

BYRAM TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES, February 8, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Chairman Ray Bonker, Scott Olson, Joe Sabatini, Andy Kimm, John Morytko, and Sandy Uργο of TLC.

Closed Session 7:31 p.m. (see separate minutes)

Open Session 8:06p.m.

Approval of December 2015 minutes- Scott made a motion, seconded by John to approve the closed and open 2/14/15 minutes with a correction to the date. All in favor.

Open Space Financial Report – Joe reported that there is \$277,745 in the local open space trust fund. In the reserve for debt service there is \$360,218. There is 9 years left on the bonds. Principal is \$540,000, interest remaining is \$128,850. Total debt is \$669,000. We have a little more than half of what we owe sitting in reserve. Interest will drop significantly in 2021. We are paying 3.75%, and the last 4 years it will go up to 4%. We do not have the option to prepay. We have a Planning Incentive Grant balance of \$415,162.

Committee Re-Appointments – The terms for Michelle Rehse and John Morytko were both reappointed. TLC 6 month appointment was approved by the Council

Tamarack Park. – Sandy stated the TLC has a new website. There is a new page “get outdoors”, which will allow you to link to the Avenza app or scan a QR code and download the map of Tamarack Park and follow the trail. Ray asked if other trail maps could be downloaded from this link. This will be something Sandy can look at in the future. Joe is including capping the old well, study for new well and drilling a new well, gates, and paving of parking lot, would be approximately \$90,000 in the capital plan for discussion.

Johnson – It is important to get the appraisals done quickly and then apply for the Highlands grant. We can also try to apply to Sussex County for grant money, if we do not get Highlands funding. Sandy did not feel the County was a viable solution. Sandy suggested going to OSI for funding.

Forester Management PlanUpdate – Joe will be looking into doing an RFP for a new forester. Hudson Farm uses Gracy Harrigan who is very expensive. We are looking for someone to do the work, because the plan is basically done. We have to figure how much annually we can afford for long term maintenance of the open space parcels. Joe suggested that first we need to appoint a Forester through a professional services agreement and then we can decide the scope of work. The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding this. Andy works with foresters and explained his interactions with them on his property. We may be able to get some names from the State Forestry Service in Andover. When responding to an RFP, Foresters may be able to recommend what is the best plan of attack for the stewardship plan prepared by Ron Farr. Andy suggested that Byram may want to partner with Hudson Farm on some of their projects. Hudson Farm is way ahead of others in the projects they are involved in. At the next meeting, the committee will review the Stewardship plan to help come up with an RFP. Joe and Andy will look to see if they can find sample RFP’s for Foresters in other municipalities.

Andy suggested meeting with the EC and Recreation to talk about the properties and the maintenance that needs to be done.

Ray asked Sandy to pull out the ABC list of properties that Open Space was interested in which was done years ago and circulate it to all the members.

We could investigate opening some of our open space properties to hunting clubs and in return the club could do maintenance work.

Joe asked Andy to get information from Jefferson about their Forester, and maybe he can come and talk to the Open Space Committee.

Environmental Commission Update – The trail heads are all marked. Scott could add an Avenza link on the Byram website that would connect to the “get outdoors” section of the TLC website when it is up and running at TLC.

Correspondence and Updates – Scott reported that the NJ Conservation rally in Trenton is March 18.

Closed Session #2 9:37 p.m. (see separate minutes)

Open Session 10:21 p.m.

Adjourn: 10:21 p.m. Motion by Scott.