

BYRAM TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MINUTES, FEBRUARY 8, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Chair Ray Bonker, Joe Sabatini, Daven Baez, Bill Schilling, Andy Kimm, Scott Olson, open space advisor Sandy Urgo from The Land Conservancy of NJ, and secretary Margaret McGarrity.

First closed session (7:32 p.m.): *See minutes attached.*

Open Session (8:45 p.m.):

Minutes: The minutes of December were tabled until the April meeting.

Correspondence:

The Land Conservancy of NJ: Council awarded 2010 contract for \$11,500, same as 2009.

Reimbursements on Vetter and Owners Maintenance: OM reimbursement \$151,016.52 received December 31, 2009; Vetter reimbursement \$117,344.05 received January 5, 2010.

Cranberry Ledge parcels: Deeds filed and under NJDEP review; two debris areas need cleaning up—waiting for weather.

Tri-Community Trail Link grant project: On schedule.

Recreational Trails grants on Arnell, Beckmann, Owners Maintenance: Margaret to discuss with Joe Cory's work on parking for Beckmann and Arnell. Ron Farr to blaze Arnell boundary to help clarify issues with Stag Lake owners regarding trail route.

Margaret to contact Katie Baron and her husband about possible scout candidates for Gold or Eagle Awards to build kiosks; also to ask Doris Flynn about other troops.

2009 Recreational Trails grant for Vetter: Revised and resubmitted for 2010. Still to resolve issues regarding Safe Drinking Water Act regulations affecting the East Brookwood well on the property.

Community Forestry Plan and No Net Loss funding: Extension of CFP grant to June 30, 2010 to understand impacts on Township budgets/costs. Joe, Margaret, Scott, Adolf Steyh met with forester Ron Farr and Todd Wyckoff of NJDEP Forestry.

Five-town advocacy effort for Sussex Branch repairs: NJDOT engineer on site late January. DOT checking their r.o.w. and drawing up a plan.

Business:

Sandy's update of the ROSI (Recreation and Open Space Inventory): Sandy took the existing ROSI and added the new parcels; however, there may be some errors on the existing ROSI.

1. The four parcels constituting Riverside Park are actually owned by NJDEP; the Township leases them. These have been on the ROSI from the start—should they be removed?
2. In the Brookside Mini Park (the small original park on Brookwood Drive, now merged with the Vetter OS parcel), the well-head and any pipes should be 'called out,' as it cannot be listed on the ROSI and there should be a written easement for the well (the water company has an access easement on the entire Mini Park parcel). Plans for the improvement of this area call for adding a small well-house—but this cannot be built on a ROSI parcel. This Mini Park parcel was donated to the Township (the well was already present)—no NJDEP GA money was involved. What was to be the stated use of this donated parcel? If it's a park, it must be on the ROSI. Sandy will fix this.
3. The One Main Street undeveloped parcel was given to the Township for 'open space and recreation purposes,' according to Scott. Thus it may have to be on the ROSI.

OS/park parcels and the PSE&G powerline project: PSE&G will have to calculate how much GA funded open space on Owners Maintenance they will disturb and pay NJDEP Green Acres to offset the disturbance. Byram does not get a share of this—Sandy will double-check. Tomahawk Park is also GA encumbered and will be disturbed by the powerline.

Ron Farr PSA and forest stewardship issues: Ron has surveys of Arnell, OM, and Beckmann/Kostrey and will mark Arnell boundaries first, with help from the Environmental Commission.

Joe spoke to Police Chief Ray Rafferty about ATV and deer management policies, recommended in the Forest Stewardship Plan: ATV policy remains as is, since police cannot pursue ATVs but only try to catch them as they enter or exit parcels; deer management will also remain as is, with the police organizing culling events by a special group of hunters (Andy requested that any culling on Arnell be coordinated with Stag Lake or that Stag Lake handle this parcel as it is boxed in by Stag Lake lands).

OS, EC, Recreation joint meeting: Joe called a meeting of the chairs of the Environmental Commission, Open Space Committee, and Recreation Committee on February 9, 2010. Both EC co-chairs attended (Sue Wise and Dawn Boyer) along with Ray and Bill and Joe. Basically a brief introduction with a focus on open space parcels and their uses and getting these three committees to communicate better. What is the over-arching plan for uses of OS parcels and funding—e.g. trails, active recreation?

Bill suggested a liaison between the Environmental Commission and Recreation Committee, which now has an open seat. Margaret will ask if an EC member wants to be appointed.

OS meeting schedule: There are large projects underway or to come (e.g. Hudson Greenway, update of Open Space/Recreation Plan), and Scott noted that it can be hard to keep everyone informed about these projects if meetings occur only every other month. The Committee agreed that monthly meetings could be called once the Plan update gets under way or to scout parcels or to meet with other Township boards.

ANJEC Smart Growth grants: Deadline March 31; highest awards are usually \$10,000 to \$15,000 and require a 50% Township match, half in cash and half in kind.

The OS Committee recommends submitting the two proposals under discussion, including the proposal from The Land Conservancy of NJ to update our Open Space and Recreation Plan for \$10,000 and the proposal to prepare a lake management plan for Lake Lackawanna, also for the same ANJEC grant amount.

ANJEC funding would be available sooner than potential Highlands funding for the OS Plan. Check on when we are required to update our Master Plan under the Highlands and whether an updated OS/Rec. Plan would be part of that.

The lake management plan for Lackawanna would also be applicable to Byram's other lakes. It would also be outsourced, with minimal impact on Township budgets or staff.

These are Environmental Commission grants and the Commission will have to discuss the two proposals and recommend to the Council. Margaret will ask ANJEC if two applications can be submitted.

Joe wants to make sure we understand how all grant projects affect ongoing budgets/staff and how they tie into a broader plan. He will discuss these issues with the OS/EC/Rec. chairs at their first February 9 meeting.

Financial review: Joe reported that at the end of 2009 there was \$577,000 in the local open space trust fund. Hudson Greenway costs (about \$163,000 from the Township for purchase plus soft costs) will be subtracted from that, leaving approximately \$400,000 in the fund.

The reserve for debt funding for the open space bond has now been covered largely by NJDEP GA's reimbursement for its share of the purchase/soft costs for Arnell/OM/Vetter. Last year, 75% of the approximately \$100,000 per year generated by the local OS tax was allocated to debt service.

Also to be subtracted, expenditures for Cory Stoner's work on the Johnson Lake dam and for his three proposals for the development of the Jones Lane fields (the Recreation Committee preferred proposal A). Also costs for new acquisitions.

The Committee discussed uses of the OS trust fund and priorities. Ray emphasized the need to develop the Jones Lane ballfields; Bill cited the need for drilling a well (perhaps on the Hudson Greenway) to irrigate C.O. Johnson Park ballfields. Joe emphasized the ongoing obligation to maintain what we already have and the costs of adding more fields, as well as the substantial engineering and construction costs of developing the Jones Lane fields. He recommended first making a plan with a schedule

of implementation and then proceeding cautiously, keeping in mind budgeting issues and possibly other sources of funds. We need to work with NJ Conservation Foundation on the sections of the Greenway that they will manage.

PSE&G powerline: Scott explained that PSE&G offered money to towns along the route, as a reimbursement for certain possible costs and for agreeing not to oppose the project. Byram was offered \$309,000 and refused, as did all the other official municipal intervenors.

Adjourn: 10:03. Motion by Scott; second by Andy; unanimous.