

**NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST**  
**Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 10 am**  
**Board of Trustees Annual Meeting**  
**The Great Hall, Monmouth University**  
***(In-person and Virtual Attendance)***

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lindsay called the meeting to order at 10:11 AM.

**Open Public Meetings Act**

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

**Roll Call**

Mr. Ceponis called the roll and confirmed the meeting had quorum.

Trustees present: Deborah Kelly, Janet Foster, Peter Lindsay, Lisa Easton, Robert Tighue (Treasury), Kate Marcopul (DEP), Linda Stender, Ken Miller (virtual), Chris Perks (virtual), Anne Salvatore (virtual), Gina Fischetti (DCA, virtual), Troy Joseph Simmons (virtual)

NJHT staff present: Alexis Alemy, Judy Murphy, Stephanie Kraut, Shannon Bremer, Glenn Ceponis, Ashley Parker, Kristen Downing, Carrie Hogan, Jennifer Boggs, Tara Ritz, Olivia Chaudhury

Present from the public:

**Report from the Nominating Committee**

Ms. Foster presented the following nominees on behalf of the Nominating Committee: Mr. Lindsay, Chair; Ms. Easton, Vice Chair; Mr. Miller, Treasurer; Ms. Stender, Secretary.

Ms. Foster called nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Ms. Foster closed nominations.

Ms. Foster moved, and Ms. Kelly seconded the motion for approval of the nominees. All voted in favor of the appointments.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from June 19 were presented for approval and comment. Mr. Lindsay stated that there was a typo regarding the poll vote (was written as “pull vote”) and that the date of the September meeting was listed incorrectly. Ms. Bremer asked for clarification regarding the typo for the poll vote and amended the minutes accordingly.

Ms. Kelly moved, and Ms. Easton seconded the motion to approve the minutes with corrections. All voted in favor of approval.

## **Public Comment**

No comment.

## **Communications**

Mr. Ceponis noted that all communications were included in the Board packet sent via email prior to the meeting. This included several news articles. Mr. Ceponis stated that one article of note was about East Point Lighthouse which was a resource funded by the Trust a few years ago. There has been a dispute between the non-profit running the museum and DEP that resulted in the non-profit's lease not being renewed. The non-profit has since moved out of the lighthouse; however, DEP does have plans to keep the site open to the public.

Mr. Lindsay noted that this has received a lot of press and attention on social media. Some conversation occurred regarding the non-profit, the lease, and DEP's potential plans for the property.

## **Reports of Officers**

### *Chair*

No report.

### *Vice-Chair*

Ms. Easton had no report, but mentioned that the League of Municipalities would be occurring on November 19-21. She mentioned that Trust staff would also be presenting on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Easton encouraged the board to support staff by volunteering to assist at our booth.

### *Treasurer*

Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Hogan for pulling all the fiscal information for the Treasurer's report. He stated that more details could be found in his report which was sent out with the communications for the meeting. Mr. Miller reported that we finished last year about \$80,000 below budget. This coming year (FY25) the proposed expenses are \$1,920,000. This is an increase from last year's budget which is reflective of two notable changes: the addition of 1 new full time employee and the funding of several context studies for Journey Through Jersey.

Mr. Miller went on to report that the Corporate Business Tax (CBT) for FY24 are expected to be about \$16,730,000, which is down about \$3.5 million from 2022 and \$1.3 million from last year. Mr. Miller announced that the total award for this year's grant round is \$13,531,000. He added that additionally there was \$1,500,000 going towards 2 previous multiphase commitments and \$100,000 towards the purchase of an easement. Overall, the total appropriations request is \$16,598,738 and the FY25 budget request is \$1,920,000.

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the FY25 budget request. Ms. Foster seconded the motion and all voted in favor of the FY25 budget request.

### *Secretary*

Ms. Stender reported that there was some movement on the legislation regarding training for commission members. After speaking with Senator Kennedy's office, Ms. Stender is hopeful that it will be introduced at the State and Local Government Committee Meeting on October 21.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Ceponis reported that both his report and the staff report were included in the Board packet for the meeting.

