

Garden State Preservation Trust
November 2, 2022 Substantive Meeting Minutes
Teleconference 10:00AM

Vice Chair Gregory Romano called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

Vice Chair Romano read a statement that advance notice of at least 48 hours of the date, time, agenda and toll-free teleconference number with access code and ZOOM Meeting Identification number of the meeting of the Garden State Preservation Trust Board, on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, at 10am, in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act and as amended by P.L. 2020 Chapter 11 was given and distributed to the State House Press Row, specifically to Politico, NJ Law Journal, NJTV, NJ Spotlight, Bloomberg News, NJ 17 Press, and NJ 101.5. Notice of today's meeting was filed with the Secretary of State for due notification and to be posted, published and broadcast.

Vice Chair Romano called the roll in place of the Executive Director. Members in attendance on the call were Ryan Feeney (for Treasurer Elizabeth Muoio), Dorothy Guzzo for DCA Commissioner, Daniel Harris (public member), Susan Payne (for Agricultural Secretary Douglas H. Fisher), Alex Rivera (public member) and Martha Sapp (for NJDEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette). Vice Chair Romano announced, we have a quorum. Other attendees on the call were Anita Bliss, Executive Assistant, Office of the State Treasurer, Melinda Caliendo, Public Information Officer, State Treasurer's office, George Lesser, Deputy Attorney General and Jeffrey Nielsen, Associate Counsel, Governor's Authorities Unit, Mian Shi and Gary Pinar, Department of the Treasury, Fiscal Office.

The Executive Director position is vacant and the eighth and ninth position on the board is vacant.

OPENING REMARKS

Vice Chair Romano welcomed members to the teleconference and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Vice Chair Romano stated that he was previously elected as vice chair. Ben Spinelli who was the Chair of the Garden State Preservation Trust had resigned to become the Executive Director of the Highlands Council and under the terms of the bylaws, he then would assume the responsibilities of the chair at least for this meeting and maybe for the next meeting until a new chair is elected. And at the next meeting they would have an election of officers for the calendar year 2023. Vice Chair Romano stated if there are any members of the public who wish to speak at the meeting, please note that the board will open the floor for public comment before we adjourn.

Vice Chair Romano thanked the members of the board as he was out for a while due to an illness. Vice Chair Romano appreciates everyone's forbearance during this period of time and is fully recovered now.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, 2022, BOARD MEETING

Vice Chair Romano asked the Board to consider the review of the minutes and asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes of the meeting. There were none.

Moved by Alex Rivera

Seconded by Susan Payne

Approved 5-0

Dorothy Guzzo and Daniel Harris recused themselves, as they did not attend the June 15, 2022 meeting.

Vice Chair Romano stated that the agenda items were moved and Green Acres will go ahead of the historic trust at the request of Green Acres with the consent of the Historic Trust. That is the only change from the original agenda that was forwarded.

Martha Sapp thanked everyone and Dorothy Guzzo for letting Green Acres present (120 Million for Green Acres) first. Martha Sapp stated that Ed Mulvane was on the call from the Office of Resource Development to answer questions on the Parks Capital requests.

Fawn McGee from NJDEP Green Acres Program put a brief slide presentation together and wanted to share the successes over the last year. Ms. McGee introduced herself as the Bureau Chief of State Land Acquisitions for Green Acres. Ms. McGee oversees the acquisitions where property owners or landowners actually submit applications for sale to the State. Ms. McGee stated that if NJDEP Green Acres has an interest in those properties for preservation, ecological reasons, connectivity, habitat preservation, it is their program for real estate transaction. NJDEP only brings those properties into ownership as a state asset and they only buy properties that they do not own so they always need land managers in NJDEP that build these properties into their management plans on and their facility plans on ownership. Ms. McGee stated that she was here today to ask for the available corporate business tax funds at a total of fifty three million and change that is for Green and Blue Acres. Green Acres is the land preservation side and Blue Acres is the flood by outside. NJDEP handles all of the real estate transactions and implementation for the Blue as well.

This funding allows NJDEP to very quickly compete with any imminent threat of properties that are up for sale potentially. Because of Ida's impact there recently is greater need to potentially do nonfederal max share to Ida impacted federal dollars that would be coming in so they upped that amount so that we could accommodate that amount for more flood buyouts this year and into next year.

