

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 (Committee Chair), George Fisher (Township Committee Liaison), Hal Shute (Vice Chair), Judith O'Brien, Alison Sommers-Sayre, Cathy Urbanski and Christine Rosikiewicz (Committee Secretary). Ernie Andreoli and Laurel Hills were absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 12, 2013: Ms. Urbanski made a motion to approve the minutes with one correction; Ms. O'Brien seconded it. Motion was approved by roll call vote with all in favor and Ms. Ashton and Ms. Sommers-Sayre abstaining.

PRESENTATION BY ALAN HERSHEY

Mr. Alan Hershey, Chair of D&R Greenway Board of Trustees & the New Jersey Trails Association narrated a slideshow presentation called "Making Trails: Lessons from Local Experience".

Highlights of the presentation included information about the NJ Trails Association website and where maps of the trails could be found. Photos of nearby trails available to the public were provided in the slideshow.

Mr. Hershey explained the volunteer trail building program and how it began. There are between ten and twenty volunteers who work together on trail building every weekend from October through May. There is a focus on footpaths and Mr. Hershey went over how projects are chosen; priority is given to projects where the trail will be a part of a larger trail network. An expert is utilized to design the trails. The work is done almost entirely with hand tools including picks, shovels and crow bars. Different aspects of trail construction including side hilling, stone steps and bridges were outlined.

The need for monitoring and maintaining the trails was explained; it was noted that help is always needed with this. Suggested locations for trails are welcome.

Mr. Hersey discussed local trails with the Committee. Financing for materials was discussed; donations and grants are sometimes utilized.

Mr. Cronce inquired to Mr. Hershey for his input with the Trail Committee's plan to develop a trail on Township open space. The need for maintenance of the property and stewardship was discussed. Mr. Cronce asked Mr. Hershey if he would tour the property; he agreed to and will provide his impressions and ideas. Mr. Hershey urged the Committee to seek out design work if the trail will be complicated. The property was briefly discussed; Ms. Urbanski will send an aerial picture to Mr. Hershey along with the Committee's proposed ideas for the trail.

Mr. Cronce expressed thanks to Mr. Hershey for his attendance at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Green Acres Projects

Mr. Cronce explained that the agenda would be amended as the hour was late.

Nunn: Mr. Cronce said the appraisals came in from the two appraisers hired by the Township and the State has also provided information. He noted that the Committee is allowed to go into closed session to discuss this if desired. He recommended the Committee go into closed session; Mr. Shute agreed. A resolution for closed session was read by the Secretary as follows:

RESOLUTION #1-2013

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances, and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Open Space Advisory Committee of West Amwell Township, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.

4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Mr. Shute made a motion to enter into closed session; Ms. Urbanski seconded it. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

The closed session began at 8:33pm.

Regular session was reopened at 9:11pm.

Mr. Cronce announced that the Committee came to a conclusion and the information will be provided to Township Committee.

Mr. Pfeiffer, a member of the public present, inquired about the results of the closed session.

Mr. Cronce explained that the Open Space Committee is an advisory committee and will provide a letter to Township Committee to communicate that this project should not be funded.

Trails: Ms. Urbanski will provide info on the trail project at the next OS meeting.

Grants: Ms. Urbanski noted that there is an ANJEC grant for \$1500 available that could be used for trails including signage and maintenance. She will bring it to the Environmental Commission; Ms. Ashton offered to help Ms. Urbanski write the grant. Ms. Urbanski noted that the dententation basin on the Music Mountain Road property was completed prior to the stormwater regulations and is now a substandard basin which requires mowing. If a rain garden was created the basin would need to be redone.

Wooden North: Mr. Shute reported that Mr. Watson told him the Wooden North appraisals are in and support the contract.

Halper: Ms. Urbanski commented on the DEP letter; the letter is incorrect and refers to the wrong property. She has contacted the DEP. Preservation is moving forward.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Pfeiffer inquired if there was a draft contract for the Nunn property. Mr. Cronce said there was a discussion of the appraisals. Mr. Pfeiffer commented that if the closed session was to decide whether to proceed with the project it would be more appropriate to be in open session as opposed to discussing what price to offer. Mr. Pfeiffer said that the Open Space Committee, Agricultural Advisory Committee, Planning Board and Township Committee all reviewed this project years ago and made a decision at that time to move forward with it; it is in the master plan. Funding has been awarded for this project. He asked the Committee to consider the history on this project and thinks the Committee will have public relations issues, resentment and jeopardize funding already rewarded and future funding. He said if the Committee follows the Township's written policies this is a project that should be done.

Mr. Pfeiffer asked if there were any updates on Toll. Mr. Cronce replied that Toll North is still in the pipeline.

Mr. Pfeiffer referenced the February minutes and noted that the PIG application was amended. He inquired if the SADC was going to require the Township to amend the master plan to include the targeted farms added. Mr. Shute said that was not mentioned. Mr. Pfeiffer suggested the Committee get clarity as to when the master plan would need to be amended to include these farms.

Mr. Cronce asked if the other agenda items could be tabled until next month.

Ms. Ashton commented regarding the information that Mr. Pfeiffer spoke of and that she did not know the history about the Nunn property. She inquired if the Committee had looked at "all the stuff" Mr. Pfeiffer talked about.

Mr. Cronce said the Committee has discussed "some of it". He still believes what he said in the closed session. He noted that ideas change....the Committee has preserved a lot of land..... and did a great job.

Ms. Ashton noted that this makes sense.

Committee members briefly discussed the property. It was noted that the County ranking system changed and if this property was brought to the County now it would be too small.

Mr. Cronce stated that the Committee made a decision. A letter will be send to Township Committee advising what the Open Space Committee recommends.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Urbanski made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Brien, to adjourn the meeting at 9:27p.m. All were in favor; the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine A. Rosikiewicz
Open Space Secretary