

**New Castle County Land Preservation Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, February 6, 2020 4:30PM  
Gilliam Building Multi-Purpose Room  
67 Reads Way, New Castle, DE 19720**

Land Preservation Task Force Members in Attendance:

Task Force Members:

Tim Sheldon  
Janet Kilpatrick  
Sherri Evans Stanton  
Jeff Downing  
Jack Coleman  
Elena Stewart  
Stewart Ramsey  
Austin Short  
Jim White  
Jim Metzger  
Jen Kmiec  
Lee Jarmon  
Michelle Giofre Pyle  
Betsy Hatch  
Kendall Sommers

New Castle County Representatives:

Councilwoman Dee Durham  
Councilman David Carter

New Castle County Staff:

Richard Hall  
Tracey Surlles  
Marco Boyce  
Andrea Trabelsi

The following members of the public were in attendance:

Peggy Schultz

**I. Housekeeping Items**

**Approval of December 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes:**

Members of the Task Force voted to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2019 Full Land Preservation Task Force Meeting.

### **Discussion of Sub-Committee Meeting Schedule:**

The Land Preservation Task Force decided to convene all the subcommittees at 3pm prior to the next Full Land Preservation Task Force meeting, which will be held on March 25, 2020 at 4:30 pm.

## **II. Task Force Sub-Committee Report-Out**

### **A. Funding Sub-Committee (Jeff Downing, Chair)**

Jeff Downing provided a brief update on the previous Funding Subcommittee meeting. He outlined the available options and what funding sources seemed more viable and feasible. He discussed the referendum concept, which would provide the public with an opportunity to vote on whether they would be willing to pay additional fees on a tax bill specifically for open space / conservation purposed. He stated that the survey will include a general question to that effect as well in order to gain public feeling on the use of a referendum.

### **B. Open Space Sub-Committee (Sherri Evans-Stanton, Chair)**

Sherri Evans-Stanton provided an update on the previous Open Space Subcommittee meeting. The survey and questionnaire was discussed at the previous meeting in addition to discussion around the development of project selection criteria. She stated that the next step of the Open Space Subcommittee would be to apply the draft criteria to a real project in order to see a real-life application of it and what sort of adjustments would be required.

### **C. Agricultural Sub-Committee Report (Stewart Ramsey, Chair)**

Stewart Ramsey discussed the previous Agricultural Subcommittee Meeting, at which the survey questions were discussed. Mr. Ramsey also discussed a previously completed survey completed by the University of Delaware in 1996 which has a 40% response rate. He outlined existing information that the Task Force could also draw from in addition to the survey set to go out to the public in the following weeks.

## **III. Survey Finalization and Dissemination Strategy**

The members of the Task Force reviewed the draft survey prepared by the supporting staff and discussed the questions that would be included in the final survey.

### **Open Space Questions:**

- Referendum Question Discussion:
  - Concerns with how the referendum would operate
  - Discussion of the Chester County Parks Model as an example to follow
  - A referendum could empower local citizen groups that wish to protect specific parcels that may not be captured by the State of Delaware model for purchase, but are still worth protecting

- Referendum could operate both for a County-wide fund or for the purchase of a specific parcel, depending on how State legislation was written. Examples in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
- Better definition of “linear tract” to be used for clarity

Farming Questions:

- Discussion about the definition of large-scale farming, which can be very subjective
- Better definition of what natural resource components are to agricultural tracts of land and high ecological value

**IV. Subcommittee Work Time**

Members of the Task Force broke out into their respective subcommittees to discuss Committee Action Items needed for the Land Preservation Task Force Report and work plan provided by supporting staff.