

**HARDING TOWNSHIP
HARDING OPEN SPACE TRUST (HOST)
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Regular Meeting Minutes

Secretary Sharp reported that a draft copy of the Master Plan per McKinley Mertz's timeline presented and okayed by the Planning Board will not be available until April 10, 2020. This evening, HOST will discuss the portion that pertains to HOST and ask questions and answer any questions presented to HOST by Elena Gable.

OPEN MEETING:

Mr. Pfeiffer called the regular meeting of the Harding Open Space Trust Committee to order at 7:30 p.m. and announced the meeting was called in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

HOST Attendance: Ms. Devine, Mr. Dietz, Mr. Jones, Mr. Novotny, Mr. Pfeiffer, Mr. Platt, Mrs. Riley, Mrs. Somers, and Mr. Weppler

Excused Absence:

Township Attendance: Mrs. Sharp, Secretary

Invited Guests: Elena Gable from Heyer Gruel

MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2020:

Mr. Pfeiffer asked if there were any comments or changes with regards to the January 8, 2020 reorganization meeting minutes. Mr. Novotny questioned if the date on the Minutes was correct. Mrs. Sharp will correct the minutes to say January 8, 2020. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Somers, seconded by Mr. Jones, and with a vote of all ayes, none opposed, the amended HOST reorganization meeting minutes for January 8, 2020 were accepted.

HOST UPDATES:

Masterplan

Miss Gable reported on the Open Space & Recreation portion of the Master Plan. Miss Gable distributed information that explained at the public meeting of the Planning Board a visual preference survey was conducted.

1. The first page showed several images where the members of the public were able to place red and yellow dots on each image. A **red dot** meant the person **did not like** the image and a **yellow dot** showed a person **liked** the photo.
2. The second page was information on Priorities for Harding: Agriculture & Farming; Open Space/Recreation/Natural Resources; Historic Resources; Economic Growth & Development; Density; Rural Character; Sustainability & Green Infrastructure; and Other. Members of the public provided information under each heading and a yellow and red dot were placed next to each comment.

Harding Open Space Trust Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2020

3. The third page was information on Goals, Targets, and Visioning for Harding. There were four questions asked and comments from the public were placed under each.
4. The fourth page was information on Commercial Architectural Character in Harding. This was a visual survey that show 12 images. Members of the public placed yellow and red dots under each image.
5. Miss Gable provided Open Space Plan Goals that listed five (5) goals and comments under each goal.

The following were suggested items from HOST:

- * Goal #1 -- Maintain the towns rural roads, Density of traffic
 - * Goal #3 -- No lighting on recreational facilities
 - * Goal #3 -- take out the sentence "To the extent feasible, map existing Bridle Trails....."
 - * Goal #3 -- Take out last sentence
 - * Goal #4 -- Take out sentence "Encourage historic farms....."
 - * Goal #4 -- Bee Keeping, Community Garden
 - * Goal #4 -- change the word incentives to "encourage" in fifth sentence
 - * Goal #5 -- take out last sentence
6. A map of Open Space/Park and Municipal properties in Harding Township was provided with a listing that showed table numbers. The table numbers are the location, ownership, and type of park (federal, county, private, municipal or nonprofit).

A copy of all information provided is appended to these minutes. It was mentioned that farm land is not provided on the map. It was discussed that Table 15 should be Table 13 (wexford). It was mentioned that 64 Pleasantville and 56 Kitchell are not on the Rossi. Table 5 (Von Zuben) should be switched to easement and the acres should be updated. The Dear property is owned by Harding Township, this needs to be moved to Municipal. A discussion ensued on the information provided.

Miss Gable asked HOST what they would like to see in the next ten years. The following are comments provided by members of HOST:

- * Acquire Open Space and Easements
- * No Commercial Development
- * The Green Belt Development come to fruition
- * Waterway protections and more open space along waterways
- * More trails on Primrose
- * See people on Township owned open space
- * No Playground in park
- * Bridle trails connected for continuity of the parks
- * Better access to Jockey Hollow to access the trails
- * Connect access to existing parks and waterways

Let the record show that Mr. Novotny left the meeting at 9:20 p.m. and mentioned that the tree planting is scheduled for April 23rd.

A discussion ensued regarding the following: invasives are a problem, deer density is a problem, dark sky is important to Harding, flora study, environment resource inventory, scenic road/bridges, etc. With no further discussions, HOST thanked Miss Gable for attending. *Let the record show that Miss Gable left the meeting at 9:32 pm.*

OPEN SPACE Tax

A discussion ensued regarding increasing the open space tax from four cents to five cents. All members were in favor of five (5) cents. Mrs. Sharp will send the recommendation to the Township Administrator.

