

Garden State Preservation Trust
June 12, 2018, Meeting Minutes
Statehouse Annex Meeting Room 16

Chairman Greg Romano called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

Executive Director Ralph Siegel read a statement that advance notice of at least 48 hours was given of the date, time, place and agenda of this public meeting of the Garden State Preservation Trust for Tuesday, June 12, 2018 at 11 a.m., and distributed in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act to Statehouse Press Corps, specifically to the Associated Press, Bloomberg News, Town Square Radio Network and News 12 New Jersey, and to various Statehouse offices, the Office of Legislative Services and to the Office of the New Jersey Secretary of State for due notification and to be posted, published and broadcast.

Mr. Siegel called the roll. Public members in attendance were: Chairman Romano, Vice Chairman Kenneth Atkinson, Andrew McNally and Benjamin Spinelli. Ex-officio members in attendance were Susan Payne (for Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher), Martha Sapp (for DEP Commissioner Catherine McCabe), Glenn Ceponis (for Community Affairs Commissioner Lt. Gov. Sheila Y. Oliver) and Michael Kanef (for Treasurer Elizabeth Muoio). Public member Andrew Buzby was absent.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Romano welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He welcomed to the meeting the new public board member, Andrew McNally of Basking Ridge, and the new ex-officio representative, Michael Kanef, director of the State Office of Public Finance, who was attending on behalf of Treasurer Elizabeth Muoio.

Chairman Romano also welcomed Deputy Attorney General Jeet Gulati attending his first GSPT meeting in place of Cliff Rones, who had served as the board's attorney since its inception in 1999 but who has now retired. He reviewed Mr. Rones' tenure and thanked him for his decades of service.

Chairman Romano welcomed Professor John Hasse from Rowan University, who was attending the meeting to make a presentation on the "New Jersey Conservation Blueprint" GIS tool developed in partnership with his own organization, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Chairman Romano (who had recused himself on the matter) thanked Vice-Chairman Ken Atkinson for adding Professor Hasse to the agenda.

On the subject of the meeting agenda, Chairman Romano reminded board members they had approved an \$80 million package of project recommendations for the Green Acres Local and Green Acres Nonprofit grant programs at the June 12 meeting. He said the recommendations before the board today were for a \$15 million funding package for the other component of Green Acres, the State Acquisition Program, which included \$3 million specifically for Blue Acres flood property acquisitions.

Chairman Romano then discussed "some of the funding issues (the executive director) has been dealing with that confront this board." He said the GSPT board for almost two decades has been reviewing and approving funding recommendations "based on our independent assessment of the money available for the various programs." He said the board and staff have always been able to measure, to monitor and to report the dollars available in each program based on constitutionally dedicated funds, which include the board's own GSPT bond proceeds plus \$600 million in General Obligation bond

proceeds approved by the voters in 2007 and 2009. He said the taxpayers through the GSPT have committed \$2.9 billion to these various programs over the past 18 years.

Chairman Romano said the latest source of support for these programs comes through a 4-percent dedication of the Corporation Business Tax (CBT). A percentage of these dedicated funds is deposited into four different funds as directed by the Preserve New Jersey Act signed into law in 2016, and that 4 percent will increase starting on July 1st in 2019. He said it will require additional enabling legislation at that time.

Chairman Romano said, “Unfortunately, the Garden State Preservation Trust has not received the detailed information needed on these four Preserve New Jersey funds, which includes data about income and deposits, expenditures, interest earnings, loan repayments, end-of-year balances and inter-fund transfers. We view that as important detail that we need to evaluate for ourselves what money is really available so we can develop a multi-year strategy.”

Chairman Romano said the Treasury Department’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has given the GSPT estimates of CBT funding without any detail. He said without sufficient detail a proper and complete evaluation of those revenue estimates and revenue streams cannot be done. He said, “We have taken a position as a board that we need to be able to evaluate those revenue streams.”

Chairman Romano said the previous chairman, Mr. Atkinson, had sent a letter in November 2017 to the OMB Executive Director David Ridolfino asking for Preserve New Jersey funds to be classified as “Special Revenue Funds” in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. These sections in the statutorily required Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) have always included the kinds of details the GSPT has relied on for 18 years. The reply from OMB to Chairman Atkinson’s letter concluded the Special Revenue Fund reports were not appropriate for the CBT dedication.

Chairman Romano said he followed up with his own letter in May 2018 asking for the same kinds of information. He said we expect to get an answer soon on that issue but have not received one so far.

