

Lebanon Township Environmental & Open Space Commission Agenda

November 17th, 2018

CALL TO ORDER

In compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act", notice has been given that the Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission conducts its regular business meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the main meeting room of the municipal building. Notice of this meeting was published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the monthly agendas are posted on the bulletin board of the municipal building.

STANDARD AGENDA

Topic	Intent/Materials
Kickoff, Roll Call & Connecting Moment	Call meeting to order and take roll call.
Presentation of Minutes	Review and approval of October Meeting Minutes. All commission members can approve except for Ms. Koch who were not present at the October meeting.
Old Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Green Acres Program Inspection Report (Duckworth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Schaaf and Nicholson Exploratory Hikes b. Nicholson Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Draft attached as Attachment 3 c. Green Acres Response Letter d. Hendra Letter b) Hunterdon County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan (Duckworth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reference report in Attachment 1 and letter submitted to Hunterdon County Planning Office as Attachment 2 c) Red Mill Race Preserve Sign (Henriksen) d) Goracy Trail (Hardy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reference report in Attachment 1.
New Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Township Planner, Mike Bolan, Retiring (Duckworth) b) Recycling (Laul) c) Sustainable Jersey (Duckworth) d) RHA State of the Watershed
Newsletter	<p>Spring newsletter deadline is February 1st. Articles on the docket include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well Testing <p>Backlog: Invasive Species, Christian Crossroads Dam Removal/History</p>

Topic	Intent/Materials
Correspondence	<p>Acknowledge and share any formal correspondence received by EOOSC chair or informal correspondence received by EOOSC members. All correspondence when possible is scanned and stored digitally in a public access Google Drive folder at https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B14m3wFylheUWjBJNEkwaU4TGc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of Hunterdon County Health Department Application for construction of new septic system located at 71 Sliker Road, Califon, NJ – Kevin and Teri Stanton – Block 49, Lot 50.04

Attachment 1: Reports

Hunterdon County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan

As per Adam Duckworth on 18-Nov-2018, at the October EOOSC meeting, it was discussed that Hunterdon County has proposed and is taking comments regarding a Hunterdon County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan. It was acknowledged that our EOOSC should review and submit comments if appropriate. Mr. Duckworth, Ms. Lawler and Ms. Petzinger volunteered to prepare a response. The letter included as Attachment 2 was prepared with additional input from Mayor Schmidt, as Open Space Coordinator, and Committeeman Laul, as EOOSC Liaison to the Township Committee. It was submitted to Hunterdon County Planning on October 16, 2018, with acknowledgement from William Millette, County Open Space Coordinator, who responded by saying:

“Thanks for taking the time to read through the plan and provide such detailed comments. I look forward to continued work with Lebanon Township in the future.”

The letter was subsequently reviewed with the Township Planning Board on October 16th and Township Committee on October 17th.

Block 36, Lot 17 - “Goracy Trail”

As per Ms. Hardy on 18-Nov-2018, the status of the project remains the same as the landowner continues to work towards finalizing her property survey before proceeding with the LT project. She remains supportive and we will continue to follow up with her.

Township of Lebanon
Environmental & Open Space
Commission (EOSC)
Municipal Building
530 West Hill Road
Glen Gardner, NJ 08826-6400

Open Space Trust Fund Program
Route 12 County Complex
planning@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Re: Draft Hunterdon County Strategic Park and Open Space Plan

To the Hunterdon County Planning Board:

Representatives from the Lebanon Township Environmental & Open Space Commission (EOSC) and the Township Open Space Coordinator have reviewed the draft Hunterdon County Strategic Park and Open Space Plan. We are delighted to see the plan coming together and are very supportive of its overall intent.

As outlined in our own Township's [Master Plan](#), two principal motivations that drive our planning process are the "preservation of the rural agricultural countryside and the farms that are an essential part of its lifestyle" and "the careful management of development in environmentally sensitive areas." In fact, within the past year, the Township Planning Board with the support of the Township Committee, approved a revised [Open Space and Recreation Plan \(OSRP\)](#) that sets "a priority for preservation with a focus on passive recreation sites." In addition, the plan more explicitly outlines the Township's intent to establish an interconnected trail system, which aligns with the County's trail concept. A concept plan for our Township is incorporated into Figure 3 of this document and the list of parcels targeted for preservation is largely driven by this trail connectivity goal.