Princeton Hydro Site Walk

Miss Somers scheduled a site walk with Mr. Geoffrey M. Goll, from Princeton Hydro on February 7, 2020 at 9 am to walk along the Great Brook. Mr. Pfeiffer, Mr. Novotny, Mrs. Riley, Mr. Wepler, and Mrs. Somers attended the site walk. A copy of Mr. Goll's recommendations are included in the meeting packet. A discussion ensued. It was recommended that the letter from Mr. Goll be sent to the Township Administrator for distribution to the Township Committee. Mrs. Sharp will send the information to the Township Administrator.

OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE HOST AND HEARING PERSONS PRESENT:

With no hearing persons present and no further business, a motion to adjourn into executive session at 9:35 pm was made by Mr. Wepler and Mr. Jones.

ADJOURNMENT – Mr. Pfeiffer

The meeting adjourned into executive session at 9:35 pm and will not return to open session. No formal action will be made in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa A. Sharp
Secretary, Harding Open Space Trust Committee

Loren Pfeiffer, Ph.D., Chair
Harding Open Space Trust Committee
Harding Township
PO Box 666, 21 Blue Mill Road,
New Vernon, NJ 07976

February 11, 2020

via email

**Re: Site Walk along Great Brook
Easement on Block 9, Lot 2
Harding Land Trust Owned on Block 8, Lots 4 and 32
Harding Township, Morris County, New Jersey**

Dear Dr. Pfeiffer:

It was a pleasure to meet with you and the other members of the Harding Open Space Trust Committee (HOSTC) to inspect Great Brook at the Township preserved open space along Dicksons Mill Road. It was requested that I meet with the HOSTC to review the condition of the stream and make recommendations, if any, regarding the overall physical health of the stream, and in particular the impact of the rock stabilization measures along the west bank of Great Brook within the property identified as Block 9, Lot 1 (privately owned and predominantly not part of the open space inventory).

We walked the site between 9 am and 10 am on Friday, February 7, 2020. During the site visit it was raining and it had been raining the prior 12 hours. The stream was flowing near bank full, which provided an opportunity to view the overall stability of the channel and flow patterns that contribute stream bank instability (i.e. erosion of the banks). Access to the property was along Dicksons Mill Road, at the timber pedestrian bridge on Block 9, Lot 4, where we walked on the east bank of Great Brook, north toward and to Blue Mill Road. We also viewed the adjacent Block 9, Lot 32 of the Harding Land Trust property from Dicksons Mill Road, walking south to 300 feet south of the intersection of Cherry Lane.

Overall, the reaches of Great Brook observed appeared relatively stable, with either herbaceous meadow vegetation, as well as trees along the stream. On the west bank of Great Brook, on Block 9, Lot 1, the land is maintained as turf between 115 feet and 310 feet south of Blue Mill Road. There was also large rock placed along the west bank of Great Brook, 180 feet in length, starting 120 feet south of Blue Mill Road. According to those present, the rock has been in place for at least seven (7) years. The concern stated by the Trustees present was whether the placed of the rock along the western stream bank was causing damage to the stream banks along the Land Trust's property. It is my professional opinion that, overall, the placed rock is not causing accelerated erosion or destabilizing the stream banks in the subject stream reach. There are concerns about the long-term stability of the placed rock as there does appear to be scour or erosion that is occurring behind it. In addition, the owner appears to maintain turf to the edge of the rock/water, which leaves the bank vulnerable to erosion; due to the shallow nature of turf grass.

For ensuring the long-term stability of the stream banks in this reach of Great Brook, it is recommended that a strip of native and un-mowed vegetation be maintained along the stream bank, with a width of at least 10 feet from the top of bank. This strip will allow for the development of deep roots to provide long term stability, and filter stormwater runoff that runs from the land into the stream. If the Land Trust and Township so chooses, it would also be advantageous to install living willow cutting along areas of the stream bank to increase the resilience and long-term stability of this stream reach. These cuttings can usually be obtained through US Fish and Wildlife Service, locally harvested, or can be purchased for low cost from a native nursery; and installed by volunteers. It is also recommended that the landowner of Block 9, Lot 1 be engaged to discuss also creating an herbaceous un-mowed strip of vegetation along their side of the stream, including the area of placed rock. Such an approach will add longevity to the placed rock and mitigate against future erosion.

Site Walk along Great Brook
Easement on Block 9, Lot 2
Harding Land Trust Owned on Block 8, Lots 4 and 32
Harding Township, Morris County, New Jersey
February 11, 2020

Overall, the stream channel, from Silver Lake to the southern-most extent of the Land Trust owned Block 9, Lot 32, where it cross under Dicksons Mill Road is stable, not entrenched, and has ready access to the adjacent floodplain; all evidence of a relatively healthy riparian system.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at your convenience. Thank you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Goll', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoffrey M. Goll, PE
President

c: Harding Open Space Trust Committee Members via email