Chairman Romano said these kinds of technical problems could never be allowed to interrupt the momentum of our land acquisition and preservation programs so the board meeting would proceed with the best information available while work will continue to acquire a more complete financial picture in the future.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCT 17, 2017, BOARD MEETING

Chairman Romano asked if there were any corrections or clarifications to the draft minutes of the meeting. There were none. Mr. Siegel noted the consideration of these official minutes was a formality because a substantive version of the minutes had been submitted on Oct. 17 last year and had completed the Governor’s veto period.

Moved by Ms. Payne

Seconded by Ms. Sapp

Approved 6-0

Mr. McNally and Mr. Ceponis abstained because they had not attended the meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Executive Director Siegel reviewed the contents of the members’ Meeting Folders with the resolutions and recommendations being considered at the meeting. He noted the Meeting Folders included the letters to the OMB director from Chairman Romano and former Chairman Atkinson concerning the lack of detailed financial information being provided to the GSPT.

Mr. Siegel said, “The fact of the matter is that in my Fiscal Report I will be talking about a dollar figure, a number that is available for the Green Acres State Acquisition program, and we are flying blind. I have no way to verify that that number will hold water. We are told from the OMB that this is the amount of money that is available. We don’t think they are lying to us, but our function has always been independent analysis, looking at interest earnings, looking at leftover money from FY2016 and FY2017 rolling forward, which this number includes, but we don’t know how much it is. This is what the chairman has been talking about. This is what the letters discuss.”

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S FISCAL REPORT: GREEN ACRES

Mr. Siegel directed board members attention to the chart provided by OMB of the funds available.

FY18 CBT Allocation By Department
(in thousands)

Agency	A CBT 71% Dedication ¹	B Diesel Balance ²	C (A+B) Grand Total, CBT Resources ³
Environmental Protection (64%)			
Open Space (60%)	29,722	3,910	33,632
<i>Acquisition</i>	11,274	1,075	12,349
<i>Development</i>	-	1,075	1,075
<i>Loans and Grants - Locals</i>	15,579	1,486	17,065
<i>Grants - Non-profits</i>	2,869	274	3,143
Blue Acres (4%)	2,734	260	2,994
Total, Environmental Protection	32,456	4,170	36,626
Agriculture (31%)			
Farmland Preservation	20,546	1,959	22,505
Stewardship	14	683	697
Total, Agriculture	20,560	2,642	23,202
Community Affairs (5%)			
Historic Preservation	8,116	2,974	11,090
Grand Total	\$ 61,132	\$ 9,786	\$ 70,918

Mr. Siegel explained how almost \$4 million in balances from the defunct Diesel Risk Mitigation fund continue to be available.

Chairman Romano asked about actual CBT revenues and if additional funds were becoming available.

Mr. Siegel said in fact the CBT collections in Fiscal Year 2017 were a disappointment, and the \$71 million that had been forecast for conservation programs has now been revised downward to \$66.7 million.

Chairman Romano asked if there is reserve money available. Mr. Siegel said, "As best as I can tell" the leftover reserve is included in the figure presented by OMB.

PRESENTATION OF GREEN ACRES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE ACQUISITIONS & BLUE ACRES ACQUISITIONS FOR FY2018

Chairman Romano introduced Fawn McGee, chief of the Green Acres State Acquisitions program, to explain the recommendations.

Ms. McGee said her work also includes Blue Acres acquisitions and other Superstorm Sandy recovery programs. She said State Acquisitions are organized into regional funding "categories." She said today's recommendations focus on nine of these project area categories according to the existence of good pending projects from willing sellers that are ready to be acquired.

Ms. McGee said her program has about 290 possible acquisition projects on the table, most of which are contiguous to or in some way enhance existing state parks and other properties. She said these are prioritized according to the needs of the State Division of Parks & Forestry, the Division of Fish & Wildlife and the Natural Lands Trust. She said the priority goes to properties that are under imminent threat of development or that are "in-fills" adjacent to or surrounded by parks or other preserved lands.

Ms. McGee reviewed the recommendations and maps in the Meeting Folder.

Ms. McGee said her office closed on 126 projects in the past year, including Blue Acres home-site purchases. She said highlights included the Delsea Woods property acquisition in the crucial Cape May peninsula, a Pinelands farm of about 200 acres, a critical part of the Princeton Battlefield property in coordination with Civil War Trust (now American Battlefield Trust), and the addition of a crucial private parcel at Great Falls National Historic Park in Paterson that is at the base of the falls and offers one of the best views of this historic natural feature.

Ms. McGee said the current recommendations target properties through the state including urban and historic sites, with a lot of focus on critical environmental lands that would protect Barnegat Bay and the Cape May peninsula. She said her staff has quite a few pending acquisitions and relies on the recommended appropriation to keep the promises of negotiations that are currently underway.

