

Open Space Advisory Committee – March 9, 2010

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Baran, Kowalski, Pfeiffer, Sommers-Sayre

Late Arrival: None

Absent: Andreoli, Cronce, Fisher (Twp. Committee Liaison), Hess

Opening Statement by Chair

Pfeiffer noted for the record that the February meeting had been canceled due to inclement weather.

Opportunity for Public Comment

John Dupuis – West Amwell Township Parks & Recreation Committee chairman addressed the Open Space Committee regarding his concerns about the county park on Gulick Road. He said that as of January 2010 he has not received additional information from East Amwell regarding the project and felt that East Amwell was proceeding without us. It was suggested again that a specific proposal needs to be provided by the Parks & Recreation Committee stating what the Township would like to see there.

Approval of written record for 08Dec2009 meeting

(Baran – ineligible)

Motion to approve the record as presented was made by Kowalski with a second by Sommers-Sayre. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes.

Approval of written record for 12Jan2010 meeting

Motion to approve the record as presented was made by Kowalski with a second by Baran. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes.

Future Open Space Planning – Discussion

Municipal Farmland Preservation PIG Application (2009/2010/2011 funding rounds) – Pfeiffer reported that he met with the Ag. Advisory Committee in February, which is developing responses to some questions posed by special planner Linda Weber.

Future Targeted Farms Discussion – Pfeiffer reported that he met with Bernie Meader regarding the possibility of preserving the Roebing properties on Barry Road. Properties are located in both West Amwell and Hopewell Township. The properties are contiguous but are not all in common ownership since Mr. Roebing passed away. The farms in West Amwell as currently configured don't meet SADC minimum criteria due to percentage of the properties that are

wooded. If the two properties in West Amwell were dealt with as one farm then it would meet the SADC criteria and would rank fairly high among all applications in the state. However, the farms are not in common ownership and the owners aren't really interested in preserving it as one farm. Pfeiffer inquired with the SADC whether they could cross county lines, which they can as a superior sovereign. If the Roebings were willing to stretch the deed of easement lines into Hopewell Township then the application would be eligible and would rank fairly high. In this event the project would need to be pursued via the SADC Direct Easement program rather than the municipal or County PIGs since the Township and County can't cross municipal or county boundaries. They are not interested in public access, so using Green Acres funding is not an option.

Green Acres Funding – Pfeiffer noted that he spoke with Jesse Lawson around the holidays. He owns a 23 acre property on 518 that is surrounded on three sides by DEP property. He is interested in selling 15 acres to the state outright. Pfeiffer put him in touch with Catherine Drake and an application has been submitted.

2010 Budget – Pfeiffer noted that he received a phone call from the Township Clerk about whether we were required to do a newsletter to taxpayers each year. Pfeiffer noted that the resolution that established the Open Space Committee said we were required to do an annual report to taxpayers each year but there is no statutory requirement to do a newsletter.

Easement Monitoring

Letter from DEP Green Acres re: Easement Monitoring – Baran indicated there was nothing new to report in light of all the recent snow.

Update on easement monitoring activities – Baran installed some chains in Calton prior to the snow storm and will install the rest shortly. The Toll property is scheduled to close on March 16 at 4 p.m. Baran will install a chain on the driveway shortly after closing and will begin posting the property after the closing.

Easement Markers for New Development – Nothing new to report.

Miscellaneous Project Updates

Open Space Newsletter – Sommer-Sayre will hold work on the newsletter until funding situation is resolved so she has a better idea of what type of publication we should do this year.

County Municipal Grant Application – Initial materials received from County.

Open Space Map Updates – No changes until Toll project closes.

Project Assignments

No additional project assignments were made.

Farmland Preservation Project Update

- Next Farmland Preservation status meeting at the Hunterdon County Planning Board is on March 24th.
- Amwell Hunt, Block 8, Lots 20 & 36, 130.36 acres, Route 179/Rock-Lamb Rd.
Toll Brothers South, also known as West Amwell Ltd. Under contract.
Closing scheduled for March 16. Pfeiffer reported on status and the many bureaucratic issues he recently confronted and resolved at both the County and State level. The Committee also discussed maintenance and security issues that will need to be addressed after closing.
- Gulick III (Block 14, Lot 33.05) ~17 acres, Gulick Road
Agricultural division of land from Gulick I. As a condition of CADB approval for Gulick I, the Gulicks have signed an option agreement granting West Amwell Township and Hunterdon County a five year option agreement, expiring February 28, 2013, to purchase a development rights easement for CMV, which remains to be determined. Farm ranks sufficiently high to be funded via the County FIG. Appraisals completed and submitted by County to SADC for certification.
- Nunn (Block 8, Lot 29.01) ~30 acres, Mill Road
Liaison: Pfeiffer
Nunns returned the required option agreement to the County prior to the deadline. Farm will be pursued via the Municipal FIG. County will help with the GIS mapping.

Green Acres Project Update

- Bowers (Block 28, Lot 26) ~21.5 acres, Goat Hill Road
Potential conservation easement project.
- Kilmer (Block 8, Lots 14 & 15), ~62 acres, Route 179
Conservation easement project. Under contract. Environmental assessment and survey approved by Green Acres. Lot line adjustment application pending before Board of Adjustment.
- King (Block 13, Lot 65) ~14 acres, Mt. Airy-Harbourton Road.
Potential conservation easement project.
- Lawson (Block 16, Lot 6.01) ~15 acres, Route 518.
Potential direct state acquisition. Pfeiffer spoke with Jesse Lawson over the holidays and put him in touch with Catherine Drake. Mr. Lawson is interested in selling approximately 15 acres of his 23 acre property directly to the state. Property is surrounded by Green Acres property on three sides. Catherine Drake has confirmed application has been received by Green Acres.

Bill List

The following bills were received from Sharon Dragan, Esq.:

\$74.53 – Attend County Meeting – Billed to Reserve for Preliminary Expenses.

\$117.60 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

\$1367.10 – Toll (West Amwell Ltd.) – Billed to Toll Brothers Ord. 05-2009.

Correspondence

No additional correspondence was discussed.

Opportunity for Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Kowalski with a second by Baran . Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Next Meeting

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 13, 2010, 7:30 p.m.