

## **Open Space Advisory Committee – May 11, 2010**

### **Call to Order**

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

### **Attendance**

Present: Baran, Cronce, Kowalski, Pfeiffer

Late Arrival: None

Absent: Andreoli, Fisher (Twp. Committee Liaison), Hess, Sommers-Sayre

### **Opportunity for Public Comment**

Lonnie Baldino, West Amwell Zoning Officer, presented his views and concerns with respect to use of ATVs and similar recreational vehicles on private land which has been preserved with conservation easements using public funding. Deed easements vary by property so a consistent approach to enforcement is elusive. It was noted that West Amwell Township only has enforcement powers on property in which it has an easement interest. With respect to a specific property raised by Zoning Officer Baldino, the Township does not have an easement interest. It was recommended that he contact Catherine Drake at Green Acres/DEP regarding this matter. Zoning Officer Baldino will also contact Buena Vista Township to inquire about their experience in enforcing a related ordinance that they have on this matter.

### **Approval of written record for 09Mar2010 meeting**

(Andreoli, Cronce, Hess – ineligible)

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

### **Approval of written record for 13Apr2010 meeting**

(Hess – ineligible)

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

### **Future Open Space Planning – Discussion**

2010 Municipal Budget & Open Space Tax Discussion – The Committee discussed an article in the last Hunterdon Country Democrat regarding the possibility of a referendum to reduce the open-space tax. The impact of reducing the open space tax upon long-term debt service obligations and the targeted spending plan to achieve the long-term preservation goals were discussed. There is currently \$2.2 million in the Open Space Trust Fund. The current open space tax revenue is essentially equal to required debt service. If this tax revenue is reduced, then funds currently in the Open Space Trust Fund will need to be dedicated for debt service. Pfeiffer reported that he spoke with CFO Jane Luhrs who advised that if the tax was permanently reduced by 2 cents we would

need to dedicate nearly \$1.6 million of the current Open Space Trust Fund for long-term debt service. This means the Township would not have the money available to follow its long-term spending plan without issuing additional debt. CFO Luhrs also advised that recalling the debt early probably wouldn't make sense either due to additional expenses involved. Pfeiffer will provide data to the Township Committee on these matters at their next meeting.

Discussion Re: Toll Project Status – Cronce/Baran reported that they contacted several contractors regarding demolition of the buildings. Only debris and buildings will be removed; slabs/foundation will be left intact. Two sealed bids have been received, and two more are expected. The final bid submission date is Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. Permits are included in the bid requirements and insurance must be verified. It was noted that one building is pre-1800 and should be mothballed but not demolished, along with an adjoining brick structure. A site plan was highlighted to designate which buildings are to be demolished. Cronce will submit this to the construction office. Cronce also reported that the fire department asked if they could practice cutting-for-rescue in the buildings before demolishing. While the Committee was supportive, it was agreed that this proposal should be presented by the Fire Department to the Township Committee for approval. Baran is continuing with the tree inventory and preparing the property for mowing, which is planned for this summer and before the auction date. There may be an opportunity to farm some portions of the property. Cronce is contacting some local farmers to determine interest. The property is to be sold with the trees remaining. There is a need to maintain the farmland assessment so some activity is desired and to complete the required forms prior to the sale. Pfeiffer also reported on status of obtaining the county reimbursement for this project.

Discussion Re: Open Space Plan – Pfeiffer will coordinate review and updates with Kowalski and Sommers-Sayre.

Municipal Farmland Preservation PIG Application (2009/2010/2011 funding rounds) – Waiting for the SADC to complete its review of latest draft of plan.

Update on Roebing – Property is on the market but eventual new owners could also be approached about preserving the property.

Green Acres Funding – Cronce will contact Ludwig again.

### **Easement Monitoring**

Letter from DEP Green Acres re: Easement Monitoring – Nothing new to report.

Update on easement monitoring activities – Nothing new to report.

Easement Markers for New Development – Nothing new to report.

### **Miscellaneous Project Updates**

Discussion Re: Training Video – Attendance list was distributed for those who viewed the video online.

Open Space Newsletter – Nothing new to report.

County Municipal Grant Application – Nothing new to report.

Open Space Map Updates – Nothing new to report.

### **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 May 19.
- Amwell Hunt, Block 8, Lots 20 & 36, 130.36 acres, Route 179/Rock-Lamb Rd.  
Toll Brothers South, also known as West Amwell Ltd. Closed on March 16.
- 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. CMV presented to Gulicks who have accepted the offer.
- 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. Application approved by Board of Adjustment in March. Kilmer requested modification of exception area; revised survey description being prepared and will be submitted to Green Acres for approval. Kilmer has scheduled cleanup on the property after which environmental consultant will need to perform another site inspection.
- 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 Lawson recently.  
Green Acres is interested and will be proceeding with appraisals.

### **Bill List**

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

\$367.50 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

\$382.20 – 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 Cronic with a second by Baran. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

### **Next Meeting**

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 8, 2010, 7:30 p.m.