

**NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST**  
**Wednesday, December 13, 2023**

**In person:**  
**Richard Holcombe House**  
**Lambertville, NJ**  
**10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lindsay called the meeting to order at 10:13 AM.

**Open Public Meetings Act**

Ms. Guzzo notified the Board that public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

**Roll Call**

Ms. Guzzo called the roll and confirmed the meeting had quorum.

Trustees present: Peter Lindsay, Janet Foster, Kenneth Miller, Deborah Kelly, Lisa Easton, Linda Stender, Katherine Marcopul (DEP), Gina Fischetti (DCA), Chris Perks, Bob Tighue (Treasury), Troy Joseph Simmons

NJHT and DCA staff present: Dorothy Guzzo, Glenn Ceponis, Carrie Hogan, Judy Murphy, Ashley Parker, Vito Scocozzo, Alexis Alemy, Jennifer Boggs, Stephanie Kraut, Shannon Bremer, Paula Lassiter, Kim Holmes (Assistant Commissioner, DCA)

Public Present: Izzy Kasdin (Executive Director, Cultural Trust), Avery Wehrs (Cultural Trust), Mayor Andrew J. Nowick of Lambertville

**Closed Session**

At 10:16 AM, Ms. Foster moved and Mr. Miller seconded the motion to enter a closed session to discuss personnel matters. All voted in favor of entering a closed session. Due to the nature of the discussion, the public and Trust staff were not included in the session. The following people were present during the session:

Trustees present: Peter Lindsay, Janet Foster, Kenneth Miller, Deborah Kelly, Lisa Easton, Linda Stender, Katherine Marcopul (DEP), Gina Fischetti (DCA), Chris Perks, Bob Tighue (Treasury), Troy Joseph Simmons

Trust staff present: Dorothy Guzzo, Glenn Ceponis

The closed session ended at 10:21 AM and the Board of Trustee meeting reconvened.

Following the closed session, Mr. Lindsay announced that Mr. Glenn Ceponis would be the new Executive Director of the New Jersey Historic Trust.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Perks moved and Mr. Tighue seconded the motion to approve the minutes from September 27. All voted in favor of approving the minutes.

Ms. Foster moved and Ms. Easton seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the closed sessions at the September 27 and June 21 meetings. All voted in favor of approving the minutes.

## **Public Comment**

Mayor Nowick introduced himself and welcomed the Trust board and staff to Lambertville. He thanked us for choosing the Holcombe House as our meeting location. Mayor Nowick also gave a brief history of the house and property as well as the city's recent ownership of the house.

## **Communications**

Ms. Guzzo noted that all communications were included in the Board packet sent via email prior to the meeting. This included any correspondence and various news clippings.

## **Reports of Officers**

### *Chair*

Mr. Lindsay reported on his attendance at the League of Municipalities and thanked his fellow board members for attending. He also thanked the staff for organizing the table and getting us involved this year. Mr. Lindsay also reported that he attended the Cultural Trust board meeting that approved the funding for our Cultural Trust grant round.

### *Vice-Chair*

Ms. Easton reported that she also attended the League of Municipalities and was happy to participate. She inquired how the staff felt everything went. Ms. Guzzo explained that because Mr. Ceponis and Ms. Bremer spoke in a session, it increased the number of people coming to our booth. She felt that it was very successful and should be something we continue to do moving forward. Mr. Ceponis added that the session had at least 250 attendees and there were a lot of great questions following the presentation.

### *Treasurer*

Mr. Miller reported that the increased benefit percentage may affect the annual operational budget, but will likely not affect it too much. He also reported that there are currently no CBT projections for FY24. There were brief discussions on what the anticipated grant funding would be for next year. Mr. Miller moved and Mr. Tighue seconded the motion to approve the Treasurer's report. All voted in favor.

### *Secretary*

Ms. Stender reported that the conference planning session went well the previous week. She had no other updates to report.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Guzzo stated that her full report as well as the staff report were provided in the Board packet for the meeting. Ms. Guzzo reported that a lot of time last quarter was dedicated to personnel matters.

Staff interviewed for the technical assistant position and will be filing the paperwork for filling the position soon. She also submitted the request for another FTE for FY25. Ms. Guzzo noted that the appropriations bill for the 2023 grant round should be approved in the coming weeks.