To that end, we feel that our own Township planning documents and the County Strategic Park and Open Space Plan share many common goals and submit this letter to demonstrate our support of the County proposal. While we wholeheartedly support the plan, we do feel there are points in the plan that can be strengthened or clarified and have included specific comments in Attachment 1. Thank you for your consideration and keep up the great work.

Kind Regards,

Adam Duckworth

Chairman, Lebanon Township Environmental & Open Space Commission

Attachment 1

Targeting of Teetertown/Mountain Farm as a General Use County Park

Regarding the targeting of Teetertown/Mountain Farm as a General Use County Park, we are supportive of the general use park concept but question whether the location of Teetertown/Mountain Farm would enable it to meet this purpose for the northern region of the County. An alternative may be to partner with the State in leveraging Voorhees State Park to achieve a similar goal. Voorhees is more easily accessible by High Bridge and Califon residents and has an entrance directly from a county road. Since both are in Lebanon Township, we would appreciate being engaged in the planning process for the northern region General Use County Park and recommend connecting with the Township Open Space Coordinator to that end.

In addition, the County Plan mentions a potential partnership with Centenary College's equestrian program. While we are generally in favor of equestrian rentals at Teetertown/Mountain Farm, some municipal parcels that are adjacent to the park have restrictions placed on them for this purpose due to the original sources of funding for their purchase. This may lead to conflicts and should be discussed with the municipality and partners during the planning process.

Concept of an Interconnected Trail System

Regarding the county's Concept Plan for the Future Interconnected Trail System, we are very supportive of this vision and have aligned our own trail concept plan with that of the county to the extent possible at the time. Please review the recently-approved Lebanon Township Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) to familiarize yourself with our vision, which seeks to take advantage of preserved land around the Hagedorn complex and Voorhees State Park. We hope to be partners with you in the planning and execution of this vision and recommend a regular cadence of joint planning sessions to keep our activities aligned where it makes sense to do so.

Preservation Terminology Used throughout the Plan

Regarding terminology used in the County Plan, the words *preserve*, *protect*, and *natural state* can mean different things to different people. While it is implied throughout the document that the intent is to protect or preserve lands from the threat of permanent land use change (e.g. development) and leave them in their natural state, it may or may not mean a "hands-off" management approach. We suggest either creating a glossary to clearly define these terms, or clearly state the intent of preservation, protection, and natural state in the same sentence or paragraph.

In addition, it appears the terms "forest management plan" and "forest stewardship plan" are used interchangeably. While they both entail a plan to manage forests in a sustainable manner, forest stewardship plans are developed specifically to manage forests in a way that will

minimize impact to, if not enhance, other natural and historic resources, such as water quality, threatened and endangered species habitats, etc. If ecological forestry is a management tool for Hunterdon County forests, then we would prefer you create forest stewardship plans only for county lands you wish to actively manage.

Active Land Management

Regarding the active management of public lands, Lebanon Township is supportive of this stewardship approach, especially for natural areas via ecological forestry and grassland management so as to increase the biodiversity of native plants and wildlife. We also support the active control of invasive species through management, policy and education.

In addition, Lebanon Township supports farmland preservation and the ongoing use of prime agricultural lands in a sustainable way. We recommend the County Plan develop land stewardship plans for public properties that are leased for agricultural or other purposes in cooperation with government and nongovernment agencies that advise on best management practices.

Deer Management

Regarding the situation of deer overabundance, Lebanon Township is supportive of efforts to reduce herd size and agree that this is necessary to address issues with invasive species. Currently, hunting is not allowed on our municipal lands, but this is not for lack of desire, only for lack of resources to implement a deer management plan ourselves. We recommend exploring options to assist municipalities in opening their lands to hunting, such as providing a service to manage hunting licenses on behalf of municipalities.

Minor Points of Clarification

- Page I-10, Table 8: Please sort by acres (largest to smallest) to match the other tables and be more intuitive.
- Page I-11, Tables 13 & 14: Please change “Lebanon” to “Lebanon Twp.” to avoid confusion. While Lebanon Twp. is in the northern region and Lebanon is in the eastern region, not everyone will look to see which Lebanon the table is referring to.
- Page III-12 (Priority #3): The section reads:

“The first natural resources goal of the Highlands Regional Plan Area, which encompasses 24 percent of Hunterdon County, is the ‘protection of large areas of contiguous forested lands.’ Besides its critical role in protecting the County’s hydrology, contiguous forests enhance wildlife and flora habitat health and biological diversity. The Musconetcong Mountains contain the most substantial concentration of the remaining

critical habitat of the threatened and endangered species in Hunterdon County according to NJDEP's NJ Landscape Project."

