

HARDING TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021
IN-PERSON
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA at 9:00 AM
Kirby Hall, Blue Mill Road, New Vernon, New Jersey
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Mayor Jones

Mayor Jones called the July 6, 2021 special meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ADEQUATE NOTICE of this meeting of the Harding Township Committee was given as follows: Notice was sent to the *DAILY RECORD* and the *OBSERVER TRIBUNE* and published in the *OBSERVER TRIBUNE* on June 3, 2021; Notice was posted on the Bulletin Board in the Township Municipal Building on Blue Mill Road in Harding, NJ on June 3, 2021, and filed with the Municipal Clerk on June 3, 2021.

Mayor Jones announced that adequate notice of this July 6, 2021 meeting was called in accordance of the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL – Municipal Clerk

Ms. Chipperson, Ms. DiTosto, Mr. Platt, Mr. Yates, Mr. Jones

Mayor Jones asked for a roll call from the Municipal Clerk. Mrs. Sharp called the roll. Let the record show that Township Committee Member DiTosto was absent and Township Committee Member Yates participated via telephone. Let the record show that Mr. Ben Spinelli and Mr. Frank Pinto of Greener By Design, Mr. Robert Goldsmith, Special Counsel and Mr. Devanshu Modi were present in person. There were three members of the public in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mayor Jones

Mayor Jones led members of the Township Committee and members of the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jones – commented that we are here this morning pursuant to the Local Lands and Buildings Law N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq. regarding the Glen Alpin Estate and is being held on behalf of the Morris County Board of County Commissioners. Mayor Jones turned the meeting over to Mr. Ben Spinelli at 9:02 am.

Mr. Ben Spinelli, Greener By Design – explained that the purpose of this special meeting today is to hold a public hearing in accordance with the Local Lands and Buildings Law due to the fact that there will be interest held by the County that will be transferred as part of the Glen Alpin disposal/diversion. The Glen Alpin property is encumbered by both State and County Conservation and Historic restrictions that the Township has been involved in the disposal/diversion process for a little over three years. The State Conservation restrictions on 3 ½ acres of the Glen Alpin property will be removed. The State House Commission has voted in favor of the removal of those restrictions. As a result of the removal of those restrictions, the Township has acquired 18 ½ acres of replacement Open Space which was approved by the Green Acres program. The requirements necessary for the State restrictions to be removed from the property have all been fulfilled and now it is the proforma operation of filing the necessary documents to reflect the removal of the restrictions, the meets and bounds of the 3 ½ acres that will be freed from the restrictions, and placing the new restrictions on the 18 ½ acres that the Township has acquired. This leaves the question of the County restrictions, which are both Open Space and Historic. As far as the Open Space restrictions are concerned, they will be removed in much the same way as the State restrictions were. The Morris County Open Space Committee made a recommendation to

the County Board of Commissioners' a month ago that the mechanism that the Township identified be approved. This will also result in concurrent County restrictions going on that same 18 ½ acres alongside the Green Acres restrictions on the property.

The Historic restrictions are on the property and the Glen Alpin Building. They are the result of both the original transaction and a series of grants that were made to Harding Township for certain improvements that were made to the Glen Alpin home. As each improvements was made, it created a list of protected features that went along with it putting aside the fact that the documents actually were not filed with the Township but the Township is treating as they were filed and they have been subject to those restrictions. The Township is proposing that the Historic restrictions held by the County be removed but be replaced with a series of much more comprehensive restrictions that cover both interest and exterior features of the home and convert the restrictions from the current 30 year easement to a permanent easement that will run with the property and the 3 ½ acres that can be disposed of. The County Historic Committee recommended that those restrictions be removed and they also made certain recommendations about the compensation that should be made. Ultimately, that compensation is up to the Morris County Board of Commissioners as to what they feels is appropriate.

The purpose of this morning's hearing is to put the public on notice that the County intends upon divesting themselves of the current restrictions that they hold; both the conservation restrictions on the 3 ½ acres on Glen Alpin and the historic restrictions on the Glen Alpin home itself. This is the opportunity for the public, if they wish, to make comment to tell the Morris County Board of Commissioners'' if they have any opinion about whether or not the recommendations of the Committee should be followed. This is the first of two meetings. We are here at the Township today due to the Local Land and Buildings Law requires that one of the two hearings for the release of the restrictions be held in the Municipality where the property is located. The second hearing is scheduled for August 2021 that will be held at the Morris County Board of Commissioners meeting in Morristown.

Mr. Ben Spinelli opened the meeting to members of the public who wish to be heard on the proposed transactions.

PUBLIC HEARING -- PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL LANDS AND BUILDINGS LAW (NJSA 40A:12-1 et seq) REGARDING THE GLEN ALPIN ESTATE AND IS BEING HELD ON BEHALF OF THE MORRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

The Township of Harding proposes that Morris County release the Historic Preservation restrictions held by the County on the entire 9.575 acres of the Glen Alpin Estate, 685 Mount Kemble Avenue, Harding Township, Block 34, Lot 1, which is encumbered through funding assistance of the Morris County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, established by L/L. 1997 c. 24 (NJSA 40:12-51-1, et seq.). In addition, the Township of Harding proposes that Morris County release its Open Space restrictions on a portion of the property consisting of 3.52 acres in fee simple and easements totaling an addition 0.63 acres of the Glen Alpin Estate, as identified in the easement dated October 19, 2004, recorded in Deed Book 6186, Page 71.

