



# OPEN SPACES

## CAPE MAY COUNTY

OPEN SESSION: Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 10:00 am

County Administration Building – 4 Moore Road – CMCH, NJ

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am.

**Roll Call:**

Joan Berkey

Cindy Chemerys

Peter Lomax

David Craig

Commissioner Will Morey (joined in progress at 10:50)

Leslie Gimeno

**Others:** Barbara Ernst

Scott Mullen

**Open Public Meetings Act:** Mr. Lomax read the Open Public Meetings Act Notice

**Flag Salute:** Mr. Lomax led the flag salute.

**Minutes from March 28th :** Ms. Gimeno was asked to correct the minutes to reflect that Ms. Berkey was not in attendance at the 3/28 meeting. Ms. Chemerys made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected; Mr. Craig seconded the motion. All in favor, with the exception of Ms. Berkey, who abstained.

**Chairman's Report:** Mr. Lomax indicated that he would forego a report.

**Director's Report:** Mrs. Ernst reported that the Planning Department staff attended the Earth Day Celebration at the CMC Park and handed out saplings. She said that the event had been a great success. Ms. Gimeno thanked the team for their work in representing the Open Spaces Program.

**Correspondence:** There was no correspondence.

**Financial Statement:** Mr. Mullen provided an overview of the Financial Statement. He indicated that there is an available balance of \$18,012,458.97. Pending grant applications (Schedule C) reflect approximately \$8 million in open grant applications under review.

Mr. Mullen informed the Board that the applicants for all projects listed on Schedule A (projects that have received awards but have not yet been closed out) will be asked to complete project status forms twice per year. The form will ask for details on the progress of the project, anticipated timelines, and other pertinent information so that we can document how projects are moving forward. Board members commented that this will be useful in decisions on current projects such as extension requests.

Mr. Mullen then provided updates on each of the projects listed on Schedule A as follows:

- PR 22-01 Sea Isle Coastal Overlook and Enhancements – working on permitting
- PR 23-02 North Wildwood Gateway – in queue for invitation for presentation
- P 22-01 Wildwood Crest Arts Pavilion – revised materials submitted; staff review pending; potentially ready for May final presentation
- P 22-03 Upper Township Beesley's Point – feedback provided to the Township; revised materials needed for Board to consider invite for Full Application
- PR 22-03 Upper Township Amanda's Field Skate Park – feedback provided to the Township; revised materials needed for Board to consider invite for Full Application
- PR 22-04 – Lower Township Diamond Beach Park – feedback provided to the Township; revised materials needed for Board to consider invite for Full Application
- SFCP 19-02 – Woodbine EcoParkPhase 2 & 3: Meeting to be held this week related to getting consensus from the NJ Department of Community Affairs regarding Jake's Law portion of the park

A brief discussion on the EcoPark and the development of the "Jake's Law" playground was held, including the development of Jake's Law regulations, the challenges associated with the regulations as it relates to unitary surfacing, and the submission of the Meadow area of the EcoPark for consideration by the NJDCA.

Presentation:

HP 23-01 – Historic Allen AME Church Bell Tower Façade Restoration – City of Cape May: Mr. Lomax thanked Mayor Mullock and Mr. Belasco for their attendance and asked for an update on the Phase 1 Stabilization project that the Open Spaces Program participated in. Mr. Belasco said that Phase 1 will be done by the end of this week as final punch list items are being addressed. Mayor Mullock provided a brief overview of this history of the initiative to restore the building which had been damaged by fire in 2018. He indicated that the building had been vacant for almost 3 years before the City purchased the building and began the work of stabilizing and weatherizing the structure. Work done to date is consistent with the historic specifications and includes: restoration of 100 year old stained glass windows, installation of cedar shake roof and copper flashing over windows, and restoration of original cedar clapboard.

Mr. Belasco said that Phase 2 will focus on the reconstruction of the historically accurate Bell Tower and facade. Historic photos were used to create the plans which include the witches' hat topper, a design that was attributed to Stephen

Decatur Button. Mr. Lomax asked if the preservation plan for the building had been completed, and Mr. Belasco indicated that it was complete and is used as the foundation for planning restoration efforts. When asked about the City's plans for the interior, Mayor Mullock said that the City would undertake the interior restoration in support of making the space available for community events. He indicated that the application pending consideration by the Open Spaces Program would enable the City to complete the exterior restoration and preservation of the building.

Mr. Lomax asked if any site work would be undertaken as part of this project, as our Program does not fund municipal infrastructure. Mr. Belasco said that the City plans to install pavers consistent with the Franklin Street Streetscaping and that the parking lot and driveway would be improved in a complimentary effort. Mr. Belasco said that due to the number of historic structures and the significance of the area, the City has nicknamed the area "Museum Row" and is seeking to enhance walkability in the area to connect the sites together. Other sites include the Firehouse Museum, Cape May Historical Society Building, the Franklin Street School, Harriet Tubman Museum, and others.

