

OPEN SPACE MEETING MINUTES - AUGUST 10, 2020

CALL MEETING TO ