

**MORRIS CANAL WORKING GROUP**

**Conference Planning Committee Meeting Minutes**

**December 11, 2013**

**10:00 am-12:00pm**

**NJTPA**

**1 Newark Center, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor Newark**

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**Committee Attendees:**

1. Bob Barth, Canal Society of NJ
2. David Behrend, NJTPA
3. Megan Kelly, NJTPA
4. Joe Macasek, Canal Society of NJ
5. Andrea Proctor, NJ State Park Service, Waterloo Village
6. Ted Ritter, NJTPA
8. Gerry Scharfenberger, Department of State, Office of Planning Advocacy

**1. Conference Goals & Objectives**

The conference goals and objectives were reviewed for the committee. The conference will target decision makers and implementers and to focus on branding the Morris Canal Greenway project. The conference will help establish a statewide greenway identity and create value for the entire stakeholder membership. Successes and challenges of implementing the greenway will also be highlighted at this conference.

The conference will help illustrate what is a greenway; where does it go; what was the Morris Canal; what is it used for; and showing how the greenway is a spine that provides connections.

**2. Speakers/Topics**

- a. Outside Keynote Speaker
- b. Stakeholder Presentations
- c. Interactive Break-out Sessions

This discussion summary is provided in section 4, format. Once the format was determined, time for interactive break-outs was not available. The committee decided a panel discussion with time for questions would be more appropriate and allow participants to hear the same message.

**3. Timeline: Late March**

Preliminary dates were selected by the committee for late March to hold the Morris Canal Greenway Conference.

**4. Format: Half Day Conference of Decision Makers**

Discussion centered on how to best communicate to conference participants the conference goals to develop the Morris Canal Greenway message of branding and success stories implementing the greenway and preserving the Morris Canal. The draft format is:

**\*\*Networking Breakfast** prior to the start of the Conference (approximately 30 minutes)

In addition to the networking during this time, an exhibit will be set up with a guide available for walk through tours to help interpret the Morris Canal history exhibit.

I. *Introduction* (approximately 45 minutes)

The introduction will provide an overview of the history of the Morris Canal, an orientation of the canal route, and focus on creating an identity and added value for the Morris Canal Greenway.

II. *Showcase Best Practices Now and Going Forward* (approximately 45 minutes)

Ideas discussed included an inventory of cultural resources along the full canal route, success stories and challenges, greenway best practices, etc.

III. *Keynote Speaker* (approximately 20 minutes)

A keynote speaker will highlight the economic development and tourism potential of implementing the Morris Canal Greenway.

IV. *Panel Session* (approximately 60 minutes)

The final portion of the conference would be a panel session to allow for some interactive dialogue and time for questions. As a way to engage the participants further, the audience may be polled for their feedback. Topics suggested included education and tourism, history and presentations on recently completed studies.

**5. Venue Options**

- a. **Waterloo Village**
- b. **Paterson Museum**
- c. **Newark Museum**
- d. **NJTPA**
- e. **Other**

The committee discussed the venue options and decided given the time of the year that the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morris County might be the best space for the conference. Also this location would be fairly centrally located along the Morris Canal Corridor and provide for easy parking. Dates have been selected and a conference date in the process of being confirmed.

Options to involve the public and to educate stakeholders on the importance of the canal were also discussed. One idea was to hold the next working group meeting during the Canal Society of NJ's annual festival Canal Day on June 28<sup>th</sup> at Waterloo Village. Waterloo is the best example for interpretation of a restored canal town in New Jersey. A special screening of the movie "Tiller Shark" could be shown of life along the canal with a discussion to follow. A presentation could also be made on greenways and the value this would bring to the preservation efforts. Canal Day is a public event, which would give an opportunity to receive public feedback on the overall project goals and objectives.

## **6. Sponsorship Opportunities**

The committee suggested reaching out to local chambers of commerce to find a breakfast sponsor.

## **7. Next Steps**

Following the completion of the conference, the committee discussed the projects which should be prioritized to build off the enthusiasm and interest generated from the Morris Canal Greenway Conference.

Ideas included promotion of non-profit and county-led Morris Canal tours, conducting surveys of stakeholder and municipal needs, promotional events for existing canal facilities.

Below is a list of committee action items.

### Committee Action Items:

1. Create a canal fact sheet to highlight the greenway corridor
2. To draw interest, create a list of famous names connected to the history of the Morris Canal, such as Thomas Edison.
3. Inventory portions of the canal open as a greenway or that have been restored
4. Inventory funding for municipal use
5. Inventory of connectivity options, to businesses, regional trails and parks, transit, etc.
6. Inventory successful restoration and greenway projects along the canal corridor
7. Inventory municipal and county level Morris Canal vision statement.
8. Finalize conference venue, date and keynote speaker.

The next Conference Planning Committee meeting will occur in late January. The date is TBD.