Pursuant to the Local Lands and Buildings Law, a representative(s) of the Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing for the benefit of Morris County to obtain public comment on the request to release the County's Open Space and Historic Preservation restrictions based upon the 2004 Grant Agreement for the acquisition of the Glen Alpin Estate, as well as the right to 30 year easements as set for the in the following grants:

2005 Grant Agreement for Roof Replacement
2006 Grant Agreement for Utility Improvements
2007 Grant Agreement for Architectural Services

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2007 Grant Agreement for HVAC System repairs, improvements, and associated professional services.

In exchange for Morris County releasing the County's Historic Preservation restriction on the Glen Alpin Estate, Harding Township intends on conveying a permanent historic preservation restriction, held by the New Jersey Historic Trust, and enhancing public access to the Glen Alpin Estate. In response to Morris County releasing its Open Space restrictions on the Glen Alpin Estate, the Township of Harding intends to or has already acquired the following properties within Harding Township that will be preserved as open space:

- Block 8, Lot 5.01 (known as the Culbertson property)
- Block 46, Lot 13.03 (known as the NJDOT property)

These lands total 18 acres and are contiguous to existing preserved open space parcels. In addition, the Township of Harding intends to convey a public access and trail easement on the Glen Alpin Estate to the Morris County Park Commission from Patriots' Path to the Jockey Hollow section of the Morristown National Historic Park.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT TIME LIMIT

Hearing of citizens during the Public Comment section of the Agenda is an opportunity for any member of the public to be heard about issues which are/are not topics scheduled for Public Hearing tonight. To help facilitate an orderly meeting, and to permit all to be heard, speakers are asked to limit their comments to a reasonable length of time.

Mayor Jones *opened the meeting to any member of the public at 9:08 am and commented any member of the public who wishes to speak to please come up to the microphone, state their name, address, and make their comments.*

Mary Prendergast, President of the Glen Alpin Conservatory a 501C3 non-profit registered in the State of New Jersey – *Mrs. Prendergast commented that eventually the Conservatory hopes to dissolve the Conservatory. In the meantime, the Conservatory exists until the process is over. Mrs. Prendergast commented if anyone is interested in a copy of the book that memorializes Glen Alpin, it is available for sale. Mrs. Prendergast explained she is thankful to everyone who worked so hard to get this really good agreement for Glen Alpin.*

Mrs. Prendergast – commented she has questions on maintenance and who is responsible for the maintenance of the property in the meantime. Mrs. Prendergast provided photographs (taken on July 5, 2021) to members of the Township Committee. A copy of the photographs are appended to these minutes.

1. *Photograph #1 – weeds in the gutter*
2. *Photograph #2 – crumbling driveway in the back of the house*
3. *Photograph #3 – Tree on Hurstmont side*
4. *Photograph #4 – Tree in back of property*

Mrs. Prendergast commented who will maintain the property and when. Mayor Jones commented that the Ash tree will be removed and the tree in the back of the property will be handled by the Township. The six acres in the front of the property will remain Harding Township's and the Township will be responsible for the maintenance. The gutters will be taken care of by the Township and the driveway the Township will make sure it is safe.

Township Committee Member Platt – commented it has been a long journey and provided a little history to give a sense of how long it has been. Mr. Platt was working in New York and was approached by Mayor Lanzerotti and John Murray to take a look at the Glen Alpin House. Mr. Platt went out to the Glen Alpin House and became passionate about what he saw that he joined the Glen Alpin Conservancy. There was a watch dog committee, appointed Mr. Conine, Mr. Balog conducted an analysis, and we all came to the same conclusion. The way it was set-up was not sustainable. The intent behind saving Glen Alpin was clear and proper and it was a herculean task. Mr. Platt is here today rejoicing that this is the only solution that would have worked. Mr. Platt thanked Mrs. Prendergast for leading the charge, Mrs. Kovacs who was very involved, the entire Committee, Mrs. Meister, and Mr. Ward where Glen Alpin became his passion to try to find a solution. Then the Township was blessed to have Dev Modi and Tim Jones who stepped up and said they were going to get this done. Mr. Platt thanked the team that the Township hired, they have been unbelievable in helping the Township get here. The generosity of the Commissioners' for taking the time and all the staff, and Mr. Falzarano. Mr. Platt commented he is here saying this is the only possible solution and it is an excellent one.

With no further public comments, Mayor Jones closed the public hearing at 9:16 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT – Mayor. Jones

Mayor Jones asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon a motion made by Township Committee Member Chipperson, seconded by Township Committee Member Platt and with a vote of all ayes, none opposed, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa A. Sharp
Municipal Clerk