

Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes March 6, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Urbanski.

Present: Chester Urbanski, Bill Kiriluk, Heidi Tomenchok, Greg Sappington, and Betty Jane Hunt plus Open Space Committee representatives –Chairman John Crouce and Vice-chairman Hal Shute.

The minutes of February 6, 2014 were approved as presented.

Lambert Farm:

The AAC continued to discuss whether the Lambert property should be recommended to move forward in the preservation process. The Open Space reps were present to answer our questions.

Chester read items he put on the agenda for consideration in our deliberations. They were as follows:

1. Is the property easily developable?
2. What are the environmental constraints on the property?
3. Should there be a 5 acre exception area or a smaller exception area? The Lamberts have requested a 5 acre exception area, but we could request that they reconsider and make the exception area 2 acres. The Toll property across 179, 130 acres has a 2 acre exception area. Most preserved farmland properties in West Amwell have a 2 acre exception area.
4. The Highway Commercial Zone would be included in the preservation. Total acreage of the property is 58 acres. 38 acres are in the R-4 zone. 20 acres are in the HC zone.
5. There is an 18' wide driveway easement to the Ziegenfuss property.
6. If the Lambert and Ziegenfuss properties are not preserved, does this leave West Amwell open to further development of both properties? The combination of both properties might be attractive to developers considering the proximity to Lambertville Water Co. water. Music Mtn. development is supplied by Lambertville Water Co.
7. The Open Space Committee has advised that at this time there are no other farms being considered for preservation.
8. AAC member recommendation to the Open Space Committee, regarding Lambert property.
9. If the AAC approves the preservation of this property, it will then go to the County for review. The County's criteria for preservation is the same as the Township's. They will then rank the property for possible preservation. Once they have ranked the property, the Township Committee will proceed with the preservation.

Chester asked the Open Space representatives if these were correct? Hal said that once the AAC makes a decision, it will go back to Open Space. He also noted that the County is already involved with this farm. They are in the process of re-scheduling a tour of the farm and will be

ranking it. John said #7 is not correct. It is currently the only active farm in the municipal program. Toll and Ziegenfuss have applied to the County. Hal noted that there are 58 steps in the County process.

Funding availability was questioned? Hal said there is \$1.25 million in State funding earmarked for West Amwell. The County has plenty of money and West Amwell has \$1 million. He said even if our share of Toll is \$400,000 and our share of this farm is \$100,000 we still have money. The Open Space is not planning to borrow any more and we are paying down the debt. It was asked how the Open Space Committee feels about this project? Hal and John both said they like it. In response to how all the restraints affect the project, Hal said the appraisals will take them into consideration.

It was noted that developers would be more interested in the Lambert farm if they could put it together with Ziegenfuss.

John said that preserving the Lambert property "fits the pie" with Ziegenfuss, Toll, Holcombe, Kilmer.

Not having to take money away from another project was agreed to be a plus.

It was the unanimous consensus of the AAC that the project should move ahead. Chester will compose a letter to that effect to the Open Space Committee with a copy to the Township Committee.

Other Business:

Betty Jane asked about the pig ordinance, Chapter 170: Pigs and Swine noted in the minutes from the last meeting. The Ordinance will be reviewed by the Planning Board Planner. It will then go to the Planning Board for review. The Agricultural Advisory Committee will review the Planning Board draft and finally it will go to the Board of Health. Chapter 170: Pigs and Swine is a Board of Health ordinance.

The next meeting will be April 3rd and will begin at 7:30 p.m.

The acting secretary for April will be Greg.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Jane Hunt,
Acting Secretary