

**Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund  
Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting  
February 22, 2023**

**Present:** David McKeon (Acting Chair), Martin Flemming III, William Fox, Lisa Hodgson, Greg Myhre, Terry O'Leary, & John Peterson

**Absent:** Alan Avery (Chair) & John Bacchione

Also Present at the meeting were: Mathew Thompson (County Counsel), Tom Thorsen (OCPD), Mark Villinger (OCPD), Dan Sindoni (OCPD), Nicole Leaf (OCPD), and Geoffrey Lohmeyer (OCPR).

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Mr. McKeon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Minutes**  
January 25, 2023

Mr. Villinger noted that the January Closed Session shall be amended to reflect that Mr. Bacchione left the room for the Berkeley Township discussion. A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Flemming to approve the January 25, 2023 meeting minutes with the noted correction. Roll was called, Mr. O'Leary abstained, remaining in favor, motioned carried.

4. **NLT Program Update:** 26,416.33 acres

Mr. Sindoni informed the Committee that the County closed on four properties since the last meeting:

#630 GLP – Sloan, Berkeley Twp., 0.11 acres.

The property is located on Beach Ave in the County's Good Luck Point project area. The County will be submitting the property to the DEP to determine eligibility for reimbursement from Coastal Blue Acres funding. The house on site will be demolished in the near future.

Mr. Peterson joined the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

#633 Topczewski, Toms River Twp., 1.03 acres

The property is located on Church Road, adjacent to the Schiano property. In close proximity to Ocean County College, the acquisition adds to the existing open space buffer around the College.

#641 Mill Creek Headwaters – Peale, Berkeley Twp., 0.17 acres

#656 Mill Creek Headwaters –Treadwell Investments, Berkeley Twp., 0.11 acres

These two properties are located within the on-going Mill Creek Headwaters Project Area. The project area is approximately 110 acres and is adjacent to the 800-acre NJ Pulverizing property.

This brings our NLT total preserved acres to 26,416.33.

**5. Old Business**

Site Inspections: Mr. Sindoni informed the Committee that Staff visited six properties in the last month.

#672 Lumley Tract Ext Property in Berkeley Township. The one-acre property is adjacent to the County's existing Lumley Tract property. Mr. Sindoni told the Committee that the property, mostly pine forest with thick thorn bushes, was adjacent to current NLT property. The property main contain dumping that has spilled over from the adjacent property. These issues are being addressed. The asking price for the property is \$10,000. The assessed value is \$2,000. Mr. McKeon asked whether additional adjacent properties had submitted nominations. Mr. Villinger informed that there were no other adjacent properties currently under review. The existing NLT properties in the area have ongoing title issues to be resolved. Once those are remedied, staff will pursue additional outreach in the area. The Committee asked for staff to contact the owner about a potential donation.

#677 Pelican Drive Property in Berkeley Township. The 2.4-acre property is located off of Route 9 in a commercial area. Mr. Sindoni informed the Committee that the property is mostly wooded. The immediate frontage includes a small cleared area and an approximately 75'x85' asphalt paved pad. The asking price is \$507,000. The Committee discussed that given the property's commercial zoning and isolated nature, the property does not fit within the parameters of the program. Staff were instructed to send a letter of no interest.

#681 Butler III Property in Berkeley Township. The 2.80-acre property is located off Butler Boulevard, east of the Butler I and Butler II properties. Mr. Sindoni told the Committee that the property is completely encumbered by wetlands according to the NJ DEP wetlands layer. Staff walked the property and confirmed the wooded wetlands. Several tires were found on the property. The asking price is \$31,700. Given the property's location, surrounded by Township owned parcels, the Committee instructed staff to forward to the Township.

#685 Nugentown Site Ext. Property in Little Egg Harbor Township. The 2-acre parcel is located off of Gifford Town Lane and backs up to the Nugentown Site property. The property was mostly forested with sparse ground cover, making it fairly easy to walk through. There was a lot of bird activity, and many hackberry trees were scattered throughout the woods. The rear portion of the site has the only open area where an

utility easement cuts through the property. The asking price is \$200,000. Staff has already been authorized to request an appraisal.

#686 TR Corridor – Spangle Property in Jackson Township. The 9.2 acre property is located on East Veterans Highway. Mr. Sindoni informed the Committee that there are numerous structures on site: a residential home, a barn, and a small road-side stand. The back area behind the house to the wood-line is fenced off as it was previously used for livestock. The back of the property is cut through by a tributary of the Toms River, with wetlands encumbering the rear half of the property. The asking price is \$899,999. Mr. Flemming added that the property was one that Township has had interest in for years—especially on obtaining the rear portion, but could never reach an agreement. A partnership with the Township may be possible due to their interest. Mr. O’Leary added that Jersey Shore Trout Unlimited stocks trout in this area. The Committee authorized staff to contact the Township to gauge interest on a partnership and to order two appraisals for the property.