Ms. McGee on the topic of Blue Acres funding said the map included in the Member Folders shows the entire state as eligible for acquisitions so her office can apply the funds anywhere in New Jersey. She said these acquisitions are intended to recover damaged properties and also to build more resilient communities.

Mr. Siegel asked about matching funds for Blue Acres. Ms. McGee said the vast majority of the acquisition funds come from a \$311 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and from a part of \$400 million in a series of grants from the Department of Housing & Urban Development for various purposes. She said her office uses state Blue Acres money for properties within identified flood zone "clusters" that do not qualify for the FEMA repetitive loss criteria. She said sometimes these houses are on the same block as other properties that are eligible for FEMA acquisition. She said, "We did not want to leave those homes alone." She said extensive Blue Acres work has been done in 15 communities. She highlighted the Bay Point

peninsula community in Lawrence Township where 44 houses were acquired and demolished to restore the landscape to a natural condition with recreational access.

Ms. McGee said, “We are creating large open-space waterfront areas.” She also said, “We are actually expanding the way we look at (projects) to use land acquisition to improve flood resiliency.”

Ms. Payne asked some questions on mapping that Ms. McGee addressed.

Chairman Romano asked why Chesterfield was not included in the Crossroads of the American Revolution Project Area because it was an historic town. Ms. McGee said the Crossroads project area is much larger than the list of towns included in the recommendation, which focused on towns which have active projects her program is pursuing right now. She said Chesterfield and other towns with historic backgrounds have not been excluded per se because the list only concerns current, active acquisition projects

Ms. Kanef asked about the selection of projects. Ms. Sapp, the administrator of the Green Acres program, said there is a state recreational plan that provides guidance on recreational priorities. She also said they have park superintendents who will call them to say that a certain piece of property is for sale and that they want us to go after it.

RESOLUTION #18-001 TO APPROVE \$12,300,000 TO FUND GREEN ACRES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE ACQUISITION FUNDING IN NINE PROJECT AREAS FOR FY2018 FROM THE PRESERVE NEW JERSEY (CBT) GREEN ACRES FUND AND FROM THE DIESEL RISK MITIGATION FUND

Chairman Romano asked for consideration of the resolution.

Moved by Ms. Payne

Seconded by Ms. Sapp

Approved 8-0

SIDE NOTE (NOT PART OF THE SUBSTANTIVE MINUTES): This resolution approves the appropriation of \$12,300,000 for Green Acres State acquisitions as recommended by and to be carried out by the Office of Green Acres.

The sources of funding break down as follows:

- **\$11.274 million from CBT FY2018 funds**
- **\$1.075 million from Diesel Risk Mitigation funds**

RESOLUTION #18-002 OF THE GARDEN STATE PRESERVATION TRUST TO APPROVE \$2,994,000 FOR GREEN ACRES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLUE ACRES PROPERTY ACQUISITION FUNDING FOR FY2018 FROM THE PRESERVE NEW JERSEY (CBT) BLUE ACRES FUND AND FROM THE DIESEL RISK MITIGATION FUND

Ms. Siegel asked for consideration of the resolution.

Moved by Ms. Sapp

Seconded by Mr. Ceponis

Approved 8-0

SIDE NOTE (NOT PART OF THE SUBSTANTIVE MINUTES): This resolution approves the appropriation of \$2,994,000 for Blue Acres flood property acquisitions as recommended by and to be carried out by the Office of Green Acres.

The sources of funding break down as follows:

- **\$2.734 million from CBT FY2018 funds**
- **\$260,000 from Diesel Risk Mitigation funds**

RESOLUTION #18-003 OF THE GARDEN STATE PRESERVATION TRUST TO APPROVE \$9,703,000 TO FUND DEP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY2019 FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS IN STATE PARKS, FORESTS, RECREATION AREAS AND WILDLIFE REFUGES FROM THE PRESERVE NEW JERSEY (CBT) GREEN ACRES FUND AND THE DIESEL RISK MITIGATION FUND.

Mr. Kanef asked about capital projects that are not funded and whether these park facilities and other infrastructure would then continue to deteriorate. Ms. Sapp said the capital projects need is far above the funding available and that the staff of the Department of Environmental Protection does the best it can in selecting priority projects.

Moved by Ms. Sapp

Seconded by Mr. McNally

Approved 8-0

SIDE NOTE (NOT PART OF THE SUBSTANTIVE MINUTES): This resolution approves the appropriation of \$9,703,000 for Capital Projects in DEP Division of State Parks and Division of Fish & Wildlife for permanent capital improvements. This DEP State Capital money is for the UPCOMING Fiscal Year, while the Green Acres appropriations approved at this meeting were from FY2018.