Mr. Ceponis stated that he has continued meeting with Deputy Commissioner Kate McDonnell on a bi-weekly basis. The focus of his conversations has been regarding our 2 pieces of legislation. Our clean-up bill that did not make it into lame-duck last year has been reintroduced and has gone through the Senate committee, but still needs to go through the Assembly. Mr. Ceponis has also discussed the commission training bill with Deputy Commissioner McDonnell. They reached out to the governor's office to review the draft of the bill and seem to be on board with it barring a couple of little tweaks. They will also be looking for Senate sponsors as well. Once that goes through, there will be some time dedicated to writing the rules before they can be put in place. Mr. Ceponis reported that, in the meantime, the Trust and Rutgers MARCH are going to continue doing historic preservation commission (HPC) trainings. He noted that there is one being led online by Ms. Dorothy Guzzo this fall and an in-person training in the spring. Mr. Ceponis added that our bill is modeled off a similar bill for planning board members with the exception that we are including refresher training for anyone who is reappointed. Ms. Kelly asked if there was a way for people to retroactively get credit for taking the currently offered course. Mr. Ceponis responded that there might be a way for us to put in a clause in the rules that accepts the training as qualified.

Mr. Ceponis introduced our two new staff members, Ms. Tara Ritz and Ms. Olivia Chaudhury. Everyone welcomed them to the Trust.

Mr. Ceponis added that he is still having meetings with the new executive director at GSPT who is very interested in learning more about our easement program and the Trust in general. Because the new executive director comes from a cultural resource background, he understands what the Trust does and its mission which has not always been the case in the past.

Mr. Ceponis talked briefly about our annual conference in June. He announced that we would likely be at Rowan College at Burlington for the second day of the conference with tours and workshops being held at sites in Burlington County. Mr. Ceponis has also been in conversation with the Historical Commission about the 2026 conference as well since there are several large events happening during the summer that year (ie: 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution and the World Cup).

Mr. Ceponis mentioned that he continues to work with HPO and EDA for the tax credit program. He added that the legislation that just passed should make it a bit easier for some of the smaller projects to get involved.

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

Ms. Fischetti reported that the Main Street program received a number of applications for the recent district round; however, she does not have approval to announce the newly named districts. She was, however, allowed to share that they received applications from Camden, Millburn, Short Hills, Freehold, Glen Rock, Maplewood, Jersey City, Haddonfield, Plainfield, and Princeton. Ms. Fischetti stated that she was excited to see such a diverse pool of applicants ranging in size. She added that they are hoping to provide technical services to the districts not just through Main Street New Jersey but also Main Street America. They also would like to award a grant to each new district to support them with their first year operations.

Ms. Fischetti stated that they recently held a grant round this past spring with the winners announced in June. They were able to offer grants of up to \$150,000 on a rolling basis meaning that the applications were reviewed as they were submitted and if the applicant met the terms in the grant announcement, they would be awarded. Ms. Fischetti explained that the program receives \$1.5 million annually to grant out; however, if there is money left, it does not carry over to the next year. In the past, they hadn't been able to award all the money because of the way they set up their application period. By having a rolling application period, they were able to award all the money. Their FY23 grants are in the process of closing out so once that's completed they'll announce the FY25 grants.

Ms. Fischetti added a final note that DCA will be starting a project in the coming months to get a better understanding of the improvement districts that exist throughout the state. Because the state does not receive notification of all the improvement districts when they're created by local ordinance at the municipal level, they don't know how many exist in total or how many of them exist in historic downtowns. This will allow them to better assist improvement districts throughout the state.

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

Dr. Marcopul reported that HPO has been very busy lately. Their floor is going to be renovated in the coming months, so they are in the process of packing things up since they need to be out of their offices by October 21. She added that during the renovations, HPO staff will be working from home with an anticipated return to office date of January 6.

On a national level, Dr. Marcopul expressed concern regarding the recent program comment for climate change projects, housing projects and transportation projects that was released by the Chair of the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP). Dr. Marcopul explained that Section 106, which is the hallmark of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their projects on historic properties. The state historic preservation offices, public, and local governments play an important role in those procedures because they bring the voice of the public as well as the state and local governments to the conversation and assist the federal government in making decisions about how they should proceed with their projects. In recent years, there's been discussion about finding ways to streamline Section 106 consultation so to that end, many federal agencies have proposed what they refer to as program alternatives. They are usually in the form of agreement documents that identify categories of projects that have little to no potential to affect historic properties or they pertain to historic preservation projects very specifically where everyone can agree that these projects can be streamlined in their review because they meet the standards or have little potential to affect historic resources. The ACHP's new program comment is a little bit different from what's usually proposed in that its goal is to streamline projects that are undertaken by any federal agency that falls under housing projects, climate change related projects, and transportation projects. The headings are very broad and can be broadly defined by each federal agency. Dr. Marcopul stated that she has spent a lot of time reading through what is included in the document and has a lot of serious concerns. These concerns, she added, are being echoed across the country by national level organizations.

