

The regular meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:34 p.m. Present for this meeting were the following Committee members: John Cronce, Jamie Kamph, Dan Malek, Judith O'Brien, Hal Shute, and Cathy Urbanski. Board Secretary, Christine Rosikiewicz, was also present. Marla Ashton and Rich Schaible were absent.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Sean Pfeiffer spoke about conversations he has had with Toll Brothers; they would like to use the property as a landscaping operation and have the sale occur after the property is preserved.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**April 8, 2014: Ms. Urbanski made a motion to approve the minutes with the following changes: page 3, paragraph 6 omit "there is no hunting on Sundays on this property", page 3 paragraph 8 add block and lot number, and typographical corrections. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion. All were in favor with Mr. Shute abstaining.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Green Acres Projects

Wooden North: Mr. Shute walked this property with D&R Greenways. Scott Holcombe will continue to farm the property.

Halper: Mr. Shute has been following up on this property; he had heard it is close to being complete.

Farmland Preservation Projects

Toll North: Mr. Cronce attended the CADB meeting last Thursday; the CADB approved preservation of the farm.

Coleman Farm/Toll South: Mr. Cronce reported that the Toll South farm was auctioned off. He attended a meeting with the SADC with Mr. Fisher and Attorney Sharon Dragan. The SADC voted to approve the sale of the property; it will now go to the Governor for his signature. The Governor has until June 5th to veto; if there is no action taken then the sale is approved. The closing will be scheduled after June 5th.

Mr. Cronce expressed thanks to Mr. Fisher and the Township Committee for their help with the application. He commented favorable on the work Township Clerk Lora Olson and Deputy Clerk Sandy Haberle did.

Lambert: Mr. Shute reported that the County voted to approve moving forward on this property. A determination needs to be made regarding an easement for the cell tower.

Hunter (B 30 L 12): Mr. Cronce reported that the Committee's recommendation regarding this property was provided to the Township Committee. There has been no further contact from the real estate agent.

Easement Inspections: Mr. Cronce reported that progress is being made on the inspections.

Trails: Mr. Cronce asked the Committee if this group should meet again and if the Environmental Commission is involved with Township trails. Ms. Urbanski will inquire with the Environmental Commission. Mr. Shute reported that the trail on Goat Hill Road is to be developed by Alan Hershey and has been flagged.

Ms. Urbanski inquired about the trail on the municipal property. Mr. Shute reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee has discussed the trails.

Mr. Cronce asked to table the discussion on trails until the June meeting.

Hewitt Park Expansion: Mr. Cronce explained that the proposed property for purchase is in the southwest corner of the property. The funds to purchase the property would come from Green Acres. Township Committee has requested the Open Space Advisory Committee review the project and provide an amount of the Green Acres funds they would be willing to spend for this property.

The use of the property could either be for parking or expansion of the park for a better buffer at the property line.

Comments were made about Hewitt Park being the only Township park and that children play baseball and soccer there. When there is a well attended game cars are parked on the roads as there is a lack of parking at the park. A full sized basketball court could possibly be added. The necessity of having enough parking was again brought up.

The Committee discussed a price for the property; it was noted that it is a one acre unusable lot. Mr. Cronce inquired if an appraisal would be needed. Mr. Shute said the contract could be made "subject to an appraisal". Mr. Cronce does not want the Township to have to incur the cost of the appraisal. Mr. Shute said the owner considers it a building lot; it was noted that lot has not been perked.

Mr. Cronce summarized that the consensus of the Committee was to spend \$20,000. A letter will be sent to Township Committee to advise them that it is the Open Space Advisory Committee's recommendation to spend \$20,000 for the property but not to spend funds on an appraisal or any funds from the Open Space Trust. The \$20,000 could also be a match of a landowner donation.

Mr. Shute reported that there is \$116,000 remaining in the Green Acres grant.

