

Protecting the Environment



MEADOWLANDS CONSERVATION TRUST
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REMOTE MEETING
OPEN SESSION MINUTES

DATE: March 9, 2022
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: Remote via Zoom

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

William Sheehan, Chairman
Hackensack Riverkeeper

Greg Remaud, Vice Chairman
NY/NJ Baykeeper

Steven Cattuna
NJSEA Delegate

Kimberly Holmes
NJDCA Delegate

Mayor Anthony Suarez
HMMC Delegate

ALSO PRESENT:

Christine Sanz, Chief Executive Officer

Jason Stypinski, Deputy Attorney General

Edward Bulmer, NJSEA Co-Director of Finance

Teresa Doss, NJSEA Co-Director MRRI

Brian Aberback, NJSEA Public Information Officer

Drew McQuade, NJSEA Senior Field Biologist / Naturalist and Data Analyst

Colleen Mercado, NJSEA Senior Operations Administrator

1. Chairman Sheehan called the meeting to order.
2. Sunshine Law Statement- CEO Sanz read the notice of meeting required under the Sunshine Law.
3. Roll Call

4. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Chairman Sheehan presented the Open Session Remote Board meeting minutes from the December 8, 2021 meeting. Upon motion by Trustee Cattuna and second by Trustee Holmes, the December 8, 2021 Open Session Remote Board meeting minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0, with Trustee Mayor Suarez abstaining.

Chairman Sheehan presented the Closed Session Remote Board meeting minutes from the December 8, 2021 meeting. Upon motion by Trustee Cattuna and second by Trustee Holmes, the December 8, 2021 Closed Session Remote Board meeting minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0, with Trustee Mayor Suarez abstaining.

5. **REPORTS**

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Chairman Sheehan briefly mentioned the upcoming event involving the installation of a historical marker at River Barge Park. He introduced Brian Aberback who provided some background on the event.

Mr. Aberback stated that the event would take place on Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 1:00 pm. He explained that he was working on the text for the marker which will acknowledge the slave trade in the Meadowlands and it will be installed next to the Trust's pavilion. He noted that an email had been sent to each of the Trustees regarding the event.

CEO REPORT

CEO Sanz also acknowledged the work that Mr. Aberback was doing. She said that the exciting component was that the public is engaging and the Trust is getting outreach from the public in regards to doing projects like this historical marker. She then provided an update on the license plate revenues:

- CY2021 License plate revenues through December were \$22,782.44.
- January 2022 license plate revenues were \$1,730.62.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Monitoring Report – 1st Quarter 2022

Mr. Drew McQuade narrated a power point presentation and provided the following monitoring results:

- Pomander Walk, Teaneck – Four bald eagles were spotted in the area, along with a dozen other bird species. He noted that some Japanese Knotweed had been cut and removed from along the edge of the river which left no buffer between the river and upland. Staff recommends replacing the Knotweed with native shrubbery or other herbaceous plants that could shore up the slope a little bit.
- Pine Terrace, Demarest – Several birds were sighted at this property along with the highlight of 16 Rusty Blackbirds, which are undergoing a huge population decline but have found their way to a lot of the Trust sites due to their nice wooded wetlands.
- Clarke Property, Demarest – Relatively small site which is well maintained.
- Emerson Woods, Emerson – No major issues; site seems to be functioning as it should. Another great list of birds were sighted, with the highlight being woodpeckers.
- Norwood Central Woods, Norwood – The woods appear healthy, although the understory appears to be limited by deer browse. The creek running through the center of the woods is a bit incised, likely due to an old culvert.
- Fox Hill, Norwood – Red-shouldered Hawks, Yellow Belly Sapsucker and relatively long list of birds were seen, which are good signs. Staff also observed a recently dumped lawnmower and not so recent, motorcycle; along with remnants of what looked like tree forts being built. Staff will continue to keep an eye on this going forward.

- Skeetkill, Ridgefield – The shoreline needs to continually be cleared of debris, and the islands should be cleared of mile-a-minute and Phragmites. A crew to assist with the plant removal work is recommended and staff suggests doing a clean-up every once in a while; a good way to engage public.
- Kane Freshwater Site – Almost a dozen duck species, along with Hawks, Harriers and Bald Eagles utilize this site. Weevils were released last summer to control the mile-a-minute invasive species and over the years they can control the spread. Staff recommends purchasing and releasing more weevils in spring to provide reinforcements; and suggests supplementing that with physical removal of growth with the help of a landscaping crew.
- Kane Riparian Area – Site appeared to be maintained; some of the phragmites and mile-a-minute were removed. Staff recommends that the phragmites and mile-a-minute continue to be maintain throughout the growing season to give plants the best shot. Also some supplemental plantings would be good to fill the site.
- Kane Natural Area – The dumping and littering along the roads, specifically at the end of Jomike Court, continues. Staff's recommendation is to open up these areas a little bit more to the public so there would be more activity in general and might help alleviate some of the dumping.
- Kane Mitigation Bank – A great diversity of ducks and some bald eagles were sighted. Staff noted various issues and concerns, including loss of marsh vegetation on the southwestern section possibly due to winter icing and some areas of concern on the berm specifically where vegetation had been mowed. The removal of this vegetation could destabilize the roots of the vegetation growing down in to the berm, which actually help to fight against erosion and fight against animal burrowing. The vegetation coverage in some areas to the east of the site were doing great.

