

**WARREN COUNTY MUNICIPAL AND CHARITABLE CONSERVANCY
TRUST FUND COMMITTEE**

500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue
Oxford, NJ 07863

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
September 9, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER: Corey Tierney opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m., read the Open Public Meeting Notice, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Jean Smolha	Todd Tersigni	Desiree Denker	Terry Urfer
Charles Fineran	Daniel Kubik	Ingrid Gray	
David Smith	Cindy Neumann	Timothy Bodine	

Members Absent: Richard Ohl

Staff Present: Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

Guests: Ken Metcalf, Candace Nattland, Hal Bromm, Michael Margulies, Tom Drake, Patricia Pasch, Craig Dunwell, Sandy Urgo, Margaret Hickey

Minutes: The July 1, 2019 minutes were reviewed. David Smith motioned, seconded by Charles Fineran to approve the minutes as presented, with Mr. Bodine abstaining. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

PRESENTATIONS

Ramsaysburg Homestead - Ken Metcalf provided an overview of recent progress made. Some of the electrical was updated in the homestead and tavern, the back of the barn was landscaped and they received some grants to establish an amphitheater done in accordance with the National Parks Service guidelines, established an interpretive path, and a flagpole installed for memorial events. They conduct several seasonal events throughout the year: Memorial Day, community picnics, painting/photography, summer music in the barn series, Fall Harvest Riverside Festival, apple tasting, and Christmas in the County event. Hosted Delaware River Sojourn for their event.

If awarded funding, the grant would fund restoration/reinstallation of the rear porch of the homestead, creating a barrier-free access to the first floor, structural upgrades to the interior of the tavern, heating and lighting in tavern, install restrooms in both the homestead and tavern, interior and exterior finishes in the cottage, and making further improvements to the barn.

Several members requested that they prioritize the projects in case projects aren't fully funded. Ms. Hickey said that the homestead and tavern are their highest priority and having at least one accessible restroom available to the public.

Mr. Urfer inquired how much more they foresee needing in total funds to complete the site. Ms. Hickey said it will depend on what other grant funds they receive, if they will need to return in the future for additional funds.

Mr. Tierney requested the applicants to prioritize each component of their application and provide an estimate for each priority, prior to the next meeting.

Shimer Mansion - Mr. Margulies provided before and after photos of restoration done to the mansion with previous funds. Built in 1850, the Shimer Mansion became the centerpiece of a 120-acre farm along the Morris Canal. It was owned by the Shimers until the 1940s and was then purchased by the Carpenters. Once the mother was moved out in the early 2000s, it sat unoccupied for 16 years. The house was then donated to Pohatcong History and Heritage in 2015.

With the grant Pohatcong History and Heritage plans to run new electrical, sewer, water, and a gas line to the building. A new heating system will be provided and an accessible toilet will be installed, new doors on the rear and side of the house will be rebuilt. The first floor will be a gallery for local artists and a meeting space for them. Part of the pool area will be converted to a pond and the rest will be filled in to become part of the sculpture garden.

Van-Nest Hoff-Vannatta - Mr. Margulies reviewed the history and significance of the farmstead. The initial 768-acre tract of land was settled by John Van Nest, circa 1763. The land was transferred to John and Abel Hoff in the early 19th century and the house was expanded in 1810. In 1856, William M. Vannatta obtained the southern half of the property, which was then 590-acres. He began leasing the property to tenant farmers, which continued until it was sold in 1960. The National Register nomination cites 1760 to 1900 as the period of significance.

The current project is to complete restoration to the summer kitchen. Plaster and lath will be restored, electrical will be run to the building, and the well will be rehabilitated to allow for water on-site.

Mr. Urfer asked what the long-term plans are for the barn. Right now, it houses agricultural equipment. Future plans for the barn could be a seasonal meeting space or possibly weddings the distant future on the ground floor. Mr. Urfer noted that it would be a good location for a farming museum.

Alpha Parkland East Addition - Mayor Dunwell presented. Alpha was a boom town, founded in 1911. Immigrants that got off the boat at Ellis Island, would get processed, take the ferry over to Jersey City, and then get on the Central Railroad of New Jersey and get off at Vulcanite Station.

The property is a small parcel of land adjacent to their existing open space along 7th Avenue. The foundation of the Vulcanite Railway Station are the only building remains and would be used as a historic marker with a kiosk. The proposed use would be a walking trail and either a pocket/dog park. The overgrowth would be cleared - potentially as an Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Tersigni inquired if Alpha has been utilizing their Green Acres funding for the Parkland East project. Mayor Dunwell said everything was delayed due to title and easement issues.

The Committee took a brief recess from 8:27 pm to 8:31 pm. Mr. Urfer motioned, seconded by Mr. Fineran to reconvene. Motion carried.

Yards Creek Preserve - Sandy Urgo, Vice President of Land Preservation at The Land Conservancy (TLC) of New Jersey presented on the open space property. It is a new preserve that will be owned, managed, and stewarded by TLC. Total project costs are \$735,000, but with numerous funders such as William Penn Foundation, Victoria Foundation, Green Acres, and private funding, they are only requesting \$111,500 from the MCCTFC.

The 122.4 acre property sits on the eastern slope of the Kittatiny Ridge. The property is a priority for the Delaware Watershed Initiative (DWI) that protects the Delaware Watershed and its major tributaries. Primary access is from Stony Brook Road, but there is 455' of road frontage on Deer Run Road. The house and shed will be demolished, a public access trail will be established, all boundaries will be posted, and a management plan will be developed to address invasive species and maintaining the trail.

The property has shag bark hickory and other plated bark trees, which is habitat for the Northern long-eared bat. This project will connect a lot of natural land and create wildlife corridors. There is 1.34 miles of stream banks. 97% of property is headwaters riparian buffer. There are pockets of wetlands with numerous species of amphibians. The preserve also has poke milkweed, an uncommon species of milkweed that grows in dense shade.

Mr. Kubich inquired if there would be mountain biking allowed on the property. Mr. Uργο said she would look into the management plan and let the Committee know. TLC will usually allow hunting through an agreement with a local hunting club (not open to the public) but will require they have insurance coverage.

Mr. Urfer inquired if this property could ever be sold to utilize it some other way. Ms. Uργο explained that once they leverage Green Acres funds, they enter into a deed of conservation restriction which protects the property. If TLC ever closed, it would revert to Green Acres land.

A sign will be installed at Stony Brook Road and parking would likely be on the driveway and/or where the house was (post-demolition).

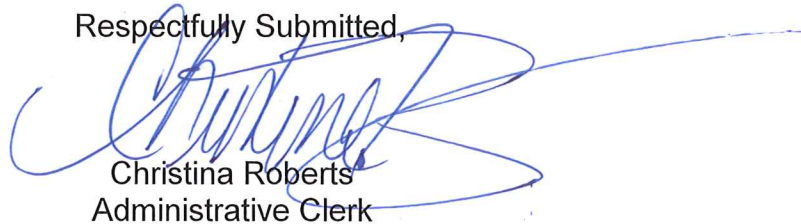
Ms. Smolha asked if the owner had another plan if TLC doesn't buy the property. Ms. Uργο said she doesn't know of any other intentions, but that Blairstown has an ordinance that no more than two houses can share a driveway.

Mr. Tersigni asked what would happen if they were partially funded. Ms. Uργο said it depends on how much less and if TLC could come up with the balance prior to the deadline.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 4, 2019 (if needed).

There being no further business, Mr. Fineran motioned, seconded by Mr. Urfer to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christina Roberts
Administrative Clerk