Website: Ms. Urbanski volunteered to take care of the website.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Zink: Mr. Shute described the Zink property; it is wooded and adjacent to the Wooden farm. The Committee reviewed a map of the property. Ms. Kamph commented favorably about the property. Mr. Shute said he was unsure if it was developable; Ms. Kamph noted that it is wet and wooded. Mr. Shute said the property owner does not want to sell; he is looking at conservation with some public access. Mr. Shute is meeting with Mr. Zink and Jay Watson on Thursday; Mr. Cronce, Ms. Kamph, Ms. Urbanski, and Ms. O'Brien would also like to attend. The Committee further discussed this property. Ms. Urbanski noted that it would be contiguous with the Wooden property. Ms. Kamph said that access should be looked at.

Galloway: Mr. Shute reported that this property has been on the market since the fall. It is 22 acres with a cottage on the property. The property has access to Mount Airy Harbortown Road. Ms. Kamph inquired if Green Acres would be interested in the property. Mr. Shute said the asking price is \$250,000. Ms. Kamph will call the agent and advise that the property could be preserved after it is purchased.

PIG Review: Mr. Shute would like to "clean up" the targeted farm list. He will reach out to the 6-8 farm owners on the list to determine if they are interested in preservation.

Budget: Mr. Shute referred to sheets provided by the CFO regarding the introduced budget. There is \$288,000 collected annually from the Open Space tax. Approximately \$320,000 in revenues is collected. There is approximately \$300,000 in debt service. The goal is to keep the budget flat; it looks like this can be achieved.

Mr. Shute drafted a budget for the Open Space Advisory Committee and distributed it to the Committee. He went over the draft budget which includes a list of properties under consideration for preservation and available funds.

By-Laws: This item will be tabled until June.

Letter of Thanks Re: Toll South Auction: Mr. Cronce will send a letter of thanks to Township Committee, the Department of Public Works, West Amwell Police Department, Clerk Lora Olson, and Deputy Clerk Sandy Haberle for their work with this property and the auction.

### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Cronce inquired if Mr. Pfeiffer had anything he wanted to add to the conversation before the next item. With regard to the proposed Hewitt Park expansion Mr. Pfeiffer advised that Green Acres requires an environmental assessment which costs a few thousand dollars.

### **NEW BUSINESS (REVISITED)**

Township Hunting Program: Mr. Malek, chairman of the Hunting Program sub-committee, went over the history of the Township hunting program. The hunting program generates revenue for the Township. It began by renting land to individual residents the first year. Going forward it was changed to leasing the land to hunting groups where the head of the group has to be a Township resident. Each year a survey is completed by the groups to determine the number of deer killed. The focus going forward is to shift to more deer management.

Mr. Malek reviewed the changes for the 2014/2015 season and read from the contract. If any parcel is removed from the program the affected group will have right of first refusal of any new property added. An example of this is what happened this year when the Coleman parcel was sold and the Wooden property was added to the program.

Mr. Malek read from the revised contract regarding doe harvesting. One doe per hunter is required per property. He noted that this skews the numbers for doe harvesting and suggested the contract assign a doe harvest quota to each group instead based on the size of the parcel.

Ms. Kamph inquired why deer management is part of this Committee. Mr. Shute replied that it is part of managing the open space.

Ms. Kamph noted that there has only been one lottery and inquired if it should be held again, possibly every five years. Mr. Malek said that high turnover would lead to conflicts and problems. With the current system the hunters can get to know the property and how the deer move on it. The hunters can manage the property and it can be a stewardship of the property. Mr. Cronce noted that there have not been any complaints. Further comments were exchanged expressing concern about the one time lottery and the current system working fine.

Other State hunting requirements and how other Townships manage similar programs was discussed.

Ms. Kamph inquired if a separate Hunting Committee could be formed that would report directly to Township Committee. Mr. Malek said unless there is a problem it is only discussed by this Committee once a year.

Mr. Malek further read from the contract about the municipal property that will be added to the program this year. This parcel will cost \$800 a year. This annual fee is paid by the group assigned.

Mr. Fisher commented that the properties should be rebid every five years. Mr. Cronce said they can think about this in the next few years.

Mr. Cronce asked Mr. Malek to incorporate these changes in the contract and forward it to Township Committee.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be on June 10, 2014.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Urbanski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kamph, to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. All were in favor; the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Christine A. Rosikiewicz  
Open Space Secretary