Dr. Marcopul summarized the 64-page document for the board. As it is currently written, the state and local governments as well as the public are being written out of the Section 106 consultation process meaning that any projects that relate to those three titled categories can be self-policed by federal agencies and will not undergo a comment period. As it's currently written, the state has no opportunity to know how the program comment is going to be applied by which federal agency to monitor that. It writes off essentially all elevations of a building except facades, allowing a lot of options to take place to secondary facades of buildings without any kind of review or requirement to meet the standards. It also does not recognize things like roads, sidewalks, curbing, or street furniture as historic properties in and

of themselves. It also allows any ground disturbance within 10 feet of a building to be considered a previously disturbed area and therefore exempt from review. Dr. Marcopul added that the Advisory Council is accepting public comments until October 8 so she is encouraging board members and Trust staff to review the document and submit comments. She noted that HPO currently has a draft letter written, however, it is still being tweaked and added to so it is not available for the board to read at this time. Dr. Marcopul stated that she does have a fact sheet of key observations that was put together by the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers as well as the comments released by the Society for American Archaeology that she can forward to everyone.

Mr. Ceponis asked if there is support from the rest of the Advisory Council or if this is just the chair proposing the comments. Dr. Marcopul confirmed that it was being proposed by the chair. Mr. Ceponis inquired if the Trust could co-sign the letter with HPO or if it would be better to submit a separate letter. Dr. Marcopul responded that there is strength in numbers so the Trust should also submit their own letter. She added that it appears that it's trying to be pushed through before the end of the current administration. Mr. Ceponis also asked if there were any other people or organizations that could put pressure on the Advisory Council to not accept the program comment. Dr. Marcopul was unsure how effective that has been so far, but if the board was interested in presenting a letter to legislators regarding the program comment, it could be beneficial. Ms. Foster asked how many organizations are aware of this and if this information can be shared with other organizations. Dr. Marcopul stated that she was unsure but encouraged spreading awareness to other organizations.

Discussion ensued relating to how the program comment came to be, what it would entail if it is enacted and passed. Ms. Stender recommended that the board take a position and circulate it to legislative representatives so that they are aware of the implications. Mr. Ceponis added that the board should also agree whether or not they would like to also send a letter to the Advisory Council.

Ms. Foster proposed that the citizen board members of the Trust approve a board letter to ACHP discouraging the acceptance of the program comment and provide feedback. Ms. Stender added that it should also be sent to legislators and the governor. Ms. Easton seconded the motion and all voted in favor of the drafting of a letter regarding the program comment.

### **Report of Department of Treasury**

No report.

### **Reports of the Standing Committees**

- **Executive Committee**

No report.

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

Ms. Foster provided an update from the Grants & Loans Committee, including the following extension requests which are further detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee report:

*Requests for Extension: \**

**Grantee:** Gloucester County

**Project:** James and Ann Whitall House

**Grant Award No.:** 2019.1041

**Grantee:** Warren County

**Project:** Morris Canal Inclined Plane 9 West

**Grant Award No.:** 2010.1027

**Grantee:** Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Frazee House, Inc.

**Project:** Elizabeth and Gershom Frazee House

**Grant Award No.:** 2022.0086

**Grantee:** Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum

**Project:** Reasoner True House (formerly True Farmstead)

**Grant Award No.:** 2022.0002

**Grantee:** Cumberland County Historical Society

**Project:** Greenwich Historic District (Log Granary)

**Grant Award No.:** 2022.0071

**Grantee:** Trent House Association

**Project:** William Trent House

**Grant Award No.:** 2021.H013

**Grantee:** Jersey City

**Project:** Reservoir #3

**Grant Award No.:** 2019.2056

**Grant Award:** \$750,000

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Ms. Easton recused from the extension request from Jersey City for Reservoir #3. Ms. Foster presented a motion to accept the extension for Jersey City's Reservoir #3. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion and all voted in favor of extension. Ms. Foster then presented a motion to accept the extensions for the other 6 projects. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion and all voted in favor of extension.