We agree with and support protecting large tracts of contiguous forests, especially for threatened and endangered species. To avoid confusion about what it means to protect the forest, we suggest the following changes: "The first natural resources goal of the Highlands Regional Plan Area, which encompasses 24 percent of Hunterdon County, is the 'protection of large areas of contiguous forested lands,' [which is done through land acquisition, easements, etc.](#)"

- Page III-22 & III-23 (Priority #9): The section reads:

"A stewardship program is essential to the care of the County's extensive amount of land-banked properties. An active stewardship effort is indispensable if the County's open space is to be restored to its native state. Few strands of forest remain in the County untouched by non-native plants. Human activity such as development and farming over past generations have allowed for changes in the County's landscape, accidentally or deliberately introducing invasive plant or animal species. Native flora and fauna are endangered by these "alien predators." A sustainability program, based on a forest management plan and ecological studies, needs to be undertaken every three to ten years to remove invasive species and replant native flora. This would create healthy forest and grassland environments, as well as a more aesthetically pleasing trail environment by introducing more sunlight into forests and allow birds, bees and other threatened and endangered native species to thrive and survive through all seasons."

We support active stewardship of public and private lands. However, the phrase "to be restored to its native state" is confusing. Please clarify so we know whether this phrase pertains only to restoring native vegetation or also bringing back dynamic forests through forest disturbances, such as prescribed fire or silviculture. Also, correct "accidentally" to "accidentally".

Township of Lebanon
Environmental & Open Space
Commission (EOSC)
Municipal Building
530 West Hill Road
Glen Gardner, NJ 08826-6400

Lebanon Township Resident

Re: Lebanon Township Open Space

Dear Resident,

Winding country roads, tree-canopied streets, little stone bridges and countless miles of farms and forests are why many people seek out and set roots in Lebanon Township. Preserving open space and farmland helps ensure the very essence of the Township remains intact for generations to come.

This letter is being sent to you because you live near one or more of the Township Open Space parcels commonly referred to as the Nicholson (Block 49, Lots 89.01 and 89.02) and Fisher (Block 49, Lot 4.02) properties. A map has been attached for your reference. Together, these three parcels make up more than 100 acres of preserved open space in the Spruce Run Watershed, protecting wetlands and drinking water quality, as well as offering passive recreation opportunities, such as hiking and fishing, for our residents.

This land is jointly owned by Lebanon Township and NJ Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) and was purchased with funding from the Green Acres Program and Environmental Infrastructure Finance Program (EIFP). Due to the use of these sources of funding, these parcels periodically undergo state inspection by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP).

In a recent inspection, evidence of hunting and use of motorized vehicles was observed on these properties. These activities are not permitted uses of township open space. We recognize this may not have been obvious due to a lack of signage and communication and we will remedy that in the coming months, beginning with this letter to landowners. If you have been using the property in this manner, please refrain from doing this any longer. If you should observe any of these activities, contact the Lebanon Township Police Department at (908) 638-8516. In addition, it was observed that neighboring private properties may be encroaching upon this protected open space. Please be sure to observe all property boundaries.

With that said, this is public open space and the Township wholeheartedly supports use of this space by our residents for passive recreation, such as hiking, fishing (with appropriate permits) and bird-watching. Look for improved signage, communication, maps and trail marking in the coming months. While hunting is not currently an approved use, there is interest in introducing hunting as part of a broader deer management program and we are actively seeking volunteers

