

Open Space Advisory Committee – December 8, 2009

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Cronce, Hess, Kowalski, Pfeiffer, Sommers-Sayre

Late Arrival: Andreoli - arrived at 7:45 p.m., Corboy (Twp. Committee Liaison) - arrived at 7:50 p.m.

Absent: Baran

Opening Statement by Chair

Pfeiffer noted for the record that the November, 2009 meeting had been canceled due to lack of a quorum.

Opportunity for Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

Approval of written record for 13Oct2009 meeting

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

Future Open Space Planning – Discussion

Update on old Farmland Preservation Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) soft cost reimbursements – Pfeiffer noted that after much effort all of the outstanding soft cost reimbursements for the old PIG have finally been received. Our old PIG state grant account can now be closed out and these now completed projects will be removed from future agendas. The remaining balance was only about \$2385, for which there are no remaining eligible expenses.

Municipal Farmland Preservation PIG Application (2009/2010/2011 funding rounds) – SFY 2011 application forms were reviewed and discussed. The targeted farms list is the same as last year. Pfeiffer noted he had spoken with Bernie Meader regarding the status of Roebing and they were not yet ready to proceed.

Green Acres Funding – It was noted required grant forms for the additional \$150,000 in grant funding that the Township was awarded this year were all submitted last month. It was also noted that additional funding may be available because the surveyed acreage on the Kilmer project was considerably less than what was anticipated based on the tax map.

Township Funding – Pfeiffer noted that he periodically requests information from CFO Luhrs regarding balances in funding ordinances and Open Space Trust

Fund. Spreadsheets from CFO Luhrs were distributed and discussed. Remaining balances from older bond ordinances will need to be canceled to capital surplus rather than the Open Space Trust Fund. It is important that this be tracked since debt service on these amounts is paid by open space tax and this funding is available to be utilized for future projects. Once appropriate ordinances have been canceled there will be approximately \$2.2 million that has not yet been allocated to specific projects, plus money that will eventually be received as reimbursements for the Toll and Kilmer projects are received.

Easement Monitoring

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

Update on easement monitoring activities – Township Committee has approved using park maintenance funding to restrict vehicular access to some open space areas.

Easement Markers for New Development – Nothing new to report.

Miscellaneous Project Updates

County Municipal Grant Application – Grant funding received. Pfeiffer thanked Cathy Urbanski for her assistance with preparing the grant application again this year.

Open Space Newsletter Status Update – Newsletter is at the printer and will be in mailboxes later this month.

Open Space Map Updates – No changes pending. Current map is available on Township Web site and in the hallway at municipal building.

Project Assignments

No new project assignments were made.

Farmland Preservation Project Update

- Next Farmland Preservation status meeting at the Hunterdon County Planning Board is on December 16.
- 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.

Mayor and Township Clerk have been authorized to sign closing documents and available, as well as silo license agreement with Tom Zeng at closing. Pfeiffer reported on status. There was some discussion about securing the property after closing as well as finding a landscape operator to maintain the fields.

- Fulper Heifer I & II (Block 20, Lots 2 & 2.01) ~88.55 ac., Rocktown-Lamb Rd
Soft cost reimbursements from county and state received. Project completed
- Gulick I (Block 14, Lot 33.02) ~52 acres, Gulick Road
Soft cost reimbursements from county and state received. Project completed.
- Gulick II (Block 13, Lot 34) ~38 acres, Gulick Road
Soft cost reimbursements from county and state received. Project completed.
- Gulick III (Block 14, Lot 33.05) ~17 acres (TBD), 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. County has ordered appraisals.
- Hanover Shoe Farm (Block 19, Lot 3.01) ~68 acres, Rock Road West
Liaison: Pfeiffer
Owners declined to return county option agreement, but Township Committee was willing to consider providing a 40% cost share on this farm to keep things moving forward via the Municipal FIG. Pfeiffer spoke with their engineer re: status and was advised landowner has been unresponsive to further inquiries. Project will therefore be considered inactive.
- Holcombe II (Block 5, Lot 15) ~60 acres, Route 179
Home Farm. Liaison: Pfeiffer.
Soft cost reimbursements from county and state received. Project completed.
- Nunn (Block 8, Lot 29.01) ~30 acres, Mill Road
Liaison: Pfeiffer
Nunns returned the required option agreement to the County prior to the March deadline. Farm will be pursued via the Municipal FIG.

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 completed and being reviewed. Pfeiffer reported on conversation with surveyor re: gross acreage.
- King (Block 13, Lot 65) ~14 acres, Mt. Airy-Harbourton Road.
Potential conservation easement project.

Bill List

The following bills were received from Bohren and Bohren:

\$9900.00 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

\$509.40 – Toll (West Amwell Ltd.) – Billed to Toll Brothers Ord. 05-2009.

The following bill was received from Gould Environmental:

\$2350.00 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

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

\$29.40 – Kilmer – Billed to Kilmer Ord. 21-2009.

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

\$2373.15 – Toll (West Amwell Ltd.) – Billed to Toll Brothers Ord. 05-2009.

\$2116.80 – 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.

Mayor Corboy commented that he had enjoyed serving as the Open Space Committee's liaison and thanked the Committee for working so well together and for building a strong record of land preservation in the Township.

Pfeiffer thanked Mayor Corboy for his support and assistance over the last three years. He also thanked the various members of the Committee for all their help this year.

Alison Sommers-Sayre was thanked for her work on the annual newsletter. It was agreed the newsletter in conjunction with more detailed minutes had demonstrated a real improvement in communication with the public over the last several years.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Kowalski with a second by Hess. Motion carried on voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Next Meeting

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 Reorganization Meeting, 7:30 p.m.