Ms. Guzzo extended her gratitude to the board and staff for their support during her tenure as Executive Director. She spoke briefly about her history with both the SHPO and the Trust and noted that while she is sad to retire, she knows the Trust is in good hands with Mr. Ceponis as the new Executive Director. Ms. Guzzo, the staff, and the trustees entered brief conversations regarding how she would be spending retirement.

Mr. Ceponis noted that the staff report will now have a section labeled “Strategic Plan” to show how staff is working towards the goals of our strategic plan.

### **Report of Department of Community Affairs**

Assistant Commissioner Holmes introduced herself and spoke of her relationship with Ms. Guzzo. She gave her well wishes to Ms. Guzzo in her retirement and presented her with a certificate of appreciation from DCA.

Ms. Fischetti congratulated Dorothy on her retirement and gave her well wishes. She then reported that she has started working on applications, launching in January, to add 3-4 new districts to the Main Street Program. Ms. Fischetti added that there would also be a new startup grant that will go with the awarding of new districts (about \$50,000 for each new district to get started). They will be offering \$1.5 million for a new grant round for existing districts. This year there will be a \$150,000 cap for requests, an increase from previous rounds, and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. She hopes that Mr. Ceponis or another Trust staff member would be willing to assist in reviewing the applications. Mr. Ceponis acknowledged that he would participate in the evaluations.

Ms. Fischetti stated that there is a partnership between Local Planning Services and Local Government Services looking at economic development initiatives. She added that Local Government Services is currently working on a master plan reevaluation in Salem and it will include a historic preservation element. This will also include a closer look at the city’s historic preservation ordinance.

### **Report of Department of Environmental Protection**

Dr. Marcopul extended her congratulations to Ms. Guzzo on her retirement. Dr. Marcopul has been keeping an eye on the authorization of the Historic Preservation Fund within Congress. She explained that the funding comes from offshore oil, but the authorization for funding has expired and needs to be renewed. Mr. Lindsay asked if this affects all 50 states and territories and Dr. Marcopul confirmed that it does. Ms. Foster asked what the implications would be for New Jersey and Dr. Marcopul explained that the Historic Preservation Office would lose 60% of its funding. This is especially concerning considering the Historic Preservation Office would need to continue administering all the same programs under a severely diminished budget. She noted that Advocacy Day in Washington DC is going to be extremely important this year to ensure that Congress reauthorizes the fund.

Dr. Marcopul also reported that the Ocean Wind 1 project has been cancelled. This project included a mitigation fund that would have been run and administered by the Trust. Her understanding is that the lease can be bought by another developer or they could sit on the ownership and pursue it again in the future. Dr. Marcopul reported that Empire Wind and Atlantic Shores are still moving forward. Conversations ensued regarding some of the details of the mitigation fund and implications of the fund.

## Report of Department of Treasury

Mr. Tighue extended his congratulations and best wishes to Dorothy. He added that on personal note, he will likely be the Treasury representative on the board of USS New Jersey. Mr. Ceponis asked what the status of the State House was. Mr. Tighue and Dr. Marcopul explained that the State House is open but some façade work is still in progress. There was some emergency work needed to stabilize the portico. Mr. Lindsay stated that he went on a tour when he was there for the Cultural Trust meeting and described some details of the tour.

## Reports of the Standing Committees

- **Executive Committee**

No report.

- **Report from the Grants & Loans Committee**

Ms. Foster introduced a request from the USS New Jersey who would like to use their 2023 grant for the ship's move to drydock instead of the original scope of work for teak deck repairs. Mr. Ceponis explained the rationale behind the change in scope and what this would entail. This would require a Request for Major Change in Scope once the grant agreement is created. All agreed that the scope change is appropriate and necessary to ensure the preservation of the ship.

Ms. Foster then provided an update from the Grants & Loans Committee, including the following extension requests which are further detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee formal report. Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Hearing no recusals, Ms. Foster recommended that the extensions be approved.

*Requests for Extension: \**

**Grantee:** Shipman Mansion Foundation, Inc.

**Project:** Red Dragon Canoe Club

**Grant Award No.:** 2019.0047

**Grantee:** Navesink Maritime Heritage Association

**Project:** Grover House

**Grant Award No.:** 2020.H034

**Grantee:** City of Camden

**Project:** Camden City Hall (520 Market Street)

**Grant Award No.:** 2020.H003

**Grantee:** Edison Memorial Tower Corporation

**Project:** Thomas A. Edison Memorial Tower

**Grant Award No.:** 2019.0076

**Grantee:** South Brunswick Township HPC

**Project:** Princeton Nurseries, Kingston

**Grant Award No.:** 2008.2098

Mr. Perks made a motion to vote on the extensions as a group and Ms. Stender seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the extensions.

