

**Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund
Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting
January 28, 2026**

Present: Alan Avery (Chair), David McKeon (Vice-Chair), John Bacchione, William Fox, John Peterson, & Michael Mangum

Also present at the meeting were: Frank Sadeghi (Commissioner, NLT Liaison), Sam Ellenbogen (Commissioner), Laura Benson (County Counsel), Anthony Agliata (OCPD), Geoffrey Lohmeyer (OCP&R), Tim Gleason (OCPD), Nicole Leaf (OCPD), Tom Thorsen (OCPD), Chris Palmieri (OCPD), & Kenneth Burton (Public).

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes: October 22, 2025

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Mangum to approve the October 22, 2025 meeting minutes. Mr. McKeon abstains, rest in favor, motion carried.

4. Program Update: 30,163.02 acres

• Closings:

- #739 Lighthouse Drive – Patel, Ocean Twp., 2.89 acres – Located directly off Main Street, this closing is located within the Lighthouse Drive target area.
- #524 Tip Seaman Extension (Messec), Little Egg Harbor Twp., 0.62 acres – Closing is located adjacent to Ocean County Tip Seaman Park. The land is vacant and had the potential for construction of a single-family dwelling prior to Ocean County preserving the property.
- #736 Dry Branch – Gerath, Stafford Twp., 0.91 acres – This nomination is located near the Dry Branch Tributary. The property owner donated the property to the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust.
- #710 FRM – Frazee Extension, Ocean Twp., 1 acre – Donation piece located in the Forked River Mountains, conveyed to the County by the Forked River Mountain Coalition.

5. Old Business

• Old Business:

- #791 TR Headwaters Ext. II, Jackson Twp., 5.34 acres – Staff discussed the initial asking price of \$750,000 with the property owner to determine if they would be interested in negotiating an offer at a lower value. Due to tax adjustments in the Township, the owner was not interested in lowering their asking price and remain at \$750,000. The Advisory Committee advised staff to move the property to Hold.

6. New Business

• **New Business:**

- #796 Bauer Field, Plumsted Twp., 82.02 acres – This nomination is over 80 acres of vacant land in Plumsted Township. Past uses of the site include farming and hunting. The property owner’s representative advised staff that the property is currently being farmed as of today. If purchased by the County, a lease agreement could be drafted to allow the farmers to remain on the period for an extended period to keep the fields in active agriculture. The owner had previously completed a subdivision plan which would preserve majority of the property; however, it still retains a highest & best use for at least ten residential dwellings located off Pinehurst Road. The asking price is \$800,000 and it is assessed as a QFarm at \$34,500. The Advisory Committee felt that the property would be a good fit for the preservation program. Staff were advised to order consultant testing on the buildable capacity of the property to help provide future appraisers with a more accurate fair market value.

- #800 Harbor Court Peninsula, Berkeley Twp., .53 acres – The property owners initially reached out to the County to see interest in preservation following a structure fire to the group home on site. While the structure remains on the property, it is currently out of service and not being utilized. It is located at the end of Harbor Court where the Mill Creek spills into the Toms River. There are 2 docks and a vinyl bulkhead on the property, offering potential for a pocket park after removal of the structure. The Advisory Committee noted that the area is prone to flooding and were concerned about the structure fire’s origins. The asking price is \$2,000,000 and assessed at \$627,300. After further review, the nomination will be re-reviewed at February’s meeting.

- #801 Georgetown Village, Lacey Twp., 2.79 acres – Nomination was submitted to staff for consideration of purchase by the County. The property has all necessary approvals with the town, county and state to construct a three-story residential building with 29 units. The Barnegat Branch Trail runs behind the property. Preservation would help mitigate traffic issues in the area. The asking price is \$1,740,000 and assessed at \$140,500. The Advisory Committee advised staff to reach out to the Township regarding a resolution of support for inclusion into the preservation program prior to acting on the nomination.

- #802 Payton Point, Point Pleasant Beach Boro., 0.23 acres – Nomination submitted to the County by the property owners. The land is currently developed with two rental apartments, an office space, marina, bait & tackle shop and a fuel dock. The asking price is \$4,000,000 and assessed at \$1,499,000. The Advisory Committee felt that the acquisition would not

be best suited for the Natural Lands Trust Fund and advised staff to move the property to Hold.

- #803 Red Inlets Drive, Point Pleasant Beach Boro., 0.23 acres – This nomination is connected to nomination #802, with the same property owners. Both nominations were submitted individually. The Red's Lobster Pot restaurant is on the property with a month-to-month lease, operating five months out of the year. The asking price is \$3,000,000 and assessed at \$1,133,200. The Advisory Committee agreed that this nomination would also not suit the Natural Lands Trust Fund and advised staff to move the property to Hold.

7. Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Mangum to move into Closed Session at 5:58 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Mangum to move back into Open Session at 6:14 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Avery stated that in closed session five nominations were discussed. There are two nominations that the Committee will take action on.

#784 Osborne Island North – Bayside Homes, Little Egg Harbor Twp., 0.17 acres
A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to recommend to the Board of Commissioners the fee simple acquisition of the Osborne Island North – Bayside Homes property under the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund, 0.17 acres in Little Egg Harbor Township for an amount not to exceed \$65,000.00. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

Noble Farms, Plumsted Twp., 9 acres
A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Mangum and seconded by Mr. Fox to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to acquire the development easement on the Nobles Farm under the Ocean County Farmland Preservation Program, in Plumsted Township totaling approximately 9 acres for an amount not to exceed \$247,500.00. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

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- 8. Adjournment:** A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

- 9. Next Meeting: February 25, 2026 at 5:30PM**

Respectfully Submitted,



Chris Palmieri
Assistant Administrative Analyst