

Governor Phil Murphy

Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Esq.

TRUSTEES

Alex Rivera, Chair

Daniel Harris

Greg Romano, Esq.

Laurie Sobel

Elizabeth Maher Muoio, State Treasurer

Dept. of the Treasury

Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner

Dept. of Environmental Protection

Edward Wengryn, Secretary

Dept. of Agriculture

Jacquelyn Suárez, Commissioner

Dept. of Community Affairs

Garden State Preservation Trust



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

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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 October 28, 2025, meeting of the Trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Rivera".

Alex Rivera

Chair

October 28, 2025, GSPT Meeting Minutes

- **Chairman Rivera called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.**
- **Reading of the Open Public Meetings Act Notice**
- **Roll Call**

Alex Rivera - present
Dan Harris - present
Greg Romano - present
Laurie Sobel - present
Ryan Feeney - present
Martha Sapp - present
Charles Roohr - present
Glenn Ceponis - present

- **Review of Executive and Closed Session Minutes of April 14, 2025**

Dan Harris made the motion to approve. Seconded by Charles Roohr.

Roll call vote:

Dan Harris - yes
Greg Romano - yes
Laurie Sobel - yes
Ryan Feeney - yes
Martha Sapp - yes
Charles Roohr - yes
Glenn Ceponis - yes
Alex Rivera - yes

Motion passes.

- **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Rivera briefly spoke about the 50 x 50 effort to preserve 50% of the state's land area by 2050, championed by the NJ Conservation Foundation in their *Nature for All* report, pre-CBT and CBT era acquisition rates, and the status of GSPT reporting to the Legislature. The Chairman indicated his hope that GSPT would consider recommending 50 x 50 as a goal to the Governor and Legislature. He noted that the CBT-era acquisition rate is about 5,500 acres per year, compared to the pre-CBT era acquisition rate of 25,500 acres per year. He also discussed challenges with evaluating the acquisition pace without a goal. He noted that the GSPT report to the Legislature will highlight this issue, which it expects to complete in the first half of 2026.

- **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Everett said that his report will be brief to allow more time for the agencies to make detailed presentations to accompany their funding requests so attendees can understand how the various CBT-funded programs work. He echoed Chairman Rivera's statement about supporting 50 x 50 and recommended GSPT hold a special meeting in the next several months to discuss. Like the meeting last December that was convened on the 25th anniversary of the GSPT (that discussed a retrospective and prospective of the first and next 25 years) this meeting would be in-person and coalesce around this theme.

- **Open Session**

A. Resolution #25-006: Green Acres State Acquisition Project Funding for FY 2026

Fawn McGee, Bureau Chief of State Land Acquisition with Green Acres, detailed the funding request for State Acquisitions (\$21,375,000 for state acquisition projects and \$825,000 for administrative funding for a total of \$22,200,000) for the following projects:

Barnegat Bay Watershed Greenway; Cape May Peninsula; Carbon Sequestration (which is a new initiative); Connecting Habitats Across New Jersey (CHANJ); Crossroads of the American Revolution; Delaware and Raritan Canal Greenway; Delaware Bay Watershed Greenway; Delaware River Watershed Greenway; Highlands Greenway; State Historic Sites; Natural Areas; Nonprofit Camps; Pinelands; Ridge and Valley Greenway; and Urban Parks.

Charles Roohr had a question on the mapping done as part of the application packages and Fawn McGee answered that Green Acres has its own in-house staff that developed a proprietary tool utilized to develop acquisition priorities.

Dan Harris made the motion to approve. Seconded by Ryan Feeney.

Roll call vote:

Dan Harris - yes

Greg Romano - yes

Laurie Sobel - abstain

Ryan Feeney - yes

Martha Sapp - yes

Charles Roohr - yes

Glenn Ceponis - yes

Alex Rivera - yes

Motion passes.

B. Resolution #25-007: Department of Environmental Protection Capital Project Funding for FY 2026

John Cecil, Assistant Commissioner for State Parks, Forests, and Historic Sites, speaking on behalf of himself and Dave Golden, Assistant Commissioner for Fish and Wildlife, detailed the

funding request (\$53,750,000 for capital projects and for \$1,250,000 for administrative funding for a total of \$55,000,000) for the following projects:

Dam Repairs/Removal/Inspections; Bridge Repairs; Road Repairs; Building Repairs and Renovations; Health and Life Safety Projects; Sanitary Facilities; Historic Structure Stabilization/Repairs; Recreational Development; Camping Development (Cabin/Shelter Program); Fishing and Boating Access; Habitat Enhancement and Access; In-House Projects; Palisades Interstate Park; Contingency Funds (emergency repairs).