At 11:05 am, Mr. Lindsay requested a 10-minute break before presenting the new grant awards. The meeting reconvened at 11:18 am.

Mr. Ceponis explained the 2024 application process including an overview of funding and a breakdown of the applications. Ms. Murphy presented the 2024 Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund Recommendations. The committee recommends funding seventy-five applications totaling \$14,998,738. The committee recommended funding for the existing multiphase grant for the Passaic County Court House and United States Custom House and Post Office Historic District for \$750,000 as well as the existing multiphase grant for Shadow Lawn for \$750,000. They also recommended the purchase of an easement for \$100,000. In total, including the multiphase commitments and the easement purchase, the recommendations equaled \$16,598,738.

#### *Historic Site Management*

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the HSM recommendations. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the recommendation for funding for Atlantic City Fire Station #6 and Atlantic City Fire Station #9. Ms. Easton recused herself from discussion and voting for Atlantic City Fire Station #6 and Atlantic City Fire Station #9 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 101 Second Ave. (Roebbling Historic District). Mr. Lindsay recused

himself from discussion and voting for 101 Second Ave. (Roebing Historic District) 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 Kalmia Club. Ms. Kelly recused herself from discussion and voting for The Kalmia Club 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 Old Barracks. Mr. Tighue recused himself from discussion and voting for Old Barracks 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 Pomona Hall. Mr. Perks recused himself from discussion and voting for Pomona Hall 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 HSM projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report, excluding Atlantic City Fire Station #6 and Atlantic City Fire Station #9, 101 Second Ave. (Roebing Historic District), The Kalmia Club, Old Barracks, and Pomona Hall.

Ms. Stender moved to accept the recommendations. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

#### *Municipal, County, and Regional Planning*

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the MCRP recommendations and there were none. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the MCRP projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. Ms. Stender moved to accept the recommendations. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

#### *Heritage Tourism*

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Heritage Tourism recommendations and there were none. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the MCRP project as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. All voted in favor.

#### *Capital Level 1*

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Capital Level 1 recommendations and there were none. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the MCRP project as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

#### *Capital Level 2*

Mr. Lindsay stated for the record that the Roebing Machine Shop is in no way connected to the Roebing Museum therefore he did not need to recuse from the discussions and voting for that project.

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Capital Level 2 recommendations. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the recommendation for funding for Atlantic City Fire Station #8 (Northside Institutional Historic District). Ms. Easton recused herself from discussion and voting for Atlantic City Fire Station #8 (Northside Institutional Historic District) due to current involvement with the site. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and 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 Atlantic City Convention Hall and USS New Jersey (BB-62). Mr. Tighue recused himself from discussion and voting for Atlantic City Convention Hall and USS New Jersey (BB-62) due to current involvement with the site. Ms. Stender seconded the motion, and all others voted in favor.

Ms. Foster then made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the HSM projects as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report, excluding Atlantic City Fire Station #8 (Northside Institutional Historic District), Atlantic City Convention Hall, and USS New Jersey (BB-62). Mr. Tighue seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

### *Capital Level 3*

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals for the Capital Level 3 recommendation and there were none. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the Capital Level 3 project as recommended by the committee and as detailed in the Grants & Loans Committee's formal report. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Ms. Stender asked what the property was used for. Mr. Ceponis and Ms. Foster explained that they offer a lot of programming. They also noted that it serves as a great example of land preservation and historic preservation working together for a common goal.

### *Multiphase Commitments and Additional Funding Commitments*

Mr. Lindsay motioned to accept the multiphase commitments as well as the additional funding commitments. Ms. Easton abstained from voting due to current involvement with Shadow Lawn. All others voted in favor.

Ms. Stender asked about the work occurring at Shadow Lawn. Ms. Easton and Mr. Ceponis explained that the next phase is electric upgrades, some of which we would be seeing on our tour after the meeting.