Chairman Sheehan thanked Mr. McQuade for his presentation.

Vice Chairman Remaud thanked Mr. McQuade for a very thorough and interesting report and he asked if staff were looking at any potential small scale restoration or improvements for the sites which could enhance wildlife, and the ecology and its resilience. He said that staff should feel free to come to the Board with their ideas.

Ms. Doss and Mr. McQuade noted some recommendations:

- Signage at certain sites indicating the area is a conservation site to be used for passive recreation only, and no dumping would be helpful;
- Continuing to use weevils to control the mile-a-minute;
- Planting of shrubbery on the edge of the river at Pomander Walk would increase songbird habitat and shore up the shoreline;
- Possibly mowing open some of the phragmite areas at the Kane Natural Area at the end of Jomike Court could create a little bit of more diversity in the bird population and wildlife;

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Sheehan spoke briefly about certain concerns that have been brought to the Trust's attention relative to the burial grounds at Pomander Walk and said that he continues to receive phone calls regarding conflicts between the Town of Teaneck, the Sandhill Band of Indians, and Teaneck residents. He recalled that there was mention of the Town putting up a post and rail fence on the site, which he had not objection to. He said he wanted to be sure that this was being monitored closely with the Town.

CEO Sanz stated that in the past staff had reached out to the Town regarding the conflicts and the Town had not been responsive until recently. She noted that recent correspondence from the Sandhill Band of Indians regarding alleged activities at the burial grounds clearly indicates a conflict exists between the Town, the Sandhill Band of Indians and at least one resident. She said that on a positive note the Town did indicate they planned on putting up a fence that is required in the easement document and that staff has requested the fence plans from the Town. CEO Sanz also mentioned that Mr. McQuade had noted in his monitoring report that there was some vegetation that had been removed on the site by the river's edge, which clearly wasn't removed by NJSEA staff. She stated that the Trust only holds an easement on the property and if the Trust wants to achieve a certain result at the site, she suggested reaching out to all parties having an interest in the property.

8. **NEW BUSINESS** - None

9. **RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman Sheehan presented the following resolution:

Resolution 22-01

Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing Reimbursement to the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.

Upon motion by Vice Chairman Remaud, second by Trustee Mayor Suarez, roll call was taken:

Vice Chairman Remaud: Yes

Trustee Mayor Suarez: Yes

Trustee Holmes: Yes

Trustee Cattuna: Abstain

Chairman Sheehan: Yes

Resolution 22-01 was approved by a vote of 4-0, with Trustee Cattuna abstaining.

10. **CLOSED SESSION** - CEO Sanz read the Closed Session Resolution into record.

Resolution 22-02

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the Meadowlands Conservation Trust to conduct a meeting, to which the general public shall not be admitted for the purposes of discussing:

- Update on Negotiations with Bellemead Corporation – Potential Property Donation

Upon motion by Chairman Sheehan and second by Trustee Cattuna followed by all in favor Resolution 22-02 was approved unanimously to enter Closed Session.

Closed Session commenced at 10:33 a.m.

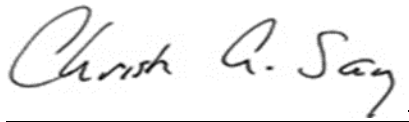
Open Session re-commenced at 10:53 a.m.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon no further business, Motion to Adjourn was made by Trustee Mayor Suarez, seconded by Trustee Cattuna, followed by all in favor.

The meeting concluded at 10:55 a.m.

I certify that this is a true and accurate transcript of the Open Session Minutes of the Meadowlands Conservation Trust Board of Trustees meeting of March 9, 2022.



Christine A. Sanz
Chief Executive Officer

March 9, 2022

NAME	Roll Call	Resolution 22-01	Resolution 22-02
Chairman William Sheehan	P	Y	Y
Vice Chairman Greg Remaud	P	Y	Y
NJDCA Delegate Kimberly Holmes	P	Y	Y
NJSEA Delegate Steven Cattuna	P	A	Y
HMMC Delegate Mayor Anthony Suarez	P	Y	Y

P = Present -- Absent A = Abstain
R = Recuse Y = Affirmative N = Negative