

**Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund
Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting
June 24, 2026**

Present: Alan Avery (Chair), David McKeon (Vice-Chair), John Bacchione, Lisa Hodgson, Greg Myhre, John Peterson, & Michael Mangum.

Also present at the meeting were: Laura Benson (County Counsel), Tom Thorsen (OCPD), Tim Gleason (OCPD), & Chris Palmieri (OCPD).

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes: May 20, 2026

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. McKeon and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to approve the May 20, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Myhre abstained, rest in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Avery noted that William Fox recently passed away and that a Resolution was prepared honoring his service to the Natural Lands Advisory Committee as well as his long history of public service.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. McKeon and Seconded by Mr. Myhre to adopt the Resolution and honor Mr. Fox's long-standing commitment to public service. All in favor, motion carried.

4. Program Update: 30,534.37 acres

- Closings:
 - #668 Florence T. Allen Ext. II – Twp Donation, Berkeley Twp., 50 acres – 50 acres of vacant property located on the Mill Creek Headwater. This acquisition was donated to the County by Berkeley Township after the purchase of the former Blackbeard's Cave.
 - #776 Mallard Road – Welle, Stafford Twp., 0.50 acres – A lot located in the Mallard Road target area was recently closed on. Staff continue to target these lots for preservation.

5. New Business

- New Business:
 - #733 Summit Ave, Brick Twp., 5.44 acres – The first nomination was recently resubmitted for consideration of acquisition after initial review in 2024. The property is completely vacant and located adjacent to Brick Township municipal land. There are no adjacent Ocean County Natural Lands preserves adjacent to the property. The asking price is \$599,000.00

and assessed at \$59,900.00. The Advisory Committee did not feel that the acquisition would be the best fit at the County level and suggested Brick Township pursue the acquisition instead. Move to hold.

- #811 Manahawkin Baptist II, Stafford Twp., 0.90 acres – This nomination is a small inholding surrounded by Natural Lands preserves. To extend the Barnegat Branch Trail south, the trail would have to cross this property which could make it a beneficial acquisition. The County has preserved land from the same owner in the past. It is a small property that is not developable. The asking price is \$50,000.00 and assessed at \$700.00. The Advisory Committee advised staff to gauge the property owner's interest in a donation.
- #812 Mallard Road – Pallad, Stafford Twp., 0.21 acres – Located in the Mallard Road project area. The County began preserving these lots after Stafford Township reached out requesting assistance to help mitigate flooding and stormwater runoff. Due to the date of the last appraisal being over two years old, staff would need to update the appraisal values to consider the nomination. The Advisory Committee authorized staff to reach out to the appraiser to determine an up to date and accurate fair market value.

6. Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Peterson and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to move into Closed Session at 5:49 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. McKeon and seconded by Mr. Mangum to move back into Open Session at 6:03 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Avery stated that in closed session three nominations were discussed. There is one nomination that the Committee will take action on.

#796 Bauer Field, Plumsted Twp., 82.02 acres

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Mangum and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to recommend to the Board of Commissioners the fee simple acquisition of the Bauer Field property under the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund, 82.02 acres in Plumsted Township for an amount not to exceed \$1,715,000.00. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

7. **Adjournment:** A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Mangum to adjourn the meeting at 5:59 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

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8. Next Meeting: July 22, 2026 at 5:30PM

Respectfully Submitted,



Chris Palmieri
Assistant Administrative Analyst