When asked about the cost estimate, Mr. Belasco said that it is current within 6 months and if the costs exceed the designated contingency, the City would cover the costs or look for other grant funding. When asked about the religious articles remaining in the building, Mayor Mullock said that the altar, windows, etc. would remain and would be considered part of the history of the site. He indicated that educational and wayfinding signage was planned for the site. Acknowledging that the site would be used by community groups and there could possibly be lease or rental fees, the Mayor indicated that the fees would be reinvested in the site's restoration and upkeep.

With no further questions from the Board or the public, Mr. Lomax thanked the City's representatives for their presentation.

HP 22-02 Gandy House Restoration; HP 22-03 Tuckahoe Train Station Restoration – Upper Township: Mr. Dietrich was in attendance to explain the status of these two projects that had encountered some challenges through the bidding process. He indicated that the Gandy House roof was in very bad shape and so the Township had made the decision to award the contract to have it restored, putting an additional \$11,500 in Township funds towards the project.

The Train Station project has a significant funding shortfall as the total project cost came in at \$120,000, whereas the initial estimate was \$45,000. An additional \$36,500 in funds is needed to support the original award of \$35,500, bringing the total "ask" of the Open Spaces Program to \$72,000. Mr. Dietrich said that the original cost estimate was derived from discussions with a local contractor for materials and using prevailing wage rates for labor. He said that he has now factored in an allowance for mobilization and will need to go back out to bid. He had originally tried to move both projects at once thinking that the larger scope would result in cost savings, but this approach did not work as anticipated and projects were split due to the deterioration of the Gandy House roof. He added that signage to be placed at each of the sites, as well as events to be held by the Historical Society, would help to raise public awareness and visitation. Ms. Berkey complimented the Township on their stewardship of the properties.

With no more questions from the Board or the public, Mr. Lomax thanked Mr. Dietrich for his attendance and information.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Closed Session:** The Board went into Closed Session at 11:19 upon a motion by Ms. Berkey, seconded by Ms. Chemerys. All in favor.

**Open Session:** The Board returned to Open Session at 12:04 upon a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Ms. Gimeno. All in favor.

**Decision on Applications:**

HP 23-01 – Historic Allen AME Church Bell Tower Façade Restoration – City of Cape May: Ms. Berkey made a motion to recommend the project for funding in the amount of \$240,000 in support of a total project cost of \$403,291; Ms. Chemerys seconded the motion. A roll call vote found all to be in favor, with the exception of Mr. Lomax and Mr. Craig, who abstained.

HP 22-03 Tuckahoe Train Station Restoration – Upper Township: Mr. Craig made a motion to recommend additional funding in the amount of \$36,500, to be added to the \$35,500 previously awarded, in support of this project; Ms. Berkey seconded the motion. A roll call vote found all to be in favor.

**Other discussion:**

Project Phasing: The definition of “independent utility” that the Board is using is:

[Independent utility Definition | Law Insider](#)

“**Independent utility** means a test to determine what constitutes a single and complete project. A project is considered to have independent utility if it would be constructed absent the construction of other projects in the project area. Portions of a multi-phase project that depend upon other phases of the project do not have independent utility. Phases of a project that would be constructed even if the other phases are not built can be considered as separate single and complete projects with independent utility.”

Key points of consensus of the Board is as follows:

- If phasing is to be used, the Open Spaces Program must be provided with an overall vision or master plan for the site that clearly defines how each phase contributes to the overall goals
- Each phase of a project must meet the purpose and intent of the Open Spaces Program, including our standards for enhanced aesthetics in design as required by the Creative Placemaking Plan
- Each phase should meet the test of “standing on its own”, demonstrating that it would be constructed absent any future phase
- Participation by the Open Spaces Program in any given phase of a project does not guarantee participation in future phases

Ms. Gimeno was asked to communicate the consensus of the Board with respect to the discussions on project phasing and provide the same to the County Administrator and municipal partners.

With regard to the Thermoplastic Mileage Marker System being installed on the bike path, Mr. Mullen and Ms. Gimeno were asked to help draft and coordinate a press release explaining the project and how it is intended to be used in tandem with future wayfinding signage. Ms. Gimeno was also asked to notify Atlantic City Electric (Ronnie Town) regarding the upcoming project to ensure that it would not interfere with any ACE site work.

**Adjournment:** The Board adjourned at 12:11 upon a motion by Mr. Craig, seconded by Ms. Berkey. All in favor