

The reorganization meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present for this meeting were the following Committee members: John Cronce, Jamie Kamph, Dan Malek, Judith O'Brien, Rich Schaible, Hal Shute and Cathy Urbanski. Board Secretary, Christine Rosikiewicz, was also present. Marla Ashton and George Fisher (Township Committee Liaison) were absent.

**REORGANIZATION**

**Ms. Rosikiewicz called for nominations for Committee Chair. Mr. Shute nominated John Cronce; Ms. Urbanski seconded the nomination. All were in favor; Mr. Cronce was elected Committee Chair.**

**Mr. Cronce nominated Hal Shute for Vice Chair. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion. All were in favor. Mr. Shute was elected Vice Chair.**

Mr. Cronce announced that regular meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments from any public present.

On a suggestion from a Committee member to change the meeting time to 7pm from 7:30 pm the Committee agreed to make this change going forward.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**December 9, 2014: Ms. Schaible made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Malek seconded the motion. All were in favor with Ms. O'Brien; Ms. Kamph, and Ms. Urbanski abstaining.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Farmland Preservation Projects**

**Toll North:** Mr. Cronce referred to the December meeting where there was concern regarding the purchase of this farm and what farming operations would occur on the farm. Mr. Richard Maury, the prospective buyer of the Toll property, was in attendance to speak to the Committee tonight at Mr. Cronce's request.

Mr. Maury explained that he has had a tree care company, located in Stockton, which has been in business for the past thirty years. The intentions for the Toll property is to have the tree service farm the land and develop composting with the byproducts of the tree service. He would like to restore the farm possibly working with the current farmer for the first couple years then taking over the farming.

The compost would be integrated back into the soils on the farm along with being sold. This would improve the soils especially on a good portion of the property where the soil isn't the best. They plan on growing trees on the property.

Mr. Maury referred to a letter her wrote to the State which mentioned Biochar. He has since heard from Mr. Cronce that there are concerns about what Biochar is. He explained that Biochar is charcoal and that the initial studies are very promising for agriculture. Biochar is increasing yields,

increasing water retention, and decreasing bad run off. It is basically a filtration reestablishing a beneficial system back into the soil where the beneficial bacteria can thrive which will help with the nutrient and moisture retention in the soil. It is very new to mainstream agriculture although it has been used before. It is being used mainly with dairy, chicken, and hog farms.

Mr. Maury spoke of the lack of run off when using Biochar and how in the Susquehanna watershed, where this type of system is used, there can't be runoff.

Mr. Maury said Biochar is not about pollution, it is carbon free, and not about burning. He explained that it is taking carbon material and heating it in a machine. Instead of burning the material is heated and the gases come off the material and are burned. The byproduct is nothing but carbon; the emissions are clean. It does not smell; it is not smoky. The basic benefactor is carbon.

Mr. Maury said it is a heat source and hopefully in the next ten to twenty years this will be integrated into farming practices as it can produce electricity, heat, and carbon. It can be used for potting soil and compost and then integrated into the fields.

Mr. Maury said this is all hypothetical and it is not for him to say that they are going to that. The price points are "crazy" as the technology is new and not up to speed where it is economical. He spoke about the rising value of carbon credits in the past five years which would offset the cost of the machines. To him this is something that would be integrated into a farming practice. It is not "a huge thing that is just spewing out tons of bad exhaust and emissions" and he said it is beneficial. There is not one out that makes sense for him as they do not produce manure. They do have carbon which could be used. He spoke of fracking taking hold and the market blowing up for using something like a Biochar machine to produce heat. He spoke about the creator of the pellet stove trying to create a carbon neutral heating system but it wasn't viable. In a farming system this would be very viable and dairy and chicken farmers are looking into this. He said for him this would be "so far off" to say this will make the deal work or have to happen. He spoke of using it to heat greenhouses on the property if the price [of the Biochar] allows.

Mr. Cronce asked Mr. Maury that if this property is purchased by him does he see this Biochar happening in the next five to ten years.

