

Open Space Advisory Committee – August 10, 2010

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Baran, Fisher (Twp. Committee Liason), Hess, Sommers-Sayre, Pfeiffer

Late Arrival: None

Absent: Andreoli, Cronce, Kowalski

Opportunity for Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

Approval of written record for 11May2010 meeting

(Andeoli, Hess, Sommers-Sayre - ineligible)

Minor typo on first page was corrected. Motion to approve the record with the correction was made by Baran with a second by Pfeiffer. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes.

Approval of written record for 25May2010 joint meeting with Environmental Commission

(Baran – ineligible)

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

Approval of written record for 25May2010 special meeting

(Baran – ineligible)

Motion to approve the record as present was made by Sommers-Sayre with a second by Hess. Motion approved on voice vote – all ayes.

Future Open Space Planning – Discussion

Resolution Re: 2010 Municipal Budget & Open Space Tax Discussion – It was noted that the Township Committee had decided not to put a referendum on the ballot this year due to the open space tax revenue essentially being equal to the debt service. Fisher noted that in 2013 the debt would be callable and the Committee might look into refinancing at that time.

Discussion Re: Toll Project Status – Pfeiffer reported that Cronce has taken the lead as the project manager to prepare the property for auction. It was noted public works has been working hard on the property. Pfeiffer related Cronce's praise for public works for the work they have done on the property. Baran reported on the work that has been ongoing. Cronce met with Tax Assessor David Gill last month and filed the farmland assessment forms in July.

Discussion Re: Open Space Plan – Discussion revolved around developing a ranking system for conservation easement projects, similar to what has already been developed for farmland preservation projects. It was noted that the Township Committee had determined that the King project would not be a priority for the Township. It was suggested that priority should be given to farms, for which farmland preservation funding isn't available. Another consideration suggested was landowner willingness to provide a donation or discount to CMV. It was noted that it can be difficult to get realistic appraisals on smaller parcels since comparable sales utilized in such appraisals tend to be approved building lots as opposed to other preservation projects. Another factor noted was that parcels should be a certain minimum size or adjacent to other preserved parcels. It was noted that volunteers could first develop a plan, but that the Township's planner should ultimately review it. The planner's fee could be paid for from Open Space Trust funds. Fisher commented that he felt priority should be given to properties with development potential. Pfeiffer noted that he agreed with this opinion completely. The rest of the Committee also agreed. There was some discussion over specific criteria that could be considered when evaluating development criteria, including perc test data, zoning, environmental resources maps, etc. Hess suggested reviewing our farmland preservation criteria to see what areas could be copied to the open space criteria.

Municipal Farmland Preservation PIG Application (2009/2010/2011 funding rounds) – Waiting for the SADC to complete its review of latest draft of plan. Pfeiffer noted that he left a message for Tim Brill re: status and is still waiting for a return phone call.

Green Acres Funding – Pfeiffer noted that he had prepared the Green Acres funding request which was approved by the Township Committee and submitted to Green Acres.

Easement Monitoring

Letter from DEP Green Acres re: Easement Monitoring – Baran indicated there was nothing new to report.

Update on easement monitoring activities – Baran indicated there was nothing new to report. Pfeiffer reported that we had received a letter from the Stiefels regarding the sale of their property, inquiring as to whether the Township wanted to exercise its right of first refusal on their property which is for sale. The Township Committee declined.

Miscellaneous Project Updates

Open Space Newsletter – Since there is no budget for a newsletter this year the Committee will just do a Web publication with the annual preservation update and an updated map. It was suggested a copy of the report could be sent to the local reporters to potentially provide some additional coverage.

County Municipal Grant Application – Pfeiffer asked for volunteers to help with the application this year. Kowalski was suggested by several members. Hess said he may be able to assist Kowalski.

Open Space Map Updates – Update will be done after Kilmer closes. Toll and Kilmer will need to be shown as closed.

Project Assignments

Pfeiffer will check with Kowalski after he returns to see if he will be available to assist with the County Municipal Grant application.

Farmland Preservation Project Update

- 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. Cleanup work to prepare property for auction is ongoing.
- Gulick III (Block 14, Lot 33.05) ~17 acres, Gulick Road
County PIG project. Gulicks have accepted offer. Township Committee granted final approval and approved funding ordinance for municipal cost share.
- 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 PIG. 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. Revised survey received and submitted to Green Acres. Baseline report needs to be done and closing is pending resolution of some cleanup issues by Kilmers.
- King (Block 13, Lot 65) ~14 acres, Mt. Airy-Harbourton Road.
Potential conservation easement project. Township Committee has advised Mr. King that project would not be a priority.
- Lawson (Block 16, Lot 6.01) ~15 acres, Route 518.
Potential direct state acquisition. Appraisals ongoing.

Bill List

The following bill was received from Bohren & Bohren:

\$715.00 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

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

\$83.69 – Attend County Meeting – Billed to Reserve for Preliminary Expenses.

\$249.90 – Gulick III – Billed to Reserve for Preliminary Expenses.

\$294.00 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

\$808.50 – 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.

Closed Session (Purchase, Lease, or Acquisition of Real Property)

The Committee held a closed session to discuss status of the demolition on the Toll project. Motion to enter closed session was made by Baran with a second by Hess. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes. Closed session began at 8:12 p.m.

Motion to return to open session was made by Baran with a second by Sommers-Sayre. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes. Closed session concluded at 8:23 p.m. There were no results of the closed session to report at this time.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Hess with a second by Baran. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Next Meeting

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 14, 2010, 7:30 p.m.