EOSC November Meeting Agenda - Attachment 3

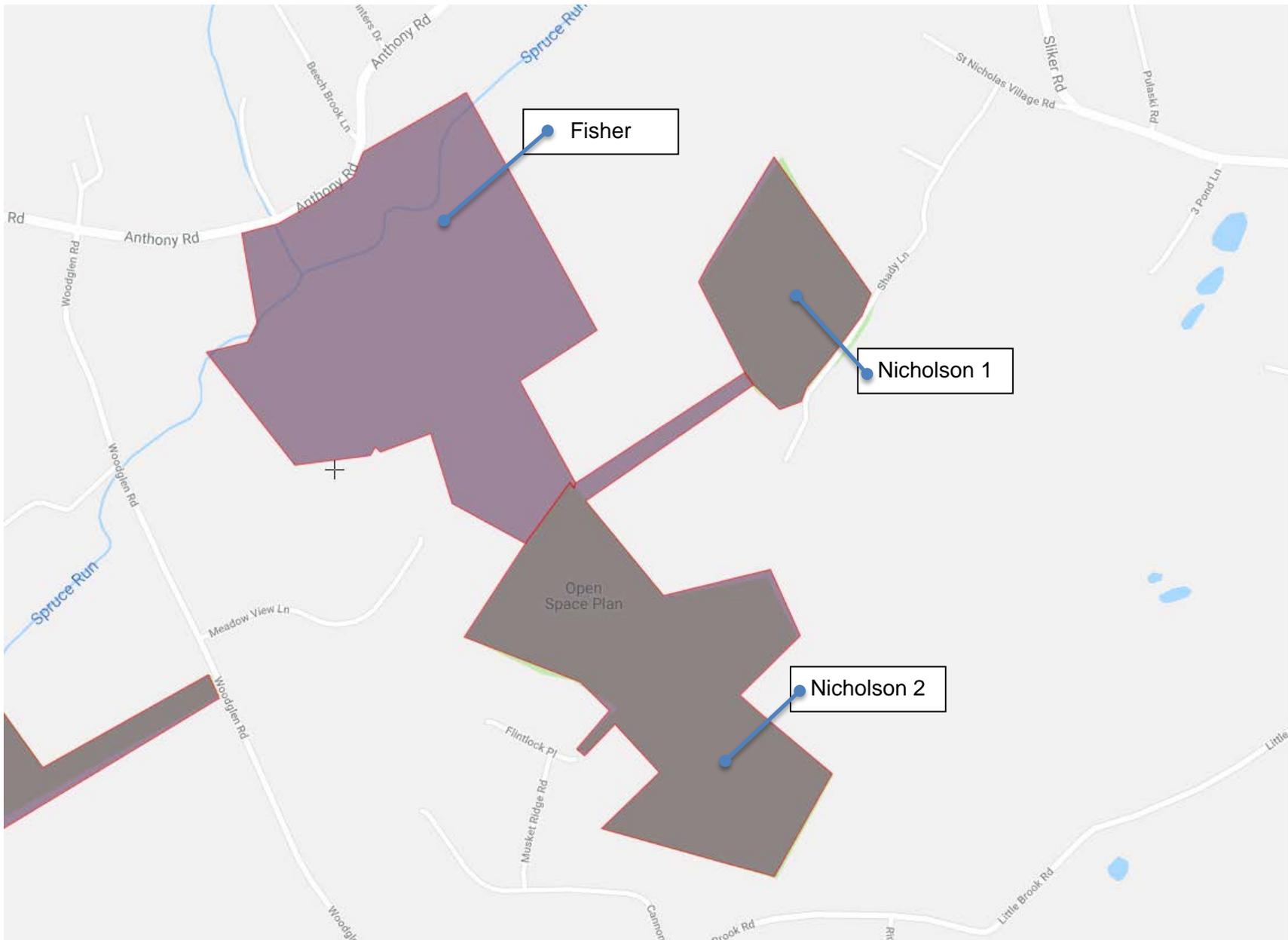
to support this endeavor. Please contact us if you have an interest in volunteering, or if you have any other questions regarding this letter or the township open space program. Included with this letter is a brochure more broadly outlining our efforts to preserve Lebanon Township's beauty and rural character. Thank you for supporting us in these efforts.

Kind Regards,

Adam Duckworth
Chairman, Lebanon Township Environmental & Open Space Commission
ltenv@lebtwp.net

Mike Schmidt
Lebanon Township Mayor and Open Space Coordinator
schmidt@lebtwp.net

Township Open Space Parcels



Lebanon Township Environmental & Open Space Commission Minutes

November 17th, 2018

ROLL CALL

EOSC Member	Role	Attendance
Adam Duckworth	Chairman, Planning Board Liaison	X
Sharon Petzinger	Member	X
Warren Newman	Member	No
Erik Jan Henriksen	Member	No
Nancy Lawler	Member	X
Sharon Hardy	Member	X
Adam Mickley	Member	X
Kathy Koch	Alternate 1	X
Marty Collett	Alternate 2	X