The sources of funding break down as follows:

- **\$8.63 million from CBT FY2019 allocated funds**
- **\$1.073 from Diesel Risk Mitigation funds**

Mr. Siegel returned to his Executive Directors report to make note of the Press Releases and Conservation News Clippings. He said these packets take a lot of work to compile and he urged board members to take them with them. He pointed out the first press release was one he neglected to include in the Meeting Book for the October 2017 meeting and that he regretted the oversight because it featured Agriculture Secretary Fisher visiting the farm owned by board member Mr. Buzby. He pointed out a photo accompanying the press release shows them all biting into tomatoes.

On other news, Mr. Siegel made note of the state Supreme Court ruling prohibiting the future award of historic preservation grants to religious institutions. Mr. Ceponis, who is a historic preservation specialist at the New Jersey Historic Trust, said the meaning of the ruling was still being evaluated. The case arose from a complaint in Morristown and Mr. Ceponis said some had the view the effect of the ruling was limited to Morris County only.

**PRESENTATION BY DR. JOHN HASSE OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY
ON THE ROWAN GEOSPATIAL RESEARCH LAB'S
"NJ CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT."**

Chairman Romano introduced John Hasse, a professor of geography at Rowan University in the Department of Geography, Planning and Sustainability, and director of the Geospatial Research Lab. Chairman Romano stated that Rowan University has undertaken a project to create a very exciting computer mapping tool.

Dr. Hasse was joined by Laura Szwak, director of Outreach and Education at the New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Dr. Hasse said New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, SADC and other conservation organizations have been working with Rowan in creating this tool to make sure that agricultural priorities and the agricultural land base are characterized in a way that is reflective of New Jersey's land preservation programs. He said the mapping tool is easy to use and has real potential to be an important conservation tool so he wanted the board members of the GSPT to see it first-hand.

Dr. Hasse used a PowerPoint slide show and an online link to the Conservation Blueprint GIS web site during the GSPT meeting. He said the Geospatial Research Lab has been focusing particularly on mapping to foster environmental understanding, environmental protection and environmentally sustainable planning. The Conservation Blueprint is Rowan's online mapping platform that can be delivered through the web. He noted that the project was developed in large part with student labor. The Conservation Blueprint is the major project in Rowan University's GIS Lab. He said the goal is to communicate a story about the conservation process with spatial information and layers to show how preservation and development have changed over time. He showed maps illustrating that New Jersey has "urbanized" 331,000 acres from 1986 to 2012. He said this 26-year pattern suggests it will be only a matter of a few more decades before the state is fully developed.

Dr. Hasse said the mapping animation can be used to examine the loss and fragmentation of New Jersey's agricultural and natural lands. For example, he said New Jersey lost 211,000 acres of agricultural land from 1986 to 2012. He said the Conservation Blueprint GIS web site can be accessed by private citizens, municipalities, nonprofits and State agencies, and that it allows for specially created maps to be shared via email.

Ms. Szwak said she had been working on the Conservation Blueprint project after bringing partners together in 2015 to discuss strategic mapping. "We asked everybody: Where do you preserve land and why do you do it? What are the indicators? What does that land have to have for you to consider it a priority?"

Ms. Szwak said they have exhibited the Conservation Blueprint at more than 30 conferences and meetings.

Dr. Hasse demonstrated the online mapping feature by using various criteria to create layers and overlays on the GIS maps. "The idea of a blueprint is to allow these agencies to focus on the highest priority lands that are remaining," he said.

Ms. Payne said the SADC staff uses the Conservation Blueprint on a daily basis to provide "really important context" on decision-making. She said it encourages her staff to think more broadly in their preservation efforts. She said he was impressed with the team Dr. Hasse has assembled and what they have accomplished.

Mr. Spinelli said the map should be useful in evaluating per-acre values. He asked Dr. Hasse to develop data and overlays so the blueprint mapping could be used to calculate total costs of large tracts or areas.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Chairman Romano thanked Ms. McGee and the Green Acres staff with their hard work in preparing the presentations for this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public offering any comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Romano asked to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by Ms. Sapp

Seconded by Ms. Payne

Approved unanimously 8-0 by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Siegel', written in a cursive style.

Ralph Siegel
executive director/board secretary

Oct. 9, 2018

Also attending:

Carrie-Anne Calvo of the Office of Legislative Services, Thea Sheridan of the Assembly Republican Staff, Steve Bruder of the SADC staff and Judeth Yeany, Greg Dorsett and Adam Taylor from the Office of Green Acres.