

**BYRAM TOWNSHIP  
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES, JUNE 14, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Chairman Ray Bonker, Daven Baez, Bill Schilling, Joe Sabatini, Council Liaison Scott Olson, and Secretary Margaret McGarrity. Also present was Eugene Reynolds, from The Land Conservancy of NJ, who will be working on the update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Committee first heard from Eugene Reynolds, in public session:

The Land Conservancy of NJ has been hired to do a 'streamlined update' of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, including:

- Goals update;
- Update of history of the open space program;
- Consistency between our plan and other local and regional documents, such as Byram's Master Plan, the County Strategic Development Plan, the State Plan, Highlands RMP;
- Recommendations regarding our open space system;
- Greenways chapter describing collective project areas linked by similar environmental characteristics or uses or other opportunities (Margaret will send Eugene a copy of the easement on the Hudson Farm Greenway);
- Best Management Practices in these various areas;
- Action item list on one-, three-, and five-year schedules;
- Information about the PSE&G powerline project and its impacts;
- Clarification of what our ordinance allows for uses of the local OS trust fund (e.g. types of development, habitat restoration, stewardship, maintenance/improvement of facilities).

The Outdoor Recreation Needs section will not be updated, although Eugene will get information from Recreation Director Janet Meisner and the Recreation Committee.

OS Committee members will review pertinent sections from the current plan and also one page from the Byram Master Plan (Eugene will email). The current OS/Recreation Plan does not have a goals section, although some goals appear in the Executive Summary and the Action Programs.

The updated plan also needs a description of what Byram has achieved to update the history of the open space program and to inform Township residents of its successes.

#### Questions concerning:

- What belongs on the ROSI? Riverside Park—land is leased from State but the State typically wants such long-term leased parks with Township facilities on the ROSI. Sussex Branch Trail—important local path and link in town-wide trail system.
- Describing greenways and ‘connectivity’—include near-term projects and longer-term wish-list.
- How does this OS/Recreation Plan relate to the Recreation Committee’s 10-year plan and the whole range of recreation programs in Byram? Bill will obtain current version of 10-year plan and send to Margaret to send to Eugene for his review; basically, recreation that is based on preserved lands will be pertinent. Capital improvements projects or proposals not pertinent, such as the suggestion for a pole barn for indoor recreation. Nothing to do with outdoor recreation needs, such as new backstops at baseball fields, as that section is not being updated.

#### Maps for the update:

- Eugene brought a draft open space map, based on property classifications from Byram’s tax records. Still need to refine definitions of farmland/woodland-assessed parcels (Byram has virtually no real farms), parcels intended for preservation (e.g. Cranberry Ledge), historic sites/districts overlay.
- OS Committee members and Margaret will note corrections for this map—Margaret will make one large paper map available in the municipal building for corrections and keep one large clean paper copy; Eugene will also email map(s) to Margaret to distribute.
- Once goals/priorities are set, Eugene will take a tour of Byram to identify project areas and greenways; OS Committee members will be invited.

Margaret will be clearinghouse for text/map corrections and will coordinate comments and send to Eugene. TLC-NJ website will have all documents available for review by all Township committees.

#### Timeline:

- The updated OS/Recreation Plan to be completed by year’s end.
- August 9 OS Committee meeting to prepare for first OS/Planning Board meeting on August 19.
- Final draft ready for joint OS/Planning Board meeting on August 19 (whether this is a regular or special PB meeting), including comments from the OS and other Township committees on goals and also corrections on the draft OS map and a Greenway map. Margaret will tell Doris Flynn, Planning Department Head, and Cheryl White, new PB secretary.
- First rough draft of entire plan to be submitted prior to the October 11 OS Committee meeting, to collect comments.

- Second joint Planning Board-Council meeting with public input on final draft plan on October 21. All Township committees should have also submitted comments to Margaret and are invited.
- Adopted by PB in December, as an amendment to the Byram Master Plan.

Adjourn public session at 8:34 p.m.

Closed session at 8:35 p.m. Motion by Scott; second by Bill; unanimous. See separate minutes.

Second public session at 9:08 p.m.

Minutes from February and May were approved: Motion by Scott; second by Daven; unanimous.

Correspondence and Updates:

Community Forestry Plan and No Net Loss: Joe and the Environmental Commission are to make final tweaks to the CFP and return to the July 6 Council meeting for a vote on adoption. On June 7, the Council agreed to send a general Letter of Intent saying that the Township plans to apply for the No Net Loss funding.

PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes): Joe gave a summary. Governor Christie is proposing taking away one-third of the funding in the 2011 State budget. In 2010, Byram received about \$63,000 in PILOT funding. Some is still on a depreciating scale; the annual amount should stabilize somewhere roughly around \$30,000-40,000 (Byram pays the State \$1,000 per year to lease Riverside Park). It is unclear how the Governor's proposal would impact our funding. This money goes into the Township's general fund, not the OS trust fund.

Margaret is trying to double-check the State's list of depreciating parcels and also pulled together information for a Township letter seeking to get the BSA parcels at Allamuchy added to our PILOT (another c. 840 acres). Margaret is also trying to verify whether Byram is c.1000 or c.2000 acres away from the next funding threshold, where all our acreage would stabilize at \$10 per acre instead of the current \$5 per acre.

Scott is working with NJ Conservation Foundation to organize the towns that get PILOT funding to oppose the Governor's cuts; c. 26 towns receive \$100,000 or more.

Financial review: Joe gave a summary. There is about \$490,000 available in the local OS trust fund (this does not account for local tax receipts in 2010 or for reimbursements to come from NJDEP GA for half of Hudson Farm Greenway soft costs or disbursements for purchase and/or soft costs on Heitman and Buis). Also we are to be paid roughly \$80,000 for the Cranberry Lake parcels, which can close once two debris piles are removed.

Joe will provide basic financial summaries for each OS agenda.

Application for grant for Brookwood-Vetter park: The East Brookwood water company sent a letter to NJDEP objecting to various aspects of the grant application (especially the proposed parking spaces) and expressing the water company's concern regarding what the Clean Water Act stipulates can and cannot happen near their wellhead in the middle of the small original park area on Brookwood Road. The Recreational Trails Council has not denied Byram's application but has set it aside until the Township works out the issues with the water company. Joe is to discuss further with Lynn Fleming, Deputy Director of the Council, regarding DEP's opinion as to whether the parking and other uses are prohibited under the Clean Water Act; he also met with the water company president, where there still is support for other parts of the grant application.

Scott noted that areas within the Lubbers Run corridor are being sought for mitigation for wetlands harmed by the PSE&G powerline project—perhaps in this way, the Township can obtain a different access to the wooded section of the Brookwood/Vetter park, where the trail/fishing access would be.

Adjourn: 9:48 p.m.