

# BYRAM TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

## MINUTES, APRIL 11, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. Present were Chairman Ray Bonker, Joseph Sabatini, Bill Schilling, Daven Baez, and Secretary Cindy Church. Andy Kimm arrived at 7:45 p.m, and Council Liaison Scott Olson arrived at 8:10 p.m. Also present was Sandy Urgo, from The Land Conservancy of New Jersey,

Closed Session 7:34 p.m. (see separate minutes)

Open session 7:40:

Approval of February 2011 minutes: Scott made a motion to approve and was seconded by Andy; all in favor. February 2011 minutes approved.

### **Business:**

Highlands Trail Project – Closed; congratulations! This project closed on March 3rd, 2011. This project was completed as a 50% bargain sale. The landowner would like to claim the charitable contribution and will be procuring an IRS appraisal for that purpose. As a result, the landowner's representative requested a copy of our appraisal report for the property (to assist in informing the appraiser they will hire). TLC-NJ had no objection and confirmed with J. Sabatini that the Township had no objection. The report, as well as an 8283 form with instructions and a letter acknowledging the charitable contribution, was provided to the landowner.

Sandy will check with Margaret to see where we stand with the reimbursements for the expenses. Larry Fink is interested in seeing the Green Acres signs put up; Cindy will follow up with Adolf.

Hudson Farm Greenway Baseline Report – This document has been required by the state prior to their making final payment on reimbursement of expenses on the project. Sandy Urgo and TLC-NJ Stewardship Manager toured the easement properties on March 17, 2011. The report was completed and provided, along with the filed easement, to the state and the Township digitally on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Hard copies were also mailed, along with a disk containing required photographs. The State is in the process of reviewing and accepting. Once accepted, the document must be signed by the Township and the landowner.

Hudson Farm Greenway/Tamarack Park Trail Plan – Sandy followed up with owner and provided him with the proposal, which he has accepted. This would involve mapping the trail on the Tamarack Park/Hudson Farm Greenway. Sandy needs to confirm usable GPS and then the trail plan can be done. To date the owner has responded and would like to see us proceed. Ray questioned if this will be blazed in the style of the Beckmann trail. Cindy will send a sample trail marker to Sandy. This will essentially be the trail used for the charity hike walk starting at Jones Lane and going over to CO Johnson. Joe expressed his concern and would not like to encourage people to be going over by the

dam. Joe is also concerned about liability issues if people are accessing the lake from township land. Sandy does not believe boats are written in the easement. Joe needs to know if we need to get a “hold harmless” from the property owner; Sandy believes this is something that he will need to discuss with the attorney and the property owner. Recreation will be holding a family camp out at the Jones Lane fields and will be encouraging people to go up and use the lake. Joe will review the easement to clarify better what needs to be done.

Sandy mentioned that there is a cliff that above the Weichert building on Route 206 that is on our easement. The charity hike did not go there but it is a great overlook. The overlook that the charity hike went to is off property. The Township might consider asking the property owners of that cliff if they would like to sub-divide their property and give the township the cliff as a donation and take a tax deduction. Joe said we need to understand the potential risks before proceeding. Sandy recommends blazing another small trail to it, instead of having it part of the main trail. The OS Committee will take the time to think about it before deciding.

Allamuchy Mountain State Park In-holdings Review- The entire park has been reviewed and a spreadsheet of all in-holdings has been developed. This spreadsheet has been cross referenced with the foreclosure list. Sandy brought a map and an in-depth review of all parcels in the Cranberry Ledge area, along with recommendations to the meeting. All parcels not within the Cranberry Ledge area will be mapped and reviewed at a subsequent meeting.

Foreclosure list – All properties on the list have been located on a map and cross referenced with the Allamuchy in-holdings list. An in-depth review of the parcels within the Cranberry Ledge area has been completed. The OS Committee reviewed the map and the foreclosure properties. Joe asked Sandy to list all property by block and lot that we would like to proceed on. Sandy will get a memo and a possible map to Joe prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Mohawk View – Sandy, Joe, Margaret and Doris met on March 17<sup>th</sup> to review documentation regarding the open space parcels that were associated with this development. Subsequently TLC obtained a copy of the deed for the parcel (Block 337.07 Lot 7) that was dedicated to the Township. There are back taxes that are owed on this property; Margaret was going to look up the back taxes and was to send to Sandy. Other lots (approximately 31 acres) were to be deeded to the Mohawk View Property Owners Association, but there is no Association. Sandy believes there are no taxes being paid on any of the lots. The question is if in fact the Township wants them? Sandy will set up a meeting with Tom Collins at his office to look at the maps and conference-call Joe into the meeting.

Trail Plan for Tamarack Park - Draft of Trail Plan may be available in two months.

Financial Report – Joe reported that there is \$609,144.01 in the local open space trust fund. In the reserve for debt service there is \$487,118.36. We can anticipate another \$100,000 over the course of the year just from tax collection. We are also anticipating some Green Acres reimbursements for soft costs on Tamarack Park and the Buis/Smith parcels.

Update on Open Space Plan – The Open Space Plan has been re-approved by the Planning Board.

ANJEC Smart Growth Planning Grant - The EC wrote a grant application to re-do the trails map, to add new open space parcels, trails and new descriptions. It was submitted March 30<sup>th</sup> to ANJEC.

Jones Lane – Council approved at the March 1st meeting the PSA for Cory to do the pre-application with NJDEP. It was discussed at the Planning Board meeting in March (recommended by the Council); the Planning Board did not have any input at that time. Cory sent Joe the application. When OS meets again, the application might be filed. Bill reported that the Recreation Committee looked at the plan and there was not more input other than to have as much parking available as possible around the fields. The Recreation Director and a member of the Township Council and some other volunteers are going to be having a camp out at Jones Lane/Tamarack Park in May. They are calling it a Byram Family Campout.

Forest Stewardship Plan – Margaret needs to request an update on the open items from Ron Farr from 2010 and some from 2011. Under the 2010 Forest Stewardship work (all to be completed in Spring 2011), Ron borrowed the county GPS system for the marking of Arnell and owners maintenance boundaries, but had a problem operating the unit. The cutting of woody debris on Beckmann to lie closer to the ground is on hold because Ron needs to get chain saw certification. All 2010 Forest Stewardship tasks were completed.

Tasks for 2011: We are looking into how to partner with Ron Farr using volunteers to cut down on costs. The OS Committee feels that this is all very low cost and a good value and would like to just see it all done (with volunteers where possible).

Ron Farr is also working on the grant for that we received under the Community Forestry Plan for a hazard tree inventory.

Highlands Trail Project (Smith/Buis) – The OS Committee recommended a new name for this parcel - Lackawanna Trail.

New Open Space Possibility – Block 231, Lot 12 on Lake Drive West. After discussions, the recommendation from the OS Committee is to not go forward on this.

New Business – Scott went to NJ Land Conservation Rally on March 19 and attended three seminars. Scott will supply the OS committee with an online link that has new regulations

regarding leases and building on encumbered land, as well as other interesting information the OS Committee may find helpful.

Andy reported that the NJ Forestry Association will be sponsoring an event on May 18<sup>th</sup> at Perona Farms at 6:30 to go over the Highlands Transfer Development Rights program.

**Adjourn:** 9:12 p.m. Motion by Scott; second by Bill.