Chairman Rivera had a question about electric vehicles and tool charging stations and Asst. Commissioner Cecil said that there was equipment installed but that Corporation Business Tax funds were not utilized to pay for it.

Charles Roohr made the motion to approve. Seconded by Dan Harris. Executive Director Everett mentioned that it would be prudent if Laurie Sobel could participate in the proceedings to utilize her expertise but that she had a conflict working for Middlesex County and had to abstain where county projects were being voted on. He was looking for recommendations from the Board on how we should proceed and Greg Romano stated that this came up in the past at GSPT and said that two resolutions were prepared – one with the conflicted matter and one without. Executive Director Everett said that he would prepare these resolutions in this fashion at future meetings and Chairman Rivera said that we would proceed as we normally would in this meeting with Ms. Sobel abstaining where county matters were concerned.

Roll call vote:

Dan Harris - yes

Greg Romano - yes

Laurie Sobel - abstain

Ryan Feeney - yes

Martha Sapp - yes

Charles Roohr - yes

Glenn Ceponis - yes

Alex Rivera - yes

Motion passes.

C. Resolution #25-008: Blue Acres State Acquisition Project Funding for FY 2026

Martha Sapp, Green Acres Director and DEP Commissioner's Designee speaking on behalf of Blue Acres Program Manager Courtney Wald-Wittkop, detailed the funding request (\$21,375,000 for state acquisition and \$825,000 for administrative funding for a total of \$22,200,000) for the following projects:

Funding will be applied statewide in floodways and floodplains of rivers and their tributaries, back bays, coastal areas, and other tidally influenced zones. More specifically, Blue Acres plans to use this funding to offer buyouts to over 30 flood-damaged homeowners across Somerset, Middlesex, and Ida-impacted areas, prioritizing the most vulnerable and cost-effective properties. It will also support demolition, site restoration, and the acquisition of two vacant lots to enhance flood resilience. Additionally, \$2.3 million will be set aside advance federally reimbursable buyouts.

Director Sapp said that federal funding wasn't guaranteed and that DEP has prioritized Blue Acres acquisitions as a result. Chairman Rivera commended the Blue Acres program for its efforts.

Dan Harris made the motion to approve. Seconded by Greg Romano.

Roll call vote:

Dan Harris - yes

Greg Romano - yes

Laurie Sobel - abstain

Ryan Feeney - yes

Martha Sapp - yes

Charles Roohr - yes

Glenn Ceponis - yes

Alex Rivera - yes

Motion passes.

D. Resolution #25-009: New Jersey Historic Trust Historic Preservation Grants Project Funding for FY 2026

New Jersey Historic Trust Director Glenn Ceponis detailed the funding request (\$13,839,484 for historic preservation projects and \$1,976,500 for administrative funding for a total of \$15,815,984) for the following projects:

Historic Site Management Grants; Municipal, County, and Regional Planning Grants; Heritage Tourism Grants; Capital Grant Level I; Capital Grant Level II; Capital Grant Level III; and Emergency Intervention Fund Grant.

Executive Director Ceponis stated that grant applications perennially far exceeded available funding and proceeded to show graphs and statistics of same.

Martha Sapp made the motion to approve. Seconded by Dan Harris.

Roll call vote:

Dan Harris - yes

Greg Romano - yes

Laurie Sobel - abstain

Ryan Feeney - yes

Martha Sapp - yes

Charles Roohr - yes

Glenn Ceponis - yes

Alex Rivera - yes

Motion passes.

- **Board Member Comment**

There were no board members comments

- **Public Comment**

There were no public comments

- **Closed Session**

Dan Harris made the motion to enter a closed session. Seconded by Charles Roohr. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Open Session**

When GSPT returned from Closed Session, Chairman Rivera stated that the purpose of entering the closed session was to discuss legal matters and that no action was taken as a result of the closed session.

- **Adjournment**

Dan Harris made the motion. Seconded by Chairman Rivera. All in favor - motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 2:58 PM.