Mr. Maury said this was hard to say because he focus will be on composting and farming the ground and not going after a new thing he would have to put a lot of money into. He will need to make more investments i.e. cleaning the property as it needs a lot of work including the fields being brought back.

Mr. Cronce asked how big the Biochar machine is. Mr. Maury said it is the size of a shipping container and said that some companies are making them inside shipping containers. He said they are being made for the military to use in remote areas to produce heat, electricity, and diesel fuel using all trash, including table scraps, to create charcoal.

Mr. Cronce inquired about the amount of exhaust that would be created from the Biochar machine. Mr. Maury said there is no particulate. Particulate comes from burning and has been associated with respiratory problems; this machine is not burning. It is gasifying material; the gases that come off of it are burned and condensed. Mr. Maury said the machine used in the military is sophisticated as it is run through a system where it condenses. The material that is condensed is a synthetic diesel fuel. These systems cost one million dollars and are used in Hawaii as the fuel is expensive

there. He spoke of other uses at strip malls and dry cleaners. Mr. Maury spoke of manure destroying the watersheds and how this technology will come into play to help the farmers deal with manure. He is looking at it as a heat source that will only produce carbon as a byproduct.

Mr. Maury spoke of actively farming from when he was 13 until he was 19 and his interest in farming.

Mr. Cronce inquired if Mr. Maury would be bringing woodchips from his business onto the property, running it through the Biochar machine, and selling the byproduct. Mr. Maury said he would do this. He spoke of the place Biochar will have in stormwater management and its effectiveness.

Mr. Cronce asked if the main objective was to put the land back into farming. Mr. Maury said yes; primarily hay which is the main thing he will need with composting. The tree company is what allows him to afford to use the property. He spoke of having the tree company, logs, composting, and topsoil, which will come from edging and doing the beds, and will be sifted and sold.

Mr. Shute asked Mr. Maury about the large exception area; it is twenty five acres. Mr. Maury said he did not want twenty five acres in the exception area. He explained that when he met with the state he wanted to increase the exception area which was originally seven acres. It was then reduced to four. Mr. Maury spoke of the "gray language" with the SADC and their ability to "change their mind". He does not want to be in a situation where he is taken to court based on the uses of his farm. He spoke to the state about the exception area and proposed two scenarios for the exception area; one with thirteen acres and one with seventeen. He was looking for the best layout to make sense for the property. The state came back with twenty-five acres which he was told he had to take. The state used features of the property to determine the exception area. Mr. Maury spoke of now buying more land that he will be paying full value for.

His intentions are that the new buildings will be where the current buildings are. He will build two new buildings using the current footprint of the barn. He went over where the staging area for the top soil will be. He will eventually like to have livestock on the farm. He said he does not need twenty five acres for the exception area and noted that some of it is wetlands.

Ms. Urbanski asked why seventeen acres are needed minus the two buildings. Mr. Maury said that he is not allowed to bring in soil or sand or waste. Hay, woodchips, and logs can be considered waste. He wanted ten acres for the composting. The state was okay with composting but Mr. Maury said this is a gray area as sand is added and it is sifted with the sand. This is not allowed on farmland and has to be in the exception area which is why he wanted the exception area to be increased.

Ms. O'Brien asked about the woodchips going into the exception area. Mr. Maury said there would need to be room for the woodchips in the exception area. One of the houses needs to be inside the exception area as it is centrally located; the other would be outside of it. Four or five acres were desired for the buildings and ten acres were desired for the compost.

Ms. Urbanski inquired what was being composed including hay. Mr. Maury confirmed hay would be composted with carbon products and used on this farm, used on other farms, and sold.

Ms. Kamph commented on it being basically an organic recycling business. Mr. Maury agreed.

Mr. Maury said he does not want to “fight” with the SADC on the exception area uses. He will not use all of it but it allows for enough room to “breathe”; he could not do this with only ten acres.

