

**Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee**  
**Department of Land Preservation**  
**P.O. Box 179**  
**Oxford, New Jersey 07863**  
**(908) 453-2650**

**October 6, 2014 Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee held October 6, 2014 at the office of the Department of Land Preservation, 500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, Oxford, New Jersey was called to order by Chairman Charles Fineran at 7:30 p.m. noting that adequate public notice was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**Members Present:** Tim Bodine                      Beth Calabrese                      Louis Cartabona                      Ellen Demeter  
Desiree Denker                      Charles Fineran                      Joel McGreen                      Nancy Miller  
David Smith                      Jean Smolha                      Todd Tersigni

**Absent:**                      None

**Staff:**                      Corey Tierney, Christina Cortis

**Others Present:** Sue Beall, Bob Canace, Carol Schwar, Michael Schwar, Michael Margulies, Robert May, Ann Miller, Ken Miller, Jean McMullan, Candace Lewis, Carol Appleby, and members of the church congregations (that did not sign in).

**September 8, 2014 Minutes:**

On page two of the minutes, there was a typographical error at the end of the first paragraph and it should read, "Mr. Canace said that was for a different date and event, the Alpha Borough application. Mr. McGreen reiterated that if he had not been on the MCCT, he would have been there waiting and, in essence, had done and said the same things that he did on the bus that he would have done as the representative at the site visit and is that this is unfair." Todd Tersigni motioned, seconded by Nancy Miller to approve the September 8, 2014 meeting minutes, as corrected. Motion carried.

Mr. Tierney presented the Committee with an extension request from Ken Miller for the Phillipsburg Union Station project. Mr. Tierney explained that although the grant term expired in February 23, 2014, the grantees have continued working on the project using other funding sources. Mr. Tierney advised the Committee that grants may be extended for a period of up to 12 months and recommended granting a twelve month extension for this project. Nancy Miller motioned, seconded by Jean Smolha to grant the Phillipsburg Union Station project a twelve month extension.

Roll Call: (Yes to approve the twelve month extension request)

Mr. Cartabona – abstain; Ms. Denker – yes; Ms. Demeter – yes; Ms. Calabrese – yes;  
Mr. McGreen – abstain; Mr. Bodine – abstain; Mr. Fineran – yes; Ms. Miller – yes; Mr. Smith – yes;  
Mr. Tersigni – abstain; Ms. Smolha – yes.

Motion carried with four abstentions. The Phillipsburg Union Station project will be granted a twelve month extension, expiring February 23, 2015.

## **Presentations of the MCCTFC Grant Applicants:**

### **Alpha Open Space**

Applicant: Alpha Borough

Project: Alpha Parkland East

Type: Open Space Acquisition Grant

Amount: \$250,000

Mr. Canace and Councilwoman Schwar delivered the presentation, explaining that the open space application would be used to purchase land for a recreational park on the eastern side of Alpha. The property is currently on the market and the Borough would like to purchase the land to avoid its development into housing units. They submitted a revised request of \$187,500, which is 75% of their original request. They are anticipating Green Acres support, but they are also prepared to match the grant with their Open Space Trust funds, if necessary. A substantial amount of funding in their Open Space Trust account, however, is already slated to be used for the demolition of their defunct municipal pool, repairs to bleachers, a new roof for the pavilion and renovations to make it more accessible, as well as repairs to the basketball court.

### **First Presbyterian Church of Washington**

The applicant was unable to provide a letter from the state, certifying their historic eligibility. Nancy Miller motioned, seconded by Todd Tersigni to deem the applicant ineligible to receive MCCT grant funding.

Roll Call: (Yes to deem the applicant ineligible for funding)

Mr. Cartabona – no; Ms. Denker – no; Ms. Demeter – no; Ms. Calabrese – no; Mr. McGreen – yes; Mr. Bodine – yes; Mr. Fineran – yes; Ms. Miller – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Tersigni – yes; Ms. Smolha – abstain.

Motion carried with one abstention. The First Presbyterian Church of Washington is ineligible for MCCT grant funding.

### **Saint James Lutheran Church**

Applicant: Saint James Lutheran Church

Project: Masonry Restoration

Type: Historical Restoration Grant

Amount: \$200,625

Mr. Margulies and several members of the church provided some background on the church and its historical significance. The church was deemed eligible for listing in the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office in May 1996. The current structure was built in 1834 and is in need of masonry restoration and re-pointing. They are financially able to support the required 25% match for the grant, but unable to fund the entire project. The church is also pursuing historic preservation funding from DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution), but has not received a response from them yet. The church also accommodates various community programs such as Boy Scouts, AA meetings, and the Sunday School. They submitted the revised scope of work with 60% and 40% of the original request.