#687 Country Lane –Jones Property in Ocean Township. The 2.64-acre property is located off of Route 9 near the Country Lane Trailhead of the Barnegat Branch Trail. Mr. Sindoni informed the Committee that the property had significant wetlands encumbering the property making it difficult to access. Mr. Villinger added that there was a large berm located on the property along Route 9, appear to be a sort of buffer to keep runoff from Route 9 from draining toward the property. The berm, was filled with many bottles and garbage. An asking price has yet be provided by the property owner, but Mr. Villinger added that the staff recommendation is to request a donation of the property. Mr. O’Leary added that the property is the most northern known limit of the Southern Grey Tree Frog in Ocean County, which is a known endangered species. Mr. McKeon reiterated that the property may be best suited for a donation as it has no development potential. The tree frog presence as well as the proximity to the Trail does provide some limited value. The Committee authorized staff to reach out to the property owner to request a donation.

## **6. New Business**

### **New Nominations:**

#688 Mill Creek Trail Ext. Berkeley Township, 1.90 acres—Mr. Sindoni informed the Committee that the property is located on JFK Boulevard, adjacent to the Mill Creek and in close proximity to the Florence T. Allen Property. The asking price is \$155,000. The real estate listing was recently updated to “pending,” which prompted staff to contact the realtor to confirm the status. The realtor stated the property is currently under contract, however staff contacted the owner to confirm and has yet to receive a response. An appraisal was ordered for the property prior to it going under contract. The Committee told staff to wait for the appraisal and to continue to follow up on the status of the contract.

#689 Cloverdale – Breakers, Barnegat Township, 1.34 acres—Mr. Sindoni told the Committee that the property consists of six small parcels, each with an asking price of \$79,900, totaling \$479,400 for all parcels. The total assessed value for the parcels is

\$30,000 and the property is zoned Residential Conservation, limiting any development. The property has no wetlands on site, but is in close proximity to the Fourmile Branch. Mr. McKeon questioned whether the development of the nearby neighborhood could extend onto the property. Mr. Villinger clarified that the properties are within the RC zone, which is similar to a TDR sending area and offered for staff to complete further research of the area to see adjacent property ownership. The Committee agreed that the area could become a good project area around the County's Cloverdale property. The Committee authorized staff to conduct outreach to the surrounding properties to see if a project area could develop in the area.

#691 Lacey Road – Parkers, Lacey Township, 3 acres—Mr. Sindoni told the Committee that the property is located off Lacey Road, near the International Recycling Systems of Lacey property and is completely surrounded by State-owned land. The asking price is \$30,000 and the assessed value is \$9,000. Mr. Villinger added that there is a no further action letter from the DEP concerning the property's former use as a stump dump. Staff has presented the property to the State for their interest, however they take no action without an application directly from the property owner. The Committee instructed staff to contact the property owner and send a State application for the owner to apply.

**7. Public Comment**

No public was in attendance.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Flemming to move into Closed Session at 6:36 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Flemming to move back into Open Session at 6:51 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Mr. McKeon stated that in closed session a number of nominations were discussed. There are five items that will have action taken:

#682 Mallard Road – Banaag, Stafford Township. A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. O'Leary to recommend to the Board of Commissioners in an amount not to exceed \$22,500. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

#690 Mill Creek Headwaters – Borio, Berkeley Township;  
#692 Mill Creek Headwaters – Fisher, Berkeley Township;  
#693 Mill Creek Headwaters – Boutemine, Berkeley Township; and  
#694 Mill Creek Headwaters – Neumann, Berkeley Township. A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Flemming and seconded by Mr. Myhre to recommend #690, #692, #693 and #694 to the Board of Commissioners in an amount not to exceed \$105,600, \$16,200, \$81,000 and \$42,000 respectively, totaling \$244,800. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

#648 Berkeley Nine Estates, Berkeley Township; and

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#615 Cedar Creek Corridor, Berkeley Township (Berkeley Township Partnership). A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Flemming to recommend #648 and #615 to the Board of Commissioners in an amount not to exceed \$1,900,000 and \$1,050,000. The Township has agreed to contribute \$241,000 toward the purchase of #648, with an in-kind contribution of ATV/ORV barrier controls, signage, and completion of site work such as grading illicit berms. The Township shall also donate approximately 18 acres of parcels that are adjacent to the project area as well as the Barnegat Branch Trail. The Committee notes that they currently recognize the efforts of the Township to enforce against illegal ATV use on County property and request that the Township continue these efforts. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

#663 Wilbur Avenue, Manchester Township. A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Flemming to recommend to the Board of Commissioners in an amount not to exceed \$612,000. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

#664 Wrangle Brook Road, Manchester Township. A **MOTION** was made by Mr. O'Leary, seconded by Mr. Fox to recommend to the Board of Commissioners in an amount not to exceed \$212,500. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

**Adjournment:** A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Myhre and seconded by Mr. Flemming to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nicole Leaf, Environmental Specialist