Proposed Essex-Hudson Greenway Project - This property was a nine-mile rail course that hasn't been used for over 20 years and became available to NJDEP. It first went to the open space institute and was then transferred to NJDEP to take over the project and undertaking in August closed on this linear track that goes thru eight communities. The nine-mile rail corridor runs thru Essex and Hudson County starting in Jersey City, Secaucus, Kearney, Newark, Bellville, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge and Montclair. NJDEP had an opportunity to buy something that is in the most diverse and densely populated communities in the state. The property was purchased in August. The Governor held a closing event up in North Jersey in September and NJDEP has put out an RFQ to hire a consultant to help with the park design. The Governor has approved and NJDEP is working on legislation to approve a commission to be established by mid-2023 to work with the consultant. The hope is that after six to eight months after the commission has been put in place that they will be able to open up to the public.

NJDEP Superstorm Sandy Blue Acres Buyout Program. It is the tenth anniversary of Sandy. NJDEP had 804 closings; this took 27 separate grant applications to get to this point in the process. 739 of those properties had been demolished to date. NJDEP was able to get 74 families out of debt forgiveness at 5.7 million dollar threshold.

Cooperative Urban Buyouts

Woodbridge had 170 buyouts that allowed NJDEP to transform those areas into flood storage areas.

City of Linden is up in Union County had the same type of situation with 22 homes.

Delaware Bayshore Area – Money Island in Downe Township. This was a State driven restoration project. NJDEP bought 20 separate homes and handled the demolition and NJDOT had dredged the creek. This was a compromised area to storm surge and high tides. This was a collaborated effort with Stockton University, Coastal Engineering and the Shellfish Industries.

Vice Chair Romano thanked Ms. McGee for a wonderful presentation.

**DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #22-005 TO APPROVE GREEN ACRES
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLUE ACRES FLOOD SITE ACQUISITIONS STATEWIDE FOR 10,500,000.00 FY
2023**

Vice Chair Romano indicated that perhaps the last resolve should also include the Chairperson/Vice Chair and/or Executive Director as he is hereby authorized to take such additional incidental action at the current time. So this would be for all resolutions, Vice Chair Romano would make that same change.

Susan Payne had a question on the language of the resolution, which was the second to the last paragraph. The resolution states that for purpose of financial monitoring and management, the trust specifies that no other funding shall be listed or allocated or designated in the Appropriations Act to provide funding for the attached list of projects and funding requests.

Martha Sapp and Vice Chair Romano confirmed that the language was from the previous resolutions and that numbers were replaced.

Moved by Susan Payne as amended
Seconded by Alex Rivera
Approved 7-0

**DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #22-006 TO APPROVE GREEN ACRES
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDING FOR 64,929,000 FY 2023**

Vice Chair Romano stated that he would make the same recommendation for the amendment, including the vice chair in the last resolved clause.

Moved by Alex Rivera
Seconded by Susan Payne
Approved 7-0

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #22-007 TO APPROVE GREEN ACRES
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE ACQUISITION FUNDING IN NINE PROJECT AREAS FOR 42,749,000 FY
2023**

Moved by Susan Payne
Seconded by Martha Sapp
Approved 7-0

**DISCUSSION & CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #22-004 TO APPROVE NJ HISTORIC TRUST
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS AND HISTORIC SITE MANAGEMENT GRANTS FOR
\$15,758,315 FY 2023**

Ms. Guzzo stated that the Historic Trust is covering grants for both planning and construction, and it's for new projects, as well as some ongoing projects. Ms. Guzzo stated that in the last week in September they received applications, and have funded a project in eighteen of twenty-one counties in New Jersey. There were no applicants in the remaining three counties.

In the interest of time, Ms. Guzzo had a PowerPoint Presentation that shows every one of their projects to be funded and would be happy to pass along to the members that were interested.

Moved by Martha Sapp
Seconded by Susan Payne
Approved 7-0

Vice Chair Romano stated that all of the resolutions approved today will have that one change which includes the Vice Chair being able to take whatever actions necessary.

