

The regular meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by John Cronce, Committee Chair.

Present for this meeting were the following Committee members: Ernie Andreoli, Marla Ashton, George Fisher (Township Committee Liaison), Judith O'Brien, John Cronce (Committee Chair), Hal Shute (Vice Chair), Cathy Urbanski and Christine Rosikiewicz (Committee Secretary). Laurel Hills and Alison Sommers-Sayer were absent.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from any public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 11, 2013: Mr. Shute made a motion to approve the minutes with one typographical correction on page 2; Ms. Urbanski seconded it. Motion was approved by roll call vote with all in favor and Mr. Cronce abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS

Green Acres Projects

Wooden North: Mr. Shute reported that this property did not close as the seller did not have a clear title. Mr. Shute explained that there are new tax laws pertaining to land that is not residential and where the State views the land as commercial property. Capital gains taxes must be paid in advance and then a rebate requested; this is a significant amount of money that needs to be put out. Green Acres funds have been received; awaiting County funds.

Halper: Appraisals are due; the offer is anticipated soon from Green Acres if it hasn't been received already. There are power line easements on the property owned by JCP&L. JCP&L may be looking to upgrade their substation and are negotiating with the property owner on this which may affect the Green Acres acquisition.

Wooden North (continued): Mr. Cronce reported that he walked the property with D&R Greenway and commented that it is an attractive property.

Farmland Preservation Projects

Toll North: Mr. Shute reported that there still isn't an option agreement in yet but the County is proceeding with appraisals which should be in by next month. He will follow up at the County meeting next week.

Wooden South: Nothing new to report.

Coleman Farm/Toll South: Mr. Cronce reported that this property is in the process of being auctioned; a date has been set. Mr. Shute said he may need help with marketing the property. Ms. Urbanski will provide maps. Mr. Cronce inquired if a sign will be placed on the property; Mr. Fisher replied that the SADC may put one up.

Lambert Farm: Mr. Shute has been in contact with the property owner who is completing an application. McGill Farms has rite of first refusal on a six acre parcel which would require a lot line adjustment. There are several exceptions in the application. The application will be submitted in September; the deadline is October.

Fozman: Mr. Shute will contact the property owner.

Jingoli: There was no update.

Ziegenfuss: This property will be added to the agenda for September. Mr. Cronce and Mr. Shute will contact the property owner. The Committee discussed access on this property; it has unusable frontage on Rt. 202. The owner is interested in preserving; the property is eighty acres.

Other Properties for Possible Preservation: Ms. Urbanski suggested two properties for consideration for possible preservation; Miller and Kiriluk. Mr. Cronce will reach out to Bill Kiriluk, one of the property owners. It was noted that Mr. Kiriluk is on the Agricultural Advisory Committee and may not be able to apply for preservation while serving on the Committee. Mr. Shute will inquire to the County about this when they meet next week.

Other

County Grant: Mr. Cronce reported that the County Grant application is almost complete.

Trails: Mr. Cronce reported that this project has been slowed down due to the wet weather. The Committee discussed the proposed trail; it could be used in May and June but then the summer is hot and there is hunting in the fall. The revenue from hunting was mentioned. It was agreed to not mow the trail now as hunting begins in a month and to put this item back on the agenda in January.

Easement Inspections: Ms. Urbanski went over the map created by Joanna Slagel. It will include layers with all easements, municipal property, Green Acres properties, farmland and each land parcel.

NEW BUSINESS

Hunting Program: Mr. Cronce has received surveys from permit holders. He commented favorably on the hunting signs and Ms. Urbanski's work on them. Mr. Malek provided a list of properties that need signs; the signs will be handed out to the hunting clubs to be posted.

State Funding: Mr. Shute reported that there have been two attempts to get a bill passed for new open space funding. The senate was called over to the summer to vote on it but the bill failed by two votes, as a result there will be no new funding this year. Mr. Shute commented that the Committee must spend what they have prudently.

New Map: Ms. Urbanski requested help reviewing the map; Ms. Ashton offered to help her. Ms. Urbanski inquired if the map should be mailed to all residents; the cost for this was discussed. Mr. Fisher suggested this be discussed at the end of November to determine if there are funds to do this at that time.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Sean Pfeiffer said he believes the Zoning Board attorney has a copy of the access easements for the Ziegenfuss property.

Mr. Pfeiffer commented that the Kiriluk property would be a great property to preserve. He said the SADC regulations specify that a member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee cannot have an active farmland application. Mr. Pfeiffer further explained that while the Agricultural Advisory Committee is charged with applying for preservation in practice the Open Space Advisory Committee has always done the paperwork. Mr. Pfeiffer suggested the Committee look into this; Mr. Cronce will follow up with the County when he meets with them.

Mr. Pfeiffer said the open space funding bill passed with a majority in both houses but it was to go on a referendum. According to the State Constitution a super majority is needed for this or for the bill to having a passing vote two years in a row.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 10, 2013.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Cronce announced that the “Celebrate West Amwell” 3rd Annual Agricultural Dinner is on September 6, 2013 at 6:30pm. Tickets are \$20 and available for purchase at the municipal building.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Urbanski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Andreoli, to adjourn the meeting at 8:11p.m. All were in favor; the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine A. Rosikiewicz
Open Space Secretary