### **United Methodist Church of Washington**

Applicant: United Methodist Church of Washington

Project: Stained Glass Window Restoration

Type: Historical Restoration Grant

Amount: \$416,781

Mr. May provided a copy of their PowerPoint presentation to members. He reviewed the proposal for the restoration of the two large stained glass windows and ten sanctuary stained glass windows, which is a continuation of the Phase I project that was funded in 2012. All work would be done by the original stained glass studio that created the church's windows in 1896. The history of the church was discussed and church members gave an overview of the various community programs they provide, such as Lunch & Learn, picnics, seminars, 12-step programs, scout groups, food pantry, etc. They also submitted a revised scope of work with 60% and 40% of the original request.

**Public Session:** No comments.

### **Committee Discussion:**

Chairman Fineran thanked the applicants for their presentations and asked the Committee members to proceed into discussion about the projects. He stated that in the past, the Committee had approved applications for projects which were near completion, such as the Hoff-Vannatta Farm last year, before digging into the remaining applications. Mr. Fineran asked the Committee if they would like to approve the Vass House application, since it was the smallest amount of funding requested and would wrap up the Vass house project. Ellen Demeter motioned, seconded by Timothy Bodine to approve the full funding request of \$18,000.

Roll Call: (Yes to approve the Vass House receives full funding of \$18,000)

Mr. Cartabona – no; Ms. Denker – yes; Ms. Demeter – yes; Ms. Calabrese – yes; Mr. McGreen – no; Mr. Bodine – yes; Mr. Fineran – yes; Ms. Miller – yes; Mr. Smith – yes; Mr. Tersigni – yes; Ms. Smolha – yes.

Motion carried. The Vass House will receive its full funding request of \$18,000.

Chairman Fineran reviewed the MCCTFC procedure and recommended that members review the Project Evaluation Criteria packet prior to making any decisions. Mr. Tierney explained that this packet was provided to the applicants when they joined the Committee, but that his office would send everyone another copy.

Mr. Fineran stated that he believed it was important for the members to consider the public benefit of each particular project, and that more weight may be given to those projects which provide open access to the public at large, such as parkland. Mrs. Demeter stated that while some historic projects, particularly churches, may be seen to only benefit a particular group, those group members also pay taxes and their projects are also important.

Mr. McGreen inquired whether municipalities had contributed funding to churches in the past. Mr. Tierney responded that, off the top of his head, he did not believe so, but would need to check to be sure. Mr. McGreen suggested the Committee give weight to those projects which received municipal funding, such as open space projects.

Several members echoed concerns that applicants may not be exploring other funding sources. Mr. Tierney confirmed for the Committee, that while Green Acres is still providing 50% matching grants to

some eligible applicants for open space acquisition, the state has little historic preservation/restoration grants available. Nevertheless, Mr. Tierney advised the Committee that applicants' matching funds should be a factor in their decision.

Mr. McGreen, noting that some historic restoration projects have received multiple grants over the years for different phases, inquired whether those applicants had provided a total estimated cost for all of their anticipated phases with their initial applications. He cautioned that while the application may be for a specific project phase during the current funding cycle, there may be undisclosed future phases leading to a lengthy and costly endeavor.

Mr. McGreen inquired of Mr. Tierney how the County's funding for preservation is broken down. Mr. Tierney explained that 55% of the County's Open Space Trust Fund goes to the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) for farmland preservation, 25% comes to the MCCT, and 20% goes to the County Board of Recreation Commissioners (BORC), less debt and administrative costs. Mr. McGreen asked whether MCCT funding was thereafter divided between historic and open space projects; Mr. Tierney responded that it was not. Mr. Tierney explained that when the Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee was established, it was almost entirely used to fund municipal open space acquisition projects. Over the years, the County began funding historic projects. The annual expenditures eventually became split between the two types of programs, but that an increasingly larger percentage in recent years has been going to historic projects. Nevertheless, he noted that the total amount given out to historic and open space projects since inception of the program was now pretty evenly split.

#### **Straw Poll:**

The Committee agreed to take a non-binding "straw poll" to identify which projects, if any, a majority would like to fully fund. Mr. Tierney explained that this had been done in prior years and that the Committee would then determine how to distribute the remaining balance among the remaining applications.

