

# Readington Township Open Space Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**August 7, 2024**

**PRESENT:**

MEMBER	JAN 3	FEB 7	MAR 13	APR 3	MAY 1	JUN 12	AUG 7	SEP 5	OCT 2	NOV 6
Juergen Huelsebusch, Chair	X	X		X		X	X			
Emanuel Bola, Vice Chair	X	X		X		X	X			
Julia Allen	X	X		X		X	X			
Thomas Davitt	X	X		X		X				
Neil Hendrickson	X			X			X			
Christopher John	X	X		X		X				
Adam Mueller				X		X	X			
Mario Orlandi	X	X		X			X			
Anne Owen	X	X		X		X	X			
Ryan Dunn, 1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate	X	X		X						
John Klotz, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Alternate	X	X		X			X			

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** David Leshik, Frank Leshik, Brian Skowronek, Doug Vornlocker

Chair Huelsebusch called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM announcing all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

**COMMUNITY:**

- 1) **Communication:** Chair Huelsebusch discussed the recent post on Facebook of the open space vision, recent acquisitions, and updated map. Members reviewed the updated map which includes conservation easements. The map has also been posted on a slide in the municipal building foyer.
- 2) **Event Updates:** The September OSAB meeting has been rescheduled to September 5<sup>th</sup>.
- 3) **Open Space Walks:** Julia Allen stated that the next open space walk will be held in September at Whitehouse Greenway. The proposed walk in October will be at Cole Road, East or West. Last month's hike was led by Robert Becker at Forest hill with 12 attendees. The hike for August 18<sup>th</sup> at River Trail was posted.
- 4) **Volunteer Sessions:** Dale Haver track walk was proposed for late August. A scouting trip would be done prior. Volunteers are needed for weekdays or Saturday mornings to

clip trails. The rail fences are starting to fall on Pleasant Road down by 202, the Gallo property, and Stanton. DPW will be notified.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Emanuel Bola made a motion to approve the June 12, 2024, meeting minutes, seconded by Julie Allen motion approved. Neil and Mario abstained.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Confidential negotiations with potential properties are in progress. Nothing further to report.

**REPORTS:**

- 1) **Farmland Preservation / Green Acres:** Julia Allen stated there is nothing new to report. Richard Dodds recommended having a representative present for the Green Acres on-site visits.
- 2) **Hunterdon County Parks / OSAB:** Nothing to report. The last Hunterdon County parks meeting had 1 application for 6 acres on Route 31 East Amwell and it was approved. There are still more funds and available competitive grants.
- 3) **Environmental Commission Update:** The meeting was canceled. The soil pollution sites of concern DEP response will be discussed at the next meeting. Nothing further to report.
- 4) **Water Watch Update:** Mario Orlandi reported on the most recent projects including stream clean up, the planting of 900 trees along Chambers Brook as a part of the riparian restoration, collaboration with Doug Vorlocker regarding site maintenance, and stream monitoring and data analysis of 12 sites. It was stated that creating a trail would improve access to the Chambers Brook site, ideally before the hunting season begins. Mario discussed including the trails as outdoor classroom for the school curriculum. Fourth grade student would participate for one event in the Fall and one event in the Spring. Julie Allen added the 7<sup>th</sup> graders go to the trail in the Fall.
- 5) **Township Updates:**
  - a. **Administrative:** Meg Slutter has retired. Danielle Monaghan will now support OSAB.

**ONGOING BUSINESS:**

- 1) **Trails Subcommittee:** Anne Owen's went over the River Trail for the hike. It was suggested the trail walks be clip and hike walks. Cole Road rotten bales under the power lines some were removed. When is the farmer going to mow those fields. Ag maintenance agreements restrict mowing prior to July 15<sup>th</sup>. DPW made a new trail with the forestry machine on the Smith and Old Brick property on Cole Road East. DPW on Cole Road West opened the orange Trail from Edgewood and removed the fallen trees. The next trails meeting will be held on August 29<sup>th</sup>. RTA and Open Space have done 70 hours and 112 hours of trail clearing respectively.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1) **Trail Hikes:** Chair Huelsebusch stated that there are preliminary plans to coordinate quarterly trail hikes with Readington Recreation. These hikes will not conflict with the monthly Open Space Walks. More information to follow. Chair Huelsebusch stated that he will work on updating the trail maps.
  
- 2) **Stewardship:** Doug Vornlocker updated the board that the deer enclosures are being checked on every two weeks. No issues to date. Five work projects have been completed in the deer enclosures. Site visits to Cushetunk. Questions on Rockaway Creek Trail who maintains that. The big red maple was removed from the Dreahook enclosure. NRCS will do soil evaluation for tree planting events and provide a technical report free of charge. Members watched the drone footage video to highlight the trails which is currently a work in progress. The plan is to add narration and content to be ready for use in October. A potential future project was discussed to create a drone video to highlight the watersheds. The trails map is being updated and will be reviewed at the next meeting. The agriculture maintenance agreements were discussed and will be reviewed by the meadows management team to revise verbiage, include additional details, and add another property.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** A member of the public asked if the E. Coli levels in Rockaway Creek to Cushetunk Lake are still elevated. Mario said there has been no change in levels, but the matter is still being investigated.

**COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:** The draft of the updated trails map will be circulated via email for comments from the board. Mr. Kotz asked if there are trees available to plant along trails in the fall. A 250,000 environmental grant has been executed by the mayor and it is possible to have trees allocated from that. Doug Vornlocker will discuss details with Robert Becker. Members discussed details of the grant and questions about the grant to ask. The mayor announced that all 70 of the hunting properties have been awarded for this year. This is the first year there has been a waitlist of 5 hunters. The season starts on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Klotz discussed the Main Street beautification project volunteers who are now working to get a Trex bench to replace the broken bench that was in the garden.

**ADJOURN:** Adam Mueller made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Juergen Huelsebusch, followed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Danielle Monaghan