MEETING MINUTES

Topic	Intent/Materials
Kickoff, Roll Call & Connecting Moment	<p>Call meeting to order and take roll call.</p> <p>Minutes: Mr. Duckworth called the meeting to order at 7:06PM. In addition to the EOSC members noted above, Mayor Schmidt, Committeeman Laul, volunteer Mike Chen and Hampton Environmental Commission member, Pam Bailey, were in attendance.</p>
Presentation of Minutes	<p>Review and approval of October Meeting Minutes. All commission members can approve except for Ms. Koch who were not present at the October meeting.</p> <p>Minutes: Mr. Duckworth asked for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from the October EOSC. The motion was made by Mr. Collett, seconded by Ms. Petzinger and unanimously approved.</p>
Old Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Green Acres Program Inspection Report (Duckworth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Schaaf and Nicholson Exploratory Hikes b. Nicholson Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Draft attached as Attachment 3 c. Green Acres Response Letter d. Hendra Letter f) Hunterdon County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan (Duckworth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reference report in Attachment 1 and letter submitted to Hunterdon County Planning Office as Attachment 2 g) Red Mill Race Preserve Sign (Henriksen) h) Goracy Trail (Hardy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reference report in Attachment 1. <p>Minutes: Mr. Duckworth reviewed the agenda topics with the team. He</p>

Topic	Intent/Materials
	<p>reminded the team at the last meeting, there was agreement to prepare and submit comments on the Hunterdon County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan and that a copy of the submitted letter was attached to the agenda along with a summary of what was done. He thanked Ms. Petzinger, Ms. Lawler, Committeeman Laul and Mayor Schmidt for their input.</p> <p>Ms. Petzinger and Mayor Schmidt indicated that they attended the public hearing. Ms. Petzinger stated that a document was prepared by the County with responses to all comments; she agreed to obtain a copy of that document for our records. There was nothing out of the ordinary that happened at the meeting. Mayor Schmidt stated that he asked what happens with the open space tax money once all target land preservation is completed; can it be used for preservation of historical buildings. Ms. Lawler stated that it could go for maintenance of open space. Mayor Schmidt said the county did not have a response at this time.</p> <p>Mr. Duckworth closed the topic and moved on to the Green Acres inspection report. He stated that two exploratory hikes of Township-preserved lands had occurred since the last meeting. He, Ms. Lawler and Committeeman Laul hiked the Schaaf property (Block 24, Lot 2.01). He, Mr. Collett and Mr. Chen hiked one of the Nicholson parcels (Block 49, Lot 89.02) and the Fisher property (Block 49, Lot 4.02). He reviewed the Green Acres Inspection findings (attached to the agenda) to refresh the team on potential issues that were identified as part of the inspection.</p> <p>With respect to Schaaf, it was acknowledged that a primitive campsite is present but is not on Township property; it is on a neighboring property but appears to be accessed from the Township property. The Township is not obligated to address this and we believe the Township can sufficiently respond to Green Acres. However, it was suggested that the Commission have further discussion on this situation to determine if the Township should consider taking action even though we are not obligated to do so.</p> <p>Committeeman Laul stated that there was some debris on the property and this has not been removed yet. Mr. Duckworth offered to help him remove it. Mr. Duckworth also highlighted that there were some points of interest on the property, including a large oak stump approximately 15-20' in diameter, a memorial marker and a potential vista overlooking Ken Lockwood Gorge. Ms. Lawler stated that perhaps the Schaaf family would be interested in contributing to trail-building efforts. Ms. Petzinger suggested that some of the points of interest be highlighted in the letter to residents.</p> <p>With respect to the Nicholson and Fisher properties, the group that hiked it provided an overview of boundaries, access points and the terrain. It was stated that the access point the group used to begin the hike was located on Shady Lane, a private lane, and that it needed to be confirmed that the property had deeded access via the private lane.</p> <p>It was stated that evidence of active hunters was present (tree stand, feeders, etc.) and that hunting is not currently an approved use of Township open space. Mayor Schmidt confirmed that contacting the local police department would be the right response and that the Chief of Police should be copied on the letters to residents. Ms. Petzinger asked if it is the Township that drives the hunting restriction or some other statute. Mayor Schmidt stated that it is likely</p>

