

Open Space Committees and Open Space Trust Funds

A municipality or county can pass a referendum establishing an Open Space Tax, and establishing an Open Space Committee

Local Process

Once the voters in a municipality or county have passed a referendum supporting the establishment of an Open Space Tax, the governing body or board of chosen freeholders has to pass an ordinance establishing the specific property tax rate. Generally, they also appoint an Open Space Committee to identify priorities for acquisition, develop a spending plan and identify potential partners for specific projects.

Ordinances

Since there is no state law enabling the establishment of Open Space Committees as official units of local government, many function as ad hoc groups, appointed on a yearly basis. A few towns have ordinances establishing Advisory Committees for the Environment and Open Space. Others have separate ordinances for Open Space Committees. These ordinances generally set up how many people are on the committee, and where they come from. There are usually a number of citizens as well as representatives from the

- Governing Body,
- Planning Board,
- Environmental Commission,
- Recreation Committee, and/or occasionally from
- Historic Preservation Commission.

The ordinance also generally directs the Open Space Committee to

- Develop a Plan for land preservation,
- Obtain approval for the Plan from the Planning Board and/or the Governing Body
- Make recommendations for specific acquisitions.

To obtain a copy of existing ordinances establishing Open Space Committees, contact [ANJEC](#) or email the [Resource Center](#).