Mr. Ceponis introduced Ms. Kasdin and Ms. Wehrs from the Cultural Trust. Ms Foster explained that evaluations were completed in August and recommendations were made by the evaluators. Both Mr. Ceponis and Ms. Foster explained the evaluation process. Ms. Foster stated that the Cultural Trust board allocated \$800,000 to this capital round at their November meeting. The committee recommends funding twenty-one applications totaling \$798,395 for capital funding by the Cultural Trust.

*Recommendations to Cultural Trust for Funding*

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Cultural Trust recommendations. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the Cultural Trust projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report, excluding USS New Jersey, Morven, Old Barracks, and Pomona Hall. All voted in favor.

Ms. Foster then made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the recommendation for funding for Pomona Hall. Mr. Perks recused himself from the discussions and voting due to current involvement with the site. All others voted in favor.

Ms. Foster then made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the recommendation for funding for the USS New Jersey, Morven, and Old Barracks. Mr. Tighue recused himself from the discussions and voting due to current involvement with all three sites. All others voted in favor.

*Discover New Jersey License Plate Fund*

The Grants & Loans Committee recommended funding for one project.

*Discover New Jersey History License Plate\**

**Applicant:** Roebing Museum

**Project:** Historic Sites and Sounds – Roebing & Trenton

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Mr. Lindsay recused himself from the discussions and voting due to current involvement with the site. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the recommendation of funding for the Roebing Museum. All others voted in favor.

*Revolving Loan Fund*

Ms. Guzzo provided an update that the rules are in draft form. We are currently awaiting comments from the DAG. She added that nothing is expired yet; however, they will be expiring next spring. Everything should be finalized before then so that the updated rules will be ready for approval.

- **Acquisitions and Easements**

Mr. Miller provided updates on the Point Breeze easement. He stated that this has been a point of discussion at the last few board meetings. We have presented an offer and it is currently with their board for approval. Mr. Ceponis explained that this is a combination of our funding and Green Acres funding. Details will be worked out once the Green Acres funding is in place and approved. There is the potential for the Trust to pay for archaeology that needs to be completed; however, they have to give us the option or ability to do it. There were subsequent discussions regarding Point Breeze and the archaeological potential of the site.

- **Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning**

Ms. Stender reported that legislation has just entered lame duck. She added that the HPC training legislation currently has a sponsor on one side, but still needs a Senate sponsor. She is waiting for comments to come back first before presenting it to senators.

Ms. Guzzo added that the bill for the Trust's enabling legislation still doesn't have a sponsor and will need one early in the next session. There were some minor adjustments that needed to be made and updated.

Ms. Guzzo also pointed out that there are still 2 vacancies on the board that need to be filled. There is one candidate that has called their representatives, but has been told they need to be nominated first before they can step in. The Board expressed their dismay in how long it takes to get appointments made. Ms. Foster asked Assistant Commissioner Holmes if she could add it to her memos and try to push it forward from her side. Ms. Holmes stated that she would reach out to a fellow colleague who works on these matters.

Ms. Kelly mentioned that the CBT surcharge is expected to expire. Ms. Guzzo explained that the surcharge was originally set up to increase over time as a short-term measure, but was extended due to the pandemic. There were some discussions about the CBT percentage and how CBT funds are broken down.

- **Education and Outreach**

Ms. Easton reported that they are largely waiting on the HPC legislation to move forward. In the meantime, the committee is starting to look into outreach programs for non-profits and municipalities. Mr. Lindsay asked about the Commission training that is expected to be offered in March. Ms. Guzzo explained the logistics and mechanics of getting it organized. There was more discussion related to the HPC training legislation and what those classes would look like.

- **Fiscal Oversight**

No report.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **New Business**

New meeting dates for 2024 have been provided. Mr. Ceponis stated that he plans on sticking to the provided schedule. He is open to having both virtual and in-person board meetings and remains amenable to whatever the board would like to do regarding that.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Kasdin thanked the staff for their hard-work during both the application process and for administering the Cultural Trust grants.

Several board members expressed their gratitude and warm sentiments for Ms. Guzzo and wished her well in her retirement. They also extended their congratulations to Mr. Ceponis.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Lindsay moved and Ms. Foster seconded a motion to adjourn at 11:41 AM. The motion passed.