Mr. John Hasse, Ph.D. of Rowan University Geo Spatial Lab gave a presentation on Conservation Blueprint which is a project that they have received funding on for several years now from the Garden State Preservation Trust Fund. The Conservation Blueprint is something that Rowan University hosts at the growing Geospatial Research Lab. It is their mapping lab at the University and is called New Jersey Maps. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and the Nature Conservancy are the leadership partners along with Rowan University. The Conservation Blueprint is a collaboration process of stakeholders on many different levels of government and nongovernmental organizations that continue to give input and has continued to increase even through the pandemic. There were different ideas for conservation, different interests, and different agendas. The map was broken down into four different models. A model for prioritizing agricultural lands, a model for prioritizing ecological and habitat lands and a model for prioritizing water quality. There is an expert steering committee behind each model that prioritizes mapping information that can help focus on lands that might be more valuable.

The NJ Map team is very small. They have several part-time grad students and one full-time person who is their mapping specialist, which covers salary and benefits.

Rowan University does projects for the SADC which helps the blueprint in New Jersey Map because they are doing specific mapping projects. So with their project expenditures, the operating budget is about \$243,000 per year and then there is technical costs for actually running. The servers are estimated at \$15,000 to \$18,000 this coming year. So this budget is how they have used the \$50,000 from the GSPT.

In closing, Susan Payne stated that the SADC has been a long supporter and they use Rowans work and their staff constantly on some of the biggest projects that really are fundamental to their program. New Jersey is a small and diverse state and the value of having all of this information in one place is very powerful. Ms. Payne indicated that the GSPT should consider expanding their support of Rowan because the zoning issue in particular is a real blind spot when it comes to build out analysis and helping towns do municipal planning. Ms. Payne would like this to become more permanent and more up to date with the latest data and aerial photography. Some of the counties are starting to use different sources of data

that are more recent and believes that this is where we should be investing. Ms. Payne asked Dr. John Hasse how many years has the GSPT provided that grant to the project and the answer was they have had three funding cycles; the first one was \$35,000, \$50,000 and \$50,000. Dr. Hasse recalled that there is some provision that the Board had approved up to \$75,000 if funding was available.

Vice Chair Romano indicated that he would review the resolutions. Dr. Hasse indicated that the contract ends December 31, 2022 which ends the third cycle and would like to submit a formal request for additional funding before the end of the year. Ms. Payne indicated that multi-year funding would really be helpful but wasn't clear if that's possible with GSPT and maybe some of the other funding sources.

Vice Chair Romano talked about the potential for another meeting. Dr. Hasse indicated funding will run out the end of the year. In January 2023 they won't have GSPT funding. Ms. Payne stated to Vice Chair Romano that the Board should consider approving a contract that starts in January of 2023 so there isn't a lapse in funds at the same \$50,000 level. Ms. Payne would like Rowan University to submit a proposal and explore the possibility to enter into a multi-year contract.

Gary Pinar from Treasury Fiscal stated that he administers the GSPT administrative budget and the proposal should be directed to his attention as well as Mian Shi in Treasury Fiscal.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was discussion about the vacant Executive Director position and Ben Spinelli resigning as Chairman of the Trust. Daniel Harris and Alex Rivera had agreed to be on the Subcommittee for the Search and Hire process. Vice Chair Romano agreed to help convene the meeting with the hopes of meeting in two weeks via teleconference to start the process. Both Mr. Harris and Mr. Rivera said they would make themselves available. Mr. Rivera stated that while there is a preference for the public members to lead the search, he would like a better understanding from the State agencies who are members of where they stand and what needs may be met for them by an executive director. Susan Payne thought it would be helpful to have the state agencies on the call and to convey everyone's thoughts on it as the subcommittee gets going as they having been involved in the Trust for a long time.

George Lesser from the Attorney General's office chimed in just to highlight as the members are meeting informally to just keep in mind not to hit any forum numbers to run into OPRA issues.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Susan Payne thanked Vice Chair Romano and wanted to convey her appreciation for all that he had done in the Garden State Preservation Trust while he was not feeling the best.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

ADJOURNEMENT

Vice Chair Romano asked to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by Susan Payne

Seconded by Alex Rivera

Approved 7-0 by voice vote