

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

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There was no public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**September 9, 2014: Mr. Shute made a motion to approve the minutes with typographical corrections and the following changes: page 2 second paragraph change the word "maintain" to "control" and page 2, under By Laws, the first sentence should read "The Committee discussed this proposed change and agreed to eliminate Article VII, Ethical Standards". Ms. Urbanski seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed via roll call vote with three abstentions.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Green Acres Projects

Halper: Mr. Shute reported that this property has closed and the south side is now owned by DEP and under the management of the George Washington Park System. The north side has also been sold.

Hewitt Park Expansion: Mr. Shute reported that this property closed last Thursday. There was an environmental report completed which identified areas of concern. Pesticides were used in the past when the property was farmed; soil testing was recommended. The property cannot be used for active recreation unless testing is completed. Since this property will be used as a parking lot testing is not required.

The deed for the main part of Hewitt Park could not be found. It was noted that the park had been donated to the Township.

The donation letter and copy of appraisal have been given to the prior owner of the expansion property. The Township now has the deed for this property and will file for reimbursement from Green Acres. West Amwell paid \$23,000 and can be reimbursed these funds from Green Acres.

Galloway: Ms. Kamph suggested the Committee look at the pipeline trail in relation to this property. Mr. Cronce said that there are no current projects located near where the pipeline is proposed, except for Galloway, although some completed projects are.

Farmland Preservation Projects

Toll North: Mr. Cronce reported that this application is with the County to be signed.

Lambert: This application is still with the SADC.

Zigenfuss: This property will be taken off the agenda.

Holcombe III: Mr. Shute reported that he will ask that the removal of the paper street on the property be put on the Planning Board agenda after the property closes.

Fulper: The Committee decided to move forward with this property last month. Mr. Shute walked the property and determined exception areas. He will complete the application. The Committee discussed access to the property. The Committee will schedule to walk this property next week with the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Other:

Trails: Mr. Shute advised Mr. Hershey that they are not the right group to maintain the trails.

PIG Review: Mr. Shute will work on this; Mr. Cronce and Ms. Kamph will assist him.

By Laws: Township Committee has approved the by-laws.

Township Property - Hay: Township Committee has approved to keep the property farmed in hay.

Hunting Program: Mr. Malek referred to the request from a club to have members go back and forth between properties. This will be allowed.

Budget: Mr. Shute reported that at the Township Committee meeting last night it was decided to refinance the Open Space debt. Right now the Township is paying 4.5% on the biggest part of the Open Space debt. After the refinance the rate will be 2.86%. Mr. Shute recommended that up to \$400,000 be taken from the Open Space fund to pay down debt and refinance on the smaller amount. The goal is to lower the Open Space tax if possible. Mr. Cronce inquired about the amount of the Open Space debt. Mr. Shute said it is about \$300, 000 a year with a total of three million in debt. Mr. Cronce recommended Open Space funds be used to pay down the debt as long as it won't affect any of the current projects. Mr. Shute said it wouldn't. If a new project comes up funds can be borrowed or the Open Space tax not reduced.

Website: There was nothing new to report.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Bear Sightings: Mr. Malek has seen an increase in bear activities and sightings in the last couple of years. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife would like all sightings reported to determine where activity is. Mr. Malek explained how bears are captured, tagged, and released in the same area they were found. Information about bears can be found at New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's website at [www.njfishandwildlife.com](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com). The hot line to report sightings is 877-927-6337. This information will be added to the Township website.

## **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There was no public present.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Open Space Advisory Committee meeting is on November 11, 2014.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Urbanski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Mr. Shute seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Christine A. Rosikiewicz  
Open Space Secretary