

ORDINANCE #2026-19

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON
AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE
OF A TERM DEED OF
CONSERVATION EASEMENT TO THE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN
CONNECTION WITH THE
COMMUNITY PARK NORTH
REFORESTATION PROJECT**

WHEREAS, Princeton is the recipient of a \$552,000 Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) Grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the purpose of which is to fund a forest restoration project in a portion of Community Park North located on Mountain Avenue and designated as Block 5201, Lots 7 and 13 on the Princeton tax maps; and

WHEREAS, the project involves clearing forty-five acres of a former spruce and pine plantation of invasive species and planting the cleared area with nearly 5,000 native trees and shrubs to improve habitat and resources for birds and other animals and increase the amount of carbon sequestered by the forest in future years to make it more resilient to climate change; and

WHEREAS, work began on the project in July 2025 and is set to finish in October 2027; and

WHEREAS, as a condition of the grant, Princeton is required to execute a Deed of Conservation Restriction with the NJDEP for the project site, to ensure the preservation, protection, repair, maintenance and monitoring of the NCS grant project for a set term and to further ensure the viability and receipt of the full environmental benefit of the project; and

WHEREAS, the full terms, conditions, and requirements of the deed restriction will be in effect for a period of five years from the date of completion of the project (anticipated to be October 2027); and

WHEREAS, in addition, no development will be allowed within the project area until 2050;
and

WHEREAS, Community Park North is already encumbered under the Green Acres program and the restrictions listed in the deed restriction will not result in any change to the public's use of the property;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Municipality of Princeton as follows:

1. The findings set forth in the preceding "WHEREAS" clauses are hereby incorporated as if restated in full.

2. Princeton is authorized and directed to convey to the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) a deed of conservation easement over that portion of Community Park North that is the subject of the above-described reforestation project, as required by the terms of the NJDEP's Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) Grant.

3. The Mayor, Clerk and other appropriate staff and officials are authorized and directed to execute on Princeton's behalf a deed of conservation easement in the form required by the NJDEP, subject to the prior review and approval of the Princeton Municipal Attorney, and to undertake any and all other acts and execute any and all other documents as may be necessary to effectuate the terms hereof.

4. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication and as otherwise required by law.

Dawn M. Mount, RMC, Clerk

Hon. Mark Freda, Mayor

First reading:

Second reading/public hearing:

Adoption:

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This ordinance, if adopted, would authorize the conveyance of a term deed of conservation restriction to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in connection with Princeton's reforestation project at Community Park North. The purpose of the conservation restriction is to ensure the preservation, protection, repair, maintenance and monitoring of the NCS grant project for a set term and to further ensure the viability and receipt of the full environmental benefit of the project. If approved, the full terms, conditions, and requirements of the deed restriction would be in effect for a period of five years from the date of completion of the project (anticipated to be October 2027), and no development would be allowed within the project area until 2050. Community Park North is already encumbered under the Green Acres program and the restrictions listed in the deed restriction will not result in any change to the public's use of the property