Roll Call: (Yes to approve that Alpha Borough Parkland East receives their full funding request of \$250,000.)

Mr. Cartabona – Abstain	Mr. Fineran – Yes
Ms. Denker – No	Mrs. Miller – No
Mrs. Demeter – No	Mr. Smith - No
Ms. Calabrese – No	Mr. Tersigni – No
Mr. McGreen - Yes	Ms. Smolha – No
Mr. Bodine – No	

Totals: Yes: 2, No: 8, Abstain: 1

Roll Call: (Yes to approve that the Frelinghuysen Township Forest Preserve Addition-2 receives their full funding request of \$275,000.)

Mr. Cartabona – Yes	Mr. Fineran – Yes
Ms. Denker – No	Mrs. Miller – No
Mrs. Demeter – No	Mr. Smith - No
Ms. Calabrese – No	Mr. Tersigni – No
Mr. McGreen - Yes	Ms. Smolha – Abstain
Mr. Bodine - No	

Totals: Yes: 3, No: 7, Abstain: 1



Roll Call: (Yes to approve that the First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown receives their full funding request of \$117,488.)

Mr. Cartabona – No	Mr. Fineran – No
Ms. Denker – No	Mrs. Miller – No
Mrs. Demeter – No	Mr. Smith - No
Ms. Calabrese – No	Mr. Tersigni – No
Mr. McGreen - No	Ms. Smolha – No
Mr. Bodine - No	

Totals: Yes: 0, No: 11, Abstain: 0

Roll Call: (Yes to approve that the Mount Bethel Church in Mansfield receives their full funding request of \$154,931.25.)

Mr. Cartabona – No	Mr. Fineran – Yes
Ms. Denker – Yes	Mrs. Miller – Yes
Mrs. Demeter – Yes	Mr. Smith - Yes
Ms. Calabrese – Yes	Mr. Tersigni – Yes
Mr. McGreen - No	Ms. Smolha – Yes
Mr. Bodine - Yes	

Totals: Yes: 9, No: 2, Abstain: 0

Roll Call: (Yes to approve that the St. James Lutheran Church receives their full funding request of \$200,625.)

Mr. Cartabona – No	Mr. Fineran – No
Ms. Denker – Yes	Mrs. Miller – Yes
Mrs. Demeter – Yes	Mr. Smith - Yes
Ms. Calabrese – Yes	Mr. Tersigni – Yes
Mr. McGreen - No	Ms. Smolha – No
Mr. Bodine - No	

Totals: Yes: 6, No: 5, Abstain: 0

Roll Call: (Yes to approve that the United Methodist Church of Washington receives their full funding request of \$416,781.)

Mr. Cartabona – No	Mr. Fineran – No
Ms. Denker – No	Mrs. Miller – No
Mrs. Demeter – No	Mr. Smith - No
Ms. Calabrese – No	Mr. Tersigni – No
Mr. McGreen - No	Ms. Smolha – No
Mr. Bodine - No	

Totals: Yes: 0, No: 11, Abstain: 0

Mr. Tierney stated that the total available funding for projects this year is \$800,000, but that the balance after fully funding the Vass House project, which the Committee approved, was now \$782,000. Final funding recommendations will be determined at the November MCCTFC meeting and then forwarded to the Freeholders for their review and approval.

Mr. Cartabona stated that all of the applicants are presenting projects that are worthy of funding, but he feels that the funding should be spread out amongst the rest of the applications. He expressed concern that if the Committee fully funds the St. James and Mansfield Church projects, then there will be little left for the remaining projects.

Mrs. Demeter responded that the Mansfield Church, for example, is a historically important building and that the cemetery, which contains Revolutionary War soldiers, has sadly not been maintained and that's sacrilegious. She said that she is concerned history is disappearing in America; that it is even being rewritten, and that it is important to preserve what we have left. She said that, with regard to churches, regardless of which faith a person may be, there is a war on Christianity and it is an important part of history which needs to be preserved.

**New Business: None**

**Old Business:**

Ms. Miller inquired about two lots on Edison Road that received MCCT funding for a park approximately two years ago. She explained that the park still does not have signage that it is for public use and that the township had designated it an emergency landing site. She expressed concern that the property is not being used in the manner the Township represented that it would be. Mr. Tierney said that he will look into this and report back at the next meeting.

Chairman Fineran asked if there were any other questions before closing the meeting.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Louis Cartabona motioned, seconded by Todd Tersigni and to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Cortis  
Administrative Clerk