### *Discover New Jersey License Plate Fund*

The Grants & Loans Committee recommended funding for two projects:

#### *Discover New Jersey History License Plate\**

**Applicant:** North Pemberton

**Project:** North Pemberton Railroad Station

**Applicant:** Tuckerton Seaport

**Project:** Tuckerton Seaport

Ms. Foster asked if there were any recusals. Ms. Foster made a motion on behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee to accept the recommendation of funding for North Pemberton Railroad Station and Tuckerton Seaport. Mr. Tighue seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Mr. Ceponis then provided an update regarding COVID-19 funding. He stated that years ago, the Trust tried to get federal money to go towards projects that went over budget or couldn't complete scopes of work due to COVID-19. We were recently approved for \$10 million in funding which has now been signed by the Governor. To be eligible, projects must have been funded within a specific time frame. A grant agreement has been signed with Disaster Relief and staff has begun preparing an application for the eligible projects.



- **Acquisitions and Easements\***

Mr. Miller reported that they are hoping a contract will exist by December so the easement for Point Breeze can be presented to the Board at that time. He added that there was one perpetual easement application that was previously approved; however, the owner passed away before the easement could be signed. Staff is inquiring to see if the estate is willing to sign the easement. Mr. Miller stated that there is an easement under consideration:

**Easement Property:** 10 Elmer Street, Trenton, NJ

Mr. Ceponis explained that a transfer in ownership from the County Improvement Authority to a developer is requiring an easement to be placed on the building to protect it from the developer. Mr. Ceponis added that this is a donation given to us and not an easement that would need to be purchased. Ms. Foster asked if the Trust would be responsible for any maintenance. Mr. Ceponis responded that the owner is responsible for any maintenance. Mr. Miller recommended the acceptance of the easement from committee. All voted in favor of acceptance.

Mr. Miller added that there is a final easement that could be potentially coming up for Stratton Hall (Woolwich Township, Gloucester County). There would likely be more information to report on that at the December meeting.

- **Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning**

Updates to Legislation and Policy were included in the Secretary's Report.

- **Education and Outreach**

Ms. Easton stated that the committee has been working with Ms. Dorothy Guzzo to develop the program and curriculum as well as identify speakers for future HPC trainings. She added that they are hoping to offer two options when the legislation is passed: 1 in-person training that would move around the state in the spring and 1 virtual training that would be offered in the fall. The virtual training would have rotating topics to keep people interested.

- **Fiscal Oversight**

No report.

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Ceponis told the board about staff's presentation at the upcoming League of Municipalities with HPO staff. He mentioned that we also have a booth that we will need volunteers for. Mr. Ceponis stated that the purchase of the booth came with 6 tickets so if any board members are interested in attending they should let him know so they can be registered. Ms. Kelly asked what the dates were for the conference. Mr. Ceponis and Ms. Bremer stated that the dates are November 19-21. Mr. Ceponis and Ms. Bremer provided information about the League, our presences, and our presentation. Ms. Foster stated that she noticed we had more applications from Union County than usual and if this was due to our presence at the League. Mr. Ceponis responded that it was a possibility.

Mr. Ceponis and the Board thanked staff for their hard work during this application period.

Mr. Ceponis stated that the December meeting is currently scheduled for December 11, however, that conflicts with the tourism conference which staff members will be attending. He requested to move it to December 18. The Board agreed to move it to December 18.

Mr. Ceponis also noted that the board and staff will be convening for a tour of the building after the meeting has adjourned.

**New Business**

None.

**Public Comment**

Ms. Elaine Gold gave her thanks for funding the New Milford Plant of Hackensack Waterworks and for our confidence in the project. She also asked if she would be able to get a copy of the documents Dr. Marcopul mentioned regarding the ACHP program comment. She added that she would like to pass it along to Bergen County's Historic Preservation Advisory Board so that they can draft a letter as well.

Ms. Jessi Paladini gave her thanks on behalf of the Vernon Township Historical Society. She added that the Trust does wonderful and meaningful work.

Ms. Jen Souder gave her thanks from the Turf Club in Asbury Park. She added that this grant is a game-changer for their organization, so they appreciate the confidence and support in their project.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Lindsay presented a motion to adjourn at 12:21 pm. Ms. Foster seconded the motion and all voted in favor of adjournment.