

MEADOWLANDS CONSERVATION TRUST
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES

DATE: December 16, 2005
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
MERI Conference Room
Lyndhurst, New Jersey

RE: Meeting of the Meadowlands Conservation Trust

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

WILLIAM SHEEHAN, Chair
Hackensack Riverkeeper

MARK BECKER, Vice Chair
Co-Director of Bergen Save the Watershed Action Network

ROBERT CEBERIO
Executive Director, NJMC

GREG REMAUD
NY/NJ Baykeeper

MICHAEL GONELLI – conference called in
NJMC, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

KRISTINA SCHVEJDA
Executive Director, Meadowlands Conservation Trust

PENNY LUDMAN, ESQ. (via teleconference)
Deputy Attorney General

LINDA BAER
Deputy Executive Director for External Affairs

ABSENT:

DENNIS ELWELL
Mayor of Secaucus

ABIGAIL FAIR
Association of NJ Environmental Commissions

1. Chairman Sheehan presided over the Meadowlands Conservation Trust Board of Trustees meeting.
2. After leading the flag salute and the reading the Sunshine Law, Ms. Schvejda read the roll call for the December 16, 2005 meeting of the Meadowlands Conservation Trust.
3. Review and Adoption of Minutes: Minutes of the October 28, 2005 meeting were adopted and approved with a motion made by Trustee Remaud, seconded by Chair Sheehan and unanimously carried by acclamation.
4. Ms. Schvejda introduced Linda Baer to the MCT Board. Ms. Baer will be working and assisting the Trust with many issues. Her knowledge and leadership with legislatures and other prominent community figures will be invaluable to MCT. Ms. Baer will also help us with funding issues.
5. No public comments were given.
6. No resolutions were presented or adopted. Chair Sheehan noted the resolution that was in the Trustees packet was to be tabled for now until certain options are explored more. Motion to table the resolution was made by Commissioner Gonnelli and seconded by Trustee Remaud and unanimously carried by acclamation.
7. Director's Report:
 - a. Ms. Tina Schvejda reported an update on the license plates funding status. The state had just sent in the August statement
 - b. Ms. Schvejda announced that Meadowlands Conservation Trust was to have a new assistant, Jonathan Martin. Mr. Martin was highly recommended by Trustee Ceberio and NJMC. Jonathan's title is special assistant to the executive director and he will begin January 3, 2006.
 - c. Update for the booklet that Dr. Erik Kiviat had written is that it's down to the redline part. Publishing should be forth coming in the months ahead. The mock up of the booklet covers and inside pages was shown for Boards review.
 - d. Chair Sheehan discussed his concerns of Louis Berger Group, INC. presentation to the Trust at the October meeting. He felt that it was presumptuous for Berger (MRI) to create/turn their Phase III tract into freshwater flow instead of allowing saltwater and tidal flow come into our lower section of the Kane Tract. . That would effectively allow MRI to establish wetland mitigation bank for freshwater wetland credits and sell them off. DAG, Ludman would like Chairman Sheehan to get her more facts and figures so that she can move forward on MCT's behalf and object to Berger's plan. The Trust should write to MRI stating our opposition to their plan but also explain that we would like to meet with them and explore the possibilities of creating a saltwater marsh area contiguous to the Kane Tract. That way we will be establishing a record that we will be able to stand on in the future on their projects. Chair Sheehan also stated that since Trustee Fair sits on the state wetlands mitigation council, it would absolve her from being able to vote on our MCT BOT on this issue. Trustee Remaud is to draft of the letter for MCT for us to send to wetlands mitigation council, NJDEP, the ARMY CORP and any other entity that should be notified.
 - e. Update on Norwood is that the municipality did not accept the proposed survey bids because they came in too high. They sent out for new bids and then survey and completion should be

done over the next couple of months. Ms. Schvejda also stated that AmericaLand Company, who is handling the title search, is almost done their work too.

