

The regular meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:31 p.m. Present for this meeting were the following Committee members: Marla Ashton, John Cronce, George Fisher, Jamie Kamph, Dan Malek, and Cathy Urbanski. Board Secretary, Christine Rosikiewicz, was also present. Hal Shute and Rich Schaible were absent.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Cronce addressed the public present and explained that this portion of the meeting was for comment on any items not on the agenda. He inquired if they were here for the Zink or Russo property. One member of the public indicated that he was in attendance regarding the Wooden property.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 13, 2014: Ms. Kamph made a motion to approve the minutes with the following changes: page 2, 4th paragraph, line 1 should read "Mr. Cronce explained that the proposed property for purchase is in the southwest corner of the park"; page 4, 4th paragraph should read "Mr. Malek further read from the contract about the municipal property portion 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"; and two surname spelling corrections. Ms. Urbanski seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed via roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Green Acres Projects

Wooden North: Ms. Kamph reported that Wooden is complete . Building a parking lot on the Wooden property is being discussed. It was noted that the parking lot should not be next to the neighboring properties as they are residences. Problems such as theft were mentioned as this has been a problem in another Township parking lot. Fencing around the parking lot may be advisable. This can be discussed further when Zink is discussed. Ms. Kamph noted that the land near Hewitt Park was also going to be a parking lot. Ms. Kamph said Mr. Shute believed the parking lot should be very limited, basically a "pull in" for the hunters. Mr. Cronce believed Mr. Shute said the parking should be on the south portion of the property.

Zink: Ms. Kamph provided maps of the Zink property (B 29 L 15.02). Clifford Zink has spoke to D&R about preserving this property; D&R likes the idea of adding onto another preserved parcel. The property is a flag lot; there is a barn on it and it could accommodate one house. The property has access to Woodens Lane. Mr. Zink also owns B 29 L 15.04, jointly with his brother, which is 2.1 acres. Mr. Zink reports that B 29 L 15.04 is a building lot; Ms. Kamph believes if there are approvals they may be older and not up to current standards. The land is very steep and there does not appear to be perc. He is proposing to sell this property to D&R. The parcel would be 8.2 acres with public access and the 5.3 acres for the house envelope. The 4.6 acres would be sold directly to D&R. Ms. Kamph reported that she and Mr. Shute are concerned as there is already a large amount of open space in that part of the Township and the neighbors' privacy would be compromised. Ms. Kamph does not believe the Township would have anything to gain by this purchase as it would not be preventing additional building. She again noted that the neighbors' properties would be compromised by this purchase.

Mr. Fisher inquired about the down slope of the field. Ms. Kamph said the down slope was wooded. She did not believe the land was buildable even if zoning issues didn't exist.

Mr. Cronce said he believes the property is self-preserved with the hills and drastic slope.

Mr. Cronce opened the meeting to the public for comments on this item.

Mr. Louis Basco and Ms. Susan Basco, 21 Woodens Lane were present. Ms. Basco addressed her concern about the area being open to public access noting a series of robberies that had taken place in the Township. To her knowledge the land does not have perk; she noted the slope and expressed that she doesn't believe the land is buildable. She reiterated that her primary concern is public access and the possibility people would walk onto her property while hiking or walking dogs through the field; there have been problems with this in the past. She noted that there have not been any problems with hunters on her property.

Mr. Cronce thanked Ms. Basco and said her comments would be considered. The Board briefly discussed the lack of trails on the property.

Mr. Michel Maniez, 37 Woodens Lane, resides next to the Wooden North property. Mr. Maniez spoke favorably regarding open space. He told of burglaries on the street where the suspect parked by 59 Wooden Lane. There is also parking on Rt. 518. He questioned whether additional parking is needed and feels it is not. He inquired if trails were planned for this property.

Mr. Cronce said there are no plans for trails at this time; perhaps in the distance future trails would be planned. There would be deer hunters on the property in the fall.

Mr. Cronce believe the Committee should discuss the parking situation. Mr. Fisher believed a bump out on the side of the road would suffice. Mr. Cronce believed parking should be discouraged as there are no trails. The hunters have an area to park in by Mr. Maniez's property.

Mr. Cronce asked if a letter should be sent to D&R regarding the parking. Ms. Kamph said D&R is waiting for the Committee's response on the preservation.

Ms. Kamph made a motion that the Township not participate in the Zink preservation project that D&R laid out and that the Committee discourages D&R from putting a parking lot on the Wooden Preserve. Mr. Malek seconded the motion. The motion passed via roll call vote.

