

OPEN SPACE MEETING – July 13, 2026

Members Present: Messrs. Sabatini, Mayor Rubenstein, Bogardus, Dlugos, Esposito

Members Absent: Messrs: Morytko, Duch

Also present: Secretary Caitlin Phillips

This meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Mayor Rubenstein.

OS FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT:

Reserve for Open Space: \$408,869.89.

Mayor Rubenstein noted updates with the CO Johnson Park project, including signage and brush disposal. He discussed lighting and an announcer's stand, for which they're looking to use Open Space funds. This would be about \$350,000 for both. Mr. Dlugos asked for the breakdown between the two parts of the repairs. Mayor Rubenstein said Mr. Sabatini will send a breakdown. They're not sure how they're procuring the announcer stand. Other sports require different lighting than football.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 8, 2026 minutes. Motion of Mr. Dlugos to approve the minutes, second by Mr. Sabatini. Mr. Bogardus abstained. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Trail Signage and Mapping

Mr. Dlugos reviewed the quotes in the packet. Gravity Designworks suggested they may need more than an hour to do some parts of the work. He noted that Avenza will be part of another application. He looked at MapNero, which doesn't need cell service. He asked the Land Conservancy about trail maps, and he thinks this was done by Byram. They can use files that can be extracted. The Historical Society agreed to dedicate funds to help with this. Mayor Rubenstein noted that for the quote of the work, the PO could state this it is not to exceed a certain amount. Mr. Sabatini said the additional time would change the scope of the quote. They need updated quotes that show the hours, and then they can do a resolution at the Council. Mr. Dlugos noted he'll be away, so asked to push this to August. Mr. Dlugos motioned to use OS funds for this work, seconded by Mr. Esposito. All in favor.

Trail Grant Updates

Mr. Dlugos said he hasn't seen any updates. Ms. Phillips said Mr. Morytko was checking on this and hasn't seen anything, but they wanted to keep this on the agenda in case there was news ahead of this meeting. Mr. Dlugos said the County noted the announcement will be made in the summer. Mayor Rubenstein noted someone can email the County to check on the status of this.

Forestry Updates

Mr. Dlugos said he's been working on barberry removal, and put down a tarp for sheet mulching. They're looking to plant tree saplings and herbs where the barberry will be removed. He said he hasn't gotten anywhere with Briar Riddle, and hasn't heard from Ms. Gracie. He's open to using other contractors for this project. Mayor Rubenstein said if there's an issue with professionals not doing work, then they should talk to Ms. Gracie.

MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Dlugos said they gave a talk to the Seniors group about invasive species. On September 12th, there will be a native plant event with a giveaway, sale, and presentation. In October is the Sussex County Arts and Heritage event. The Historical Society will do weaving event, and will open the schoolhouse. They'll be making forest looms using trees nearby, and will be community art. They are thinking of doing an Environmental Commission newsletter. Mr. Sabatini said CO field 8 is having issues, as there may be a leak somewhere. They are waiting

for the engineer to provide additional information. The field holds a lot of water after it rains. They don't want to accept the project until all of the elements are set, and irrigation needs to be figured out. They took over mowing the grass, because the contractor wasn't doing this. Ms. Phillips noted the EC presented an award to a resident for invasive species work.

Mr. Sabatini discussed the budget. He asked the Council members for their goals to help guide the budget. The EC should look at the budget to see if there's anything they need beyond normal items. There are issues with health insurance increases. A new employee, Diane, started today, and will be the new EC secretary. The new tax assessor, Aaron Wilson, started. He is working on a proposal for re-assessment. Byram Fest is August 22nd. Mr. Bogardus said there's a planning meeting for Byram Fest tomorrow, that includes the police and fire departments. The theme is the United States' 250th anniversary. Mr. Esposito said the Historical Society is excited to help with the mapping project.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

No public was present.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE COMMITTEE DEEMS NECESSARY

Ms. Phillips noted there will be a bookmobile at Byram Fest. Mayor Rubenstein noted that the Recreation Department could use the library for event ideas, like teaching the community about its services. Mr. Dlugos noted libraries also have good spaces to host events. Mr. Sabatini said libraries are also typically used for cooling and heating stations. He noted there is work being done at the Dennis Branch, which will be closed for about a year for proposed renovations, and the Recreation Department could look into this for future work.

ADJOURN – Motion by Mr. Dlugos, second by Sabatini, to adjourn the meeting at 7:52pm. All members in favor. Motioned carried.