Mr. Shute said that activities in the exception area will fall under township land use. Mr. Maury said it seems it fits into conditional uses from his research. Mr. Maury referred to conversations he had with the state regarding soil disturbance, referred to a farm in Pittstown, and said state is okay with composting on farmland if fifty percent is hay. Mr. Shute told Mr. Maury he will have to do due diligence with land use. Mr. Maury said that composting is an agriculture use but the tree service falls under conditional uses on the property. He reported that regarding the exception area there will be a deed restriction on the twenty five acres to be used only for what it is being used for and only for uses that have to do with agriculture. This is in addition to the deed restriction on the farm. He spoke of the 25 acre exception area use to be related to agriculture or have houses on it.

Ms. Kamph asked if the township includes the recycling industry in farm regulations or if it is a different type of business. Mr. Shute said the Planning Board has been going through its land use ordinances noting that there is nothing on recycling. If a use is not specially mentioned it is prohibited. If this is a recycling center he does not know if it is permitted. If a property owner is bringing stuff in from the outside and selling it then it becomes a commercial venture. Mr. Maury spoke of bringing woodchips in, mixing it with hay which is an agriculture product, and selling it on an agriculture property. Committee members commented that this is not for this Committee to discuss.

Mr. Cronce asked if there were any other questions on the operations. He thanked Mr. Maury for his presentation and commented on it being very helpful. He reported that the County is still waiting on the attorneys and for the appraisals to come in.

Mr. Maury said he will go the township for approvals as soon as the appraisals are complete and potentially revised. He is not purchasing the property until approvals are received.

The Committee briefly went over the location of the property; it is Block 5 Lot 24 and 24.01 currently owned by Toll Brothers.

Green Acres Projects

Halper: This property will be taken off the agenda.

Hewitt Park Expansion: The Township now owns this property. Ms. Kamph does not have the LMV; she will submit everything else for reimbursement. Mr. Shute said that Green Acres says a soil test should be completed as the property was farmed during the 1940’s and could have DDT. The test does not need to be performed as the property will not be used for recreation.

Galloway: This property was sold and will be taken off the agenda.

Farmland Preservation

Toll North: Mr. Cronce referred to the presentation earlier in the meeting. The second appraisal is being completed.

Lambert: Mr. Shute reported that the appraisals are “far apart”; awaiting the CVM from the state.

Holcombe III: Mr. Cronce said the Open Space Advisory Committee and County want to eliminate the paper street on this property; it is not part of the appraisal. Township Committee has reviewed it and will introduce an ordinance to remove it.

Fulper: Mr. Shute has spoken to Mr. Fulper; he will contact Mr. Fulper again.

Zigenfuss: This property was discussed at the County meeting. The property owner has a deed that shows a right of way to the property that does not go through Lambert farm. The State suggested the Open Space Advisory Committee determine if the easement is legitimate. The County suggested the property owner should pay for the cost of determining this or share the cost with the Township. The Committee believes they should not determine whether or not the property owner's deed is legitimate or use taxpayer funds to determine this. The proposed alternate route for the pipeline could possibly go through this property, the likelihood of this was discussed.

Other

Annual PIG Application: Mr. Shute made a change on the PIG application before it was submitted regarding the two Runkle properties; both properties are now listed together on the application instead of separately. One property has poor soils and one has poor access. It was noted the proposed pipeline could go through this property; the possibility of this was briefly discussed. Mr. Shute removed the Toll property off the list as the County is close to preserving it.

Hunting Program: Mr. Malek had nothing new to report.

Website: Ms. Urbanski reported that there were no changes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Farmland Preservation Programs: Ms. Kamph completed an outline of the preservation programs the Committee uses including websites and all contact information. Mr. Cronce commented favorably on this and thanked her. She asked the Committee to let her know of any others she can add to it.

Ms. Kamph said she will try and revive the mapping program on the computer and update it. She would like to have a map of ongoing projects that could be updated monthly.

Ms. Kamph has a neighbor who inquired about joining the Committee; she provided contact information to Mr. Cronce.

Ms. Urbanski inquired if the Committee could discuss the earlier presentation; Mr. Cronce replied that they can't.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There was no public present.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be on February 10, 2015.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Urbanski made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Brien, to adjourn the meeting at 8:38p.m.  
All were in favor; the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

---

Christine A. Rosikiewicz  
Open Space Secretary