Halper: Mr. Shute will report on this property in September; it is believed it closed at the end of June.

Farmland Preservation Projects

Toll North: This property is still in contract review with the County.

Lambert: This application is with the SADC.

Hewitt Park Expansion: The sale contract is being drafted by the attorney; appraisal quotes are being obtained.

Zigenfuss: The property owner is applying for preservation on her own. Mr. Cronce asked the Committee if they wanted to proceed with preservation of this property as there have been discussions by the committee regarding it being self-preserved if the Lambert property is preserved. Although the property has a right of way it would be costly to build a road. Mr. Cronce will attend the County meeting.

Fulper: Mr. Cronce spoke to Mr. Shute regarding this property. Mr. Shute has spoken to the property owner regarding selling the development rights on the south side of the property using Green Acres funds.

Galloway: Ms. Kamph referred to the map of this property; it is at the end of the Alexauken Creek. Mr. Shute and Ms. Kamph spoke to the realtor about preserving ten acres of the stream at a cost of \$70,000. The Committee referred to the map and discussed this property and funding of it if preservation is desired. Highlights of the discussion included that this property would complete the trail, access to the property, the possibility of purchasing only the trail, the importance of connecting properties, the cost of the property, and the size of the property. The Committee will walk the property.

Other:

Easements Inspections: Ms. Urbanski is working on a 75 page report that she will provide to the Open Space Committee and Township Committee. Mr. Cronce thanked her for her work on this project.

Trails: This item was tabled until the September meeting.

PIG Review: This item was tabled until the September meeting.

By-Laws: Ms. Urbanski and Ms. Kamph have reviewed the by-laws. The ability of the Committee to have a paid secretary was added. Ms. Urbanski will forward this to the Secretary to distribute to the Committee via e-mail. The by-laws will be read and discussed at the September meeting. The public may view them and the Committee will vote on their approval.

Website: Ms. Urbanski has brought the webpage up to date. She would like to add additional information to the webpage including the map. Ms. Kamph commented favorably on the County website with regard to Open Space and suggested the Committee webpage have a link to the County website as the County website has the West Amwell open space plan on it.

NEW BUSINESS:

Township Property - Hay: Ms. Urbanski was asked by Mr. Cronce, as Environmental Chair, to research this property with regard to environmental issues. He also asked Mr. Malek for input as Chair of the Hunting Program. Ms. Urbanski went over a map with the Committee. She believes hay is a gentle crop for this property as it is a permanent cover, it is "kind to the soil", there are no pesticides necessary, and it is very self-sustaining. She expressed concern of the use of Round Up if the crop should change from hay to a Round Up resistant corn or soybean. The property is uphill of wetlands; she is concerned the Round Up would enter the streams. Round Up is toxic to amphibians and fish.

Mr. Cronce provided background; this property is owned by the Township and hay is farmed on it by Mr. Fulper. There is concern about erosion into the creek if a row crop is farmed instead of a grass crop.

Ms. Urbanski said there is consideration of deer permits being issued on this property. Deer will not damage the hay but will damage soybean and corn crops.

Ms. Kamph asked if the Committee wants to farm this land at all. Ms. Urbanski said in the past a consideration was to have grass was planted and cut after July 15th creating a bird habitat. Ms. Kamph spoke about a no mow grass on her property.

Mr. Fisher spoke of the benefit of having the land farmed so the Township does not have to mow the land.

Mr. Cronce said the Board could suggest to the farmer the field be kept in hay. He suggested the Open Space Committee send a joint letter with the Environmental Commission. Ms. Urbanski will report on this at the September Open Space Advisory Committee meeting after the Environmental Commission meets next.

Mr. Malek said there is no advantage to the Township if a crop is grown on the property. Mr. Cronce said the Wooden property will stay in hay. It was noted that runoff isn't a problem with hay crops.

Toll South: Mr. Fisher attended the closing on the Toll South property. Mr. Cronce explained that this property was owned by the Township and was sold through an auction. The property is preserved; there is a small portion with public access. The proceeds from the sale went to the Township and the State.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Sean Pfeiffer inquired if the Toll North contract has been sent to Toll North's attorneys. Mr. Cronce did not know as he did not attend the last County meeting. He is meeting with the County on July 16th and will ask then.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be on September 9, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Urbanski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Malek, to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. All were in favor; the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine A. Rosikiewicz
Open Space Secretary