

MERCER COUNTY OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD

Tuesday, February 3, 2026; 5:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

Mercer County Administration Building
640 South Broad Street, Trenton, NJ 08650-0068

*****Meeting via Zoom online platform*****

VOTING MEMBERS:

(Present)

Maria Connolly, Director of Planning, County Executive Designee
Alan Hershey, Chair, (former Vice Chair), Piedmont Representative
Wendy Mager, Vice Chair, Millstone Representative
Haig Kasabach (former Chair), Assunpink Representative
Timothy London, Urban Representative
Mike Long, Park Commission Representative

NON-VOTING:

(Present)

Cindy Taylor, Secretary
Mansi Shah, Assistant Planner

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Kasabach called the February 3, 2026 meeting of the Mercer County Open Space Preservation Board to order at 5:02 pm.

- I. Statement of Adequate Notice
 - a. Ms. Taylor stated that pursuant to the Sunshine Law, notice of this meeting was advertised in the Trenton Times on February 14, 2025 and posted on the Mercer County Planning website.
- II. Approval of Minutes from October 7, 2025
 - a. Ms. Mager moved to accept the minutes. Alan Hershey seconded. The motion unanimously passed.
- III. Public Comment
 - a. None
- IV. Old Business
 - a. Ms. Taylor stated that in 2025, the Open Space Preservation Board approved the funding to preserve Oasis Farm, a \$1 million grant. Mercer County has executed a project agreement with Robbinsville Township and a property survey is underway.
- V. New Business
 - a. Reorganization
 - i. Election of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary
 1. Mr. Kasabach moved to elect Alan Hershey as Chair. Mr. Long seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
 2. Mr. Hershey moved to elect Ms. Mager as Vice Chair and Ms. Taylor as Secretary. Mr. London seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
 - ii. 2026 Meeting Schedule
 1. Mr. Kasabach moved to accept the schedule. Mr. London seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
 - b. 2026 Tax Levy Recommendation
 - i. Mr. Kasabach moved to adopt the tax levy resolution at \$0.03 and Mr. London

- seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Mercer County Open Space Preservation Assistance Program Policy Re-evaluation
 - i. Ms. Mager moved to approve the language changes in the policy. No substantive changes were made. Mr. Hershey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
 - d. Harlan Joseph Peace Park letter of recommendation
 - i. Mercer County is applying for NJDEP funding to design and build the Harlan Joseph Peace Park in Trenton. Ms. Mager moved to approve a letter of support for the project. Mr. London seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - e. Trail program
 - i. Mansi Shah, a new Assistant Planner in the Planning Department, presented the finalized policies and procedures for the County's new trail grant program. The program is now advertised on the Planning website:
<https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/planning/mercer-county-trail-grant-program>

VI. Discussion

a. Project Updates

i. County Open Space/Farmland Acquisitions

1. Ms. Taylor reported that there are three active SADC farmland preservation applications, two in Hopewell Township and one in Robbinsville.
2. Regarding Open Space, Ms. Taylor reported that the County closed on the Dale property in October 2025. This property will be managed as part of Howell Living History Farm. The County still needs to replace the septic and close wells before it can receive Green Acres reimbursement for the acquisition. The County also closed on the Ewing Leasing property in November 2025. The property in Ewing will provide an extension to the Johnson Trolley Trail. It will likely require environmental remediation prior to trail construction. The County also settled a lawsuit regarding the PennEast acquisition in Hopewell Township. The settlement states that PennEast will sell the property to their tenant, who will be required to preserve the property through the SADC Farmland Preservation program within five years. If preservation is unsuccessful after five years, the County will have the option to purchase the property for open space. Lastly, the County anticipates it will close on the Hoge III property in Hopewell Borough within the next few weeks. This property was acquired with the assistance of D&R Greenway and may serve as an LHT connection to Hopewell Borough in the future.

ii. Parks Update

1. Mr. Long reported that the Green Acres-funded Living Shoreline project at Rosedale Park is in the permitting phase. Wetland delineation and surveys have been completed. No timeline to share on this yet, but invasive phragmites removal may begin later this year. The Green Acres-funded Jake's Law Playground project at Rosedale Park was officially awarded after soil sampling results confirmed there were no environmental impacts present. Site plans for the playground are being developed now. Site plans for Dam Site 21 are still under DEP review. Construction is expected to be complete in late 2027 as of now-pending DEP review delays. The finalized trail plans included approximately 2.5 miles of new trail bed. The Trenton wharf project is still ongoing, with a July completion target for the new floodwall. Park Commission is looking to start the park construction on the wharf in August.

VII. Correspondence

a. None
VIII. Closed session

a. none
IX. Adjournment

a. Ms. Mager moved to adjourn, Mr. London seconded the motion. Meeting ended at 6:18 pm.