

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Present for this meeting were the following Committee members: John Cronce, Chris Kamnitsis, Jamie Kamph, Rich Schaible, Hal Shute, and Cathy Urbanski. Christine Rosikiewicz, Committee Secretary, was also present. George Fisher and Dan Malek were absent. John Dale, Township Committee Liaison, was also absent.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There was no public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 8, 2016**

Ms. Urbanski commented favorably on the minutes and made a motion to approve the March 8, 2016 minutes with one typographical correction and the following two changes:

Under Old Business “Green Acres Signage (revisited)” should be changed to “Farmland Preservation Signage”.

Under Trail Project, first sentence: delete “and Green Acres”.

Mr. Schaible seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Route 179 Project: Mr. Cronce contacted someone who represents this project; they are not interested in preservation and want to proceed with the development.

Farmland Preservation Signage: Mr. Cronce reported that they are still in the process of finding someone to make the signs. The County won’t do it unless it’s a County road. Raritan Township cannot do it.

**Green Acres Projects**

Thompson: Mr. Shute said this property will not qualify for Farmland Preservation as it is wooded therefore it was moved on the agenda to Green Acres Projects. Mr. Cronce noted that the Committee had given the property owner a deadline to contact them and the Committee was contacted before the deadline. Mr. Shute and Mr. Fisher walked the property in March. Mr. Shute commented that it is an interesting property. There are numerous holes on the property, many with water in them. This property is a good connector between the former United Water Company and Hewitt Park, which connects to Goathill Overlook. There is a power line that goes through it. If the pipeline is approved it will also go through it.

Mr. Shute described the property as about 35 acres and large flag lot. He passed a map of the property around to the Committee that depicted the current pipe line and power line. Ms. Kamph suggested the Committee wait on this property until after it is known about the pipeline.

Mr. Shute said he was approached by Alex Bacon from New Jersey Conservation Foundation about this property. The Township needs to be the buyer; there is funding available that would greatly reduce the Township’s cost. Ms. Bacon drafted an option agreement; Mr. Shute had the Township

attorney review it and went over it with Township Committee. Township Committee agreed to proceed as far as the Open Space Advisory Committee wants to. Mr. Thompson has signed and returned the option agreement. Mr. Thompson added an addendum stating that he would have his own appraisal done and receive a donation credit from the Township.

Mr. Shute said the Open Space Advisory Committee needs to decide if they want to go forward and discussed a range of cost per acre.

Mr. Cronce asked Mr. Shute his opinion on the property. Mr. Shute said the property could only be used for a trail. Ms. Kamph noted the holes are a liability and asked if the Township would have to clean them up. Mr. Shute does not think the Township would have the liability. Mr. Kamph suggested the preservation include having to clean up the holes.

Mr. Cronce asked about road frontage. Mr. Shute said it is a flag lot and passed a map of the property around to the Committee. Ms. Urbanski asked how many houses could use the driveway since it is a flag lot. Mr. Shute answered one house therefore only one house could be built there.

Ms. Kamph asked about how much of the property would be affected by the pipeline. Mr. Shute said half at most; the other half of the property is swamp. Ms. Kamph asked what the property is worth with the pipeline on it. Mr. Shute said it is still a building lot. Ms. Kamph commented unfavorably about preserving this property.

Ms. Urbanski asked about the Committee's possible cost. Mr. Shute discussed this and asked about the Committee's interest in it. Ms. Urbanski asked if NJCF would still fund it if the Township doesn't. Mr. Shute said they wouldn't and commented that the property will be severely compromised if the pipeline goes through. Mr. Shute said there could be a legal quagmire if the pipeline is approved.

Ms. Kamph commented that the property is not contiguous with anything preserved.

Mr. Shute said the Township Committee is awaiting their recommendation. Mr. Cronce commented favorably that the property hooks into to trails and backs into Hewitt Park. The Committee discussed the location of the property with regard to trails.

Mr. Shute said the Committee has not spent any money as appraisals have not been done.

Comments were further exchanged about this property.

Ms. Urbanski made a motion to abandon the project. Ms. Kamph seconded it. All were in favor; the motion passed.

Mr. Cronce thanked Mr. Shute for his work on this.

County Grant: Mr. Shute has received the three year County grant check for \$45,000 noting that the grant is the result of Ms. Urbanski's work. Favorite comments were made by the Committee about this grant.

Holcombe III: Mr. Shute said the Committee should receive the CMV back this month; this property should close by the fall.

Fulper: Mr. Shute provided Mr. Fulper with paperwork, he is waiting for Mr. Fulper to return it. The previous proposal would preserve two farms on the south side of Rocktown Rd.; this would reduce

build out by 25 units. The State denied this proposal; the State said all or nothing has to be preserved as the GDP ties all the properties together. The State said the other option would be to do the appraisals under the current zoning (which is now eight acres up from three). This option was not favorable to Mr. Fulper.

Mr. Shute then proposed to Mr. Fulper to buy down 15 units at the 8 acre appraisal. Mr. Fulper asked to proceed with this. Mr. Shute is awaiting LLC papers from Mr. Fulper.

There was agreement to abandon this project and take it off the agenda noting that Mr. Fulper has the option to approach the Committee in the future if desired.

Other:

Hunting Program: Mr. Cronce reported that all reports are back, everything is positive, and quotas were met. Mr. Schaible said that the tree trimming near the power lines on Alexauken Road affected the deer populations and most clubs had a poor season for deer harvest due to the weather. Ms. Urbanski provided quotas for the Committee per Mr. Malek's request.

Trail Project: Mr. Shute reported that the Alexauken Creek trail is complete. This trail is clearly marked. The white loop is short and there is an orange loop at the end of the white loop for a total of two miles. Mr. Hershey is drafting maps. Mr. Shute will send some dates out to the Committee via e-mail for them to walk it together.

Website: Ms. Urbanski reported that the website is up to date.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Budget: Mr. Shute provided copies of the Open Space budget to the Committee. He commented that the Thompson trust balance is decreasing every year. Township Committee would like to reduce the Open Space tax next year, a year early, and then raise the general municipal tax the same amount to use for more critical purposes. He spoke of the good work the Open Space Advisory Committee has done over the years and that they should not disband but be more selective with projects.

Mr. Cronce said the balance on January 1, 2016 was \$402,000; on January 1, 2017 it was projected to be \$301,112. The 2017 debt service is \$430,000. In 2018 it will be \$80,000.

Currently the Open Space tax is six cents; the proposed decrease would be to four cents.

Mr. Cronce asked when the Open Space debt would be paid down. Mr. Shute said in 2026.

Mr. Cronce commented on the great job the Committee has done and that there will always be something for the Committee to do.

Mr. Shute said there is \$800,000 in State funds the Committee will lose if they don't have activity. They could possibly get a year grace on this. Mr. Cronce said the Committee would have to provide twenty percent of the funding. Mr. Shute said the breakdown is 60% from the State PIG, 20% from County, and 20% from the Township. Mr. Cronce commented negatively on losing the State funds.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

There was no comment on any correspondence.

**OPEN TO PUBLIC**

There was no public present.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Mr. Cronce announced that the Committee will not meet next month due to the school needing the parking lot for graduation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Cronce made a motion, seconded by Ms. Urbanski, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. All were in favor; the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

---

Christine A. Rosikiewicz, Open Space Secretary