- f. Trustee Ceberio said that Carlstadt is going to try and condemn part of the Kane Tract from the Trust. Any part Carlstadt can condemn allows them to go out a get fill permits so that they can develop the land. BOT members questioned Trustee Ceberio on the possibility of it not being true. Trustee Ceberio assured them that it was no joke and the NJMC had offered to show them other ways to receive monies.
- g. Chairman Sheehan informed Ms. Schvejda and the rest of MCT BOT that no meeting has taken place yet in regard to having a joint task force on working with NJ and NY's watershed issue imitative. Vice Chair Becker added that Bergen SWAN has been working with Rockland County, municipalities and non profit organizations. It has become a very active group that might even mirror NJ WMA5. Trustee Ceberio suggested that we get federal legislation for designating the Hackensack River watershed as an area of national significance.
- h. Ms. Schvejda confirmed that she had recently gone out to Closter & Norwood one Sunday afternoon and met with their environmental commission/committee on where to put potential trails that would link up the two communities. Demarest, Cresskill, Tenafly, North Vale and Alpine would all be interested in conducting a joint project and funding for greenways and trails throughout the municipalities. Ms. Schvejda will follow up on that.
- i. Trustee Ceberio met with Ms. Schvejda and Irfan Bora, NJMC CEO, to go over the list of NJMC properties and which ones will be turned over to the Trust. Their focus was directed on properties which would have the least amount of costs to the Trust. The following land transactions are scheduled for 2006; the Oritani Marsh area (Rose City initiative) without appeals for open space in East Rutherford and Meadowlark in Ridgefield would give 310 acres to the Trust.
- j. Chair Sheehan wanted clarification of the appeals part. Trustee Ceberio expounded that originally Meadowlark and Oritani had no restrictions on them. The radio towers would have been placed on the Bloomberg tract. The only part that NJMC would keep on Meadowlark would be the 20 acres that someone had dumped ash on and NJMC would put their photovoltaic farm on it. The 75 – 100 Eastern Brackish Marsh acres, plus properties on Murray Hill Parkway would also come over to the Trust.
- k. There are negotiations going on with Guarini for a conservation easement that would be turned over to the Trust. There would also be radio towers on 50-acres of the 100-acre Guarini Tract. Frank Guarini wants 50 acres given over to the Trust with the stipulation that it be named after him. The Mori Tract is wetlands and uplands. The 50-acre wetland portion could come over to MCT via negotiations of NJMC. Ms. Schvejda thanked Trustee Ceberio and NJMC for all their hard work and generosity to Meadowlands Conservation Trust.
- l. KOA Campgrounds of America is looking for a site in the Meadowlands, so NJMC has put together a proposal for land acquisition with Allied Junction and KOA Campgrounds. The campgrounds would be within walking distance to the train station and 5 minutes from New York City.
- m. Trustee Remaud brought up the Port Authority monies. Trustee Ceberio said all of that money was earmarked for NJMC projects.

- n. Where the NJ tax return check off stood was discussed and Mayor Doria was going to move it out of committee and put it on the Senate side. The bill will probably get refilled in January, not lame duck session.
 - o. Ms. Schvejda is going to meet with Ridgefield park environmental committee woman Karen Reid about two properties, Bear Spring and Wolf Creek. The Trust will see how we can assist them in their preservation endeavors.
 - p. Affordable housing coalition reached out to Ms. Schvejda about interest in being involved. Chair Sheehan stated that MCT is a land trust, not a housing authority. That position is not one we should be taking. Trustee Remaud agreed, but felt that we could show an element of concern. Ms. Schvejda felt that if we commented on affordable housing we would be “open” to publicly support other projects such as abortion rights, bear hunts, etc. Chair Sheehan said that all NJ land conservation trusts should be involved with the housing issue. Ms. Schvejda to follow up. DAG Ludman stated that we are in but not of the state of NJ and that if we spoke out then we may be perceived as “speaking out” for the state.
 - q. Trustee Ceberio commented that NJMC is hosting a symposium on housing in March that Ms. Baer is heading up. Trustee Ceberio would like MCT, Ms. Schvejda to be involved in the event too.
 - r. Ms. Schvejda attended several meetings, one with Ducks Unlimited and the first ever Meadowlands Region Chamber of Commerce symposium. All agreed the symposium went well and anticipated that future ones would be even better.
 - s. MCT BOT meeting dates for 2006 were discussed. Also more sub committee meetings would like place.
 - t. Vice Chair Becker commented that Bergen SWAN and MCT will be presenting at the annual NJ Land Trust rally on March 25, 2006.
 - u. Bergen SWAN and Hackensack Riverkeeper have been in a legal battle with Rivervale on the Poplar Tract and municipal golf courses that Bergen County is interested in acquiring. MCT should get involved with all.
8. Next meeting set for February 24, 2006 10:00a.m. NJMC MERI room.
9. Motion to adjourn meeting was made.

Kristina R. Schvejda, Executive Director
Meadowlands Conservation Trust