Topic	Intent/Materials
	<p>not a Green Acres restriction as some county open space is funded by Green Acres and they allow hunting; we would have to confirm that for sure. Lebanon Township Code does not explicitly restrict or permit hunting so it is restricted by default. In the feedback on the County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan, our Township did recommend the County consider administering a program on behalf of municipalities to manage hunting on municipal open space. Mayor Schmidt said based on his conversations, the county did seem open to the idea.</p> <p>The group that hiked Nicholson and Fisher then explained the landscape they encountered, including a variety of small streams, the Spruce Run and a narrow corridor between Nicholson 1 and Nicholson 2 that was difficult to traverse. Mr. Duckworth stated that a desired access point was off of Meadowview Lane as that would provide a connection to Goracy Trail and then Miquin Woods. Mayor Schmidt noted that Meadowview is a private lane and an access point there would be unlikely. Ms. Lawler stated that the easiest way to improve the Spruce Run crossing would be to strategically place some large rocks. Ms. Petzinger stated that if a bridge was desired, it would require a permit, which can be expensive and take six months to secure.</p> <p>Mr. Duckworth then introduced and reviewed the draft letter to residents neighboring the Nicholson and Fisher properties. There was a great deal of discussion on the content of the letter with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall tone was good • Move the first paragraph to the end so the point of the letter is within the first sentence or two as some people won't read further than that • Consider putting some of the points in a bulleted list • Specifically call out "in the recent state inspection" to clearly articulate who is driving this • Remove the reference to seeking volunteers for hunting as that has not been agreed to yet • Consider referencing some interesting attributes of the properties • Add some information on impact of motorized vehicles <p>Ms. Petzinger volunteered to provide some verbiage regarding the impact of motorized vehicles.</p> <p>Mr. Duckworth closed the feedback session and stated he would revise the letter for further discussion and approval at the next meeting.</p> <p>Mayor Schmidt noted that no additional letter is necessary for the Hendra property.</p>
<p>New Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Township Planner, Mike Bolan, Retiring (Duckworth) f) Recycling (Laul) g) Sustainable Jersey (Duckworth) h) RHA State of the Watershed <p>Minutes: Mr. Duckworth acknowledge that Township Planner, Mike Bolan, is retiring at the end of the year. He then asked Mr. Mickley and Mr. Collett if they would be able to familiarize themselves with the Sustainable Jersey framework and provide the Commission with some options for how to achieve bronze</p>

Topic	Intent/Materials
	<p>certification in 2019. They agreed they could do that at the December meeting. Mr. Duckworth then reminded the team that RHA is hosting their State of the Watershed conference in Califon at the ESC building on December 1st. Ms. Koch noted that she would be attending.</p> <p>Mr. Duckworth then turned it over to Committeeman Laul who recently attended the League of Municipalities conference and returned with information about recycling. There were some major changes earlier in the year when China stopped accepting much of US recycling and the value of that recycling plummeted from \$95/ton to \$5/ton. This is greatly impacting the value proposition of recycling.</p> <p>He then stated that he learned many new best practices, as well as practices to avoid. Paper and cardboard that gets wet is no longer usable. No plastic bags can get recycled. Recyclables must be clean. If any disposal truck driver observes contamination of a recyclables that appears to exceed ~30%, they typically bring it right to the dump. The same thought process applies to contamination observed after the recyclables are dropped at a recycling facility. Committeeman Laul is very interested in a campaign to raise awareness about these issues within the Township and stated he will be writing an article in the Spring newsletter. Mr. Duckworth stated he could support a campaign using the Green Team Facebook page, as well.</p>
Newsletter	<p>Spring newsletter deadline is February 1st. Articles on the docket include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well Testing <p>Backlog: Invasive Species, Christian Crossroads Dam Removal/History</p>

Topic	Intent/Materials
<p>Correspondence</p>	<p>Acknowledge and share any formal correspondence received by EOSC chair or informal correspondence received by EOSC members. All correspondence when possible is scanned and stored digitally in a public access Google Drive folder at https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B14m3wFylheUWjBJNEkwaU4TGc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of Hunterdon County Health Department Application for construction of new septic system located at 71 Sliker Road, Califon, NJ – Kevin and Teri Stanton – Block 49, Lot 50.04 <p>Minutes: Mr. Duckworth provided the Stanton application to Ms. Petzinger for review but noted that it did not seem to raise any concerns. He stated that the formal agenda was completed and asked if anyone had any other topics. Ms. Petzinger stated (very humbly) that she was the recipient of the Women in Wildlife Award bestowed by the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ. There were many cheers and congratulations.</p> <p>Mayor Schmidt stated that the house on the Pelio property along Sharrer Road has been demolished, which was a key step to fully completing the Pelio acquisition. He also stated that from his perspective it seems Camp Bernie is very supportive of trail connectivity between Point Mountain and Teetertown and that seems to be progressing between Camp Bernie and the County.</p> <p>Mr. Duckworth asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM. Mr. Collett made the motion, Ms. Lawler seconded and it was unanimously approved.</p>