed his hope that Conservation Blueprint will serve as a storyteller to understand different perspectives of conservation and the environment and provide a guide for what people in the community should focus on. The technical aspects of it are important, but the convening power of Blueprint is also important to its success and operations. This funding is important to the growth of Blueprint.
 3. Katrina McCarthy, senior GEOLAB staff member, stated that a Conservation Blueprint meeting will be held on May 22 from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m., and SADC and Green Acres are both on the agenda.
 4. Everett indicated that, with board permission in this vote, he would draft a scope of work with Rowan commensurate with the increase in funding. Hasse specifically stated that work on the Conservation Lands Index and Remaining Lands layer would be part of the scope of work.
 5. Romano asked about the previous \$75,000 grant to Rowan and sought clarification on the structure of this agreement. Everett clarified that it is a two-year agreement with \$97,500 each year. Given the availability of funds due to the Executive Director position being vacant for nearly two-thirds of the fiscal year, all of the funds would be encumbered this fiscal year.

6. Payne asked for clarification about where the money for this grant is coming from. Everett answered that it is from GSPT's operating budget, which is not currently drawn from CBT revenues.
 7. Hasse shared that Rowan has not received funding from GSPT in this fiscal year.
 8. Harris made a motion to approve the resolution. Payne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. Resolution #24-003: Green Acres Local and Nonprofit Acquisition, Recreational Development, and Stewardship Project Funding for FY 2024
1. Cecile Murphy, Green Acres staff, presented the Green Acres funding request. Murphy stated many changes from the last grant round in this category, most notably an expansion of Jake's Law grants to municipalities. Jake's Law playground supports a fully inclusive playground for children with disabilities. Green Acres had a very successful outreach, which resulted in higher-quality applications.
 2. 16 out of 21 counties received either County or municipal Jake's Law funding.
 3. 86 awards were made in Adverse Cumulative Stressor/Overburdened Communities (ACS/OC). These communities received 50% of stewardship funds, 53% of Jake's Law funds, and 93% of park development projects.
 4. Murphy commended the outreach made by recipients, especially Jake's Law recipients. The outreach experience will impact DEP's future guidance for this grant.
 5. Murphy highlighted major projects in the following communities:
 - Phillipsburg for a Rails to Trails project
 - Hainesport Township for Creek Turn Park
 - Harding Land Trust in Morris County
 - Washington Park in Union City
 6. Murphy stated that Green Acres will amend its rules in this program and is holding three stakeholder meetings over the coming weeks.
 7. Rivera expressed his pleasure with the Jake's Law funding and hopes it will lead to additional park investments for adults and elderly people with mobility challenges.
 8. Harris made a motion to approve the resolution. Rivera seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 9. Sapp stated that Jake's Law funding will be competitive in future years. This round was noncompetitive.

8) Board Member Comment

- Vice Chairman Dan Harris asked about the Senate President and Assembly Speakers appointed to the board, ensuring all members attend the meeting. Chairman Rivera provided his understanding of the current composition of the board. The Senate President and Assembly Speaker each have one appointment they can make to GSPT. Harris stated that the Assembly Speaker made another appointment and was under the impression the appointment process had been completed. Rivera stated he was not aware of another appointment. Harris stated that he would follow up on the appointment.
- Payne stated Charles Roohr, Deputy Executive Director of SADC, will be the interim director when Susan retires and should be included in future GSPT correspondence.

- 9) Public Comment
 - A. No public comment was made.
- 10) Closed Session
 - A. Sapp made a motion to enter a closed session. Payne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 11) Action as a Result of Closed Session
 - A. When GSPT returned from the closed session, Chairman Rivera stated that the purpose of entering the closed session was to discuss personnel matters. No action was taken as a result of the closed session.
 - B. Payne moved to accept the minutes of the January 11, 2024, executive session. Romano seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 12) Adjournment
 - A. Payne motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sapp seconded. The motion passed unanimously.