

**Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund
Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting
April 24, 2024**

Present: Alan Avery (Chair), David McKeon (Vice-Chair), William Fox, Lisa Hodgson, John Bacchione, Jennifer Kuhn & Greg Myhre

Also present at the meeting were: Virginia E. Haines (Commissioner, NLT Liaison), Frank Sadeghi (Commissioner), Laura Benson (County Counsel), Anthony Agliata (OCPD), Robert Kuhne (OCSWM), Chris Palmieri (OCPD), Tom Thorsen (OCPD), Larisa Paxton (OCPD), Tim Gleason (OCPD), Britta Forsberg (Public) & Joyce May (Public).

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes: March 27, 2024

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. McKeon to approve the March 27, 2024 meeting minutes. All in favor, Mr. Bacchione and Ms. Kuhn abstained, motion carried.

4. Program Update: 29,910.76 acres

Mr. Avery informed the Committee of the resignation of Terry O’Leary, former Advisory Committee member, to which the Committee noted how thankful they were for his services throughout his years on the Natural Lands Advisory Committee.

- **Closings**

- Mill Creek Trail – Pine Beach Donation., 0.44 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that we acquired a donation from Pine Beach for the Mill Creek Trail totaling 0.44 acres. Mr. Palmieri also noted that this is the first Natural Lands Trust Fund property located in the Borough of Pine Beach.
- #668 Florence T. Allen Ext. II., 26.67 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this closing totaled 26.67 acres and was located in Berkeley Township. This property was also formerly known as Blackbeard’s Cave on Route 9.

5. Old Business

- **Site Inspections:**

- #725 TR Ridgeway Branch II Ext., Jackson Twp., 2.70 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this property is a cleared lot located directly off of Ridgeway Road in Jackson Township. There were some noticeable dumping piles on the property, as well as site access for a well. Towards the back of the property, there was Japanese Knotweed which is

an invasive plant and would have to be excavated. Mr. Avery noted that this property was located in a target area for acquisitions. The Committee advised staff to order an appraisal.

- #730 TR Ridgeway Branch II – Strudler, Jackson Twp., 5.00 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this property is adjacent to our TR Ridgeway Branch II preserve, as well as TR Ridgeway Branch II Ext. The property had a house, two storage sheds, and a previously used chicken coop that is now utilized for storage. Staff noticed some oil barrels on the property, however noted that they were empty. The Committee advised staff to order an appraisal.
- #715 Lighthouse Drive – Mickelsen, Ocean Twp., 0.13 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this property is 100% encumbered by wetlands. While on site, staff noticed some piles of concrete as well as a creek at the end of the property. Mr. Avery asked if this property was approved by township resolution, to which Mr. Palmieri confirmed. The original asking price was \$4,000, to which Mr. Avery asked if it was possible for the Committee to make an offer without a formal appraisal. Ms. Benson noted that it would not comply with the Natural Lands Trust Fund rules. The Committee advised staff to send outreach to the surrounding lots near the property to gauge additional interest on preservation.
- Realtor Outreach:
 - #729 Camp Albocando Ext., Manchester Twp., 16.60 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this property was on the March 27th agenda, to which the Committee voiced their concerns on the property owner’s desire to receive lifetime tenancy, the structures on the property, and the asking price. The realtor reached out to staff and stated the property owners will no longer seek a lifetime tenancy, there has been discussions of demolition of the structures, and that they would consider an offer as long as it is a fair market value price. The Committee advised staff to order appraisals on the property.
- Old Business:
 - #718 Berkeley Nine Estates Ext., Berkeley Twp., 4.90 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this property was also on the March 27th agenda, however the Committee asked to revisit the nomination at a later time. Commissioner Sadeghi asked if this acquisition would be something that Berkeley Township would support. Mayor Bacchione replied that it would. Mr. McKeon noted that it would be a good idea to reach out to the property owner regarding the above ground storage tanks on the property. The Committee advised staff to hold the property until the next month’s meeting when there is more information on the property.

- New Applications:
 - #687 Country Lane – Jones, Ocean Twp., 0.88 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this nomination is a previous nomination that was originally put to hold due to the high asking price, which was resubmitted to the program after a drop in price from \$85,000 to \$35,000. The property is adjacent to the Barnegat Branch Trail as well as approved property that is currently going through issues with remediation. The Committee advised staff to obtain township approval for the property inclusion into the preservation program before moving forward.
 - #733 Summit Ave, Brick Twp., 5.44 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that we received a nomination in Brick Township near the Sawmill Creek Tributary. The property was directly adjacent to Brick Township property, and the asking price was \$499,000 and it was assessed at \$52,600. The Committee advised staff to forward the property to Brick Township due to it being surrounded by township land.
 - #734 Pine Lake Park – Correia, Manchester Twp., 0.27 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that the next nomination is located in Manchester Township directly adjacent to our Pine Lake Park Transfer and Ridgeway Campground preserves. The property owners recently inherited the property and live in Florida and are looking to relieve themselves of taxes. The asking price is \$45,600 and it is assessed at \$45,600. The Committee advised staff to reach out to the Engineering Department regarding the ROW from Ridgeway Road, as well as to gauge whether or not they'd be interested in the property.
 - #735 Grassle Marsh Ext, Tuckerton Township., 1.72 acres – Mr. Palmieri informed the Committee that this nomination is located directly off of Radio Road and adjacent to our Grassle Marsh Preserve and Rutgers University. The property was recently subdivided from a single lot to three. Mr. Gleason noted that he was approached by Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve regarding a possible partnership on acquiring the land to add onto the Grassle Marsh preserve in order to prevent development. The Committee advised staff to check with Tuckerton regarding township support and to find out the owners of the adjacent parcel of land.

6. Public Comment

Joyce May (Realtor, Little Egg Harbor) stated that she was attending the meeting to see how the Natural Lands Trust Fund Program is run and that she has a property that she may be interested in selling to the County, however she would need all property owners to agree on the sale before nominating.

Britta Forsberg (Save Barnegat Bay) asked if the Committee had intentions of recognizing Mr. O'Leary for his years of service on the

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Advisory Committee. The Committee stated that he would be recognized for his service.

Ms. Forsberg asked about the status of two properties in Berkeley Township. Mayor Bacchione stated he could reach out to her and give her an update at a later date.

Ms. Forsberg asked about the status of the Hanna Property in Ocean Township. Staff explained that the township did not support the acquisition, so it was moved to hold.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to move into Closed Session at 6:13 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to move back into Open Session at 6:21 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

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

Burr Street, Barnegat Twp., 0.65 acres.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. McKeon and seconded by Mr. Fox to recommend to the Board of Commissioners in an amount not to exceed \$145,000. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

7. **Adjournment:** A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Bacchione to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

8. **Next Meeting: May 22 at 5:30PM**

Respectfully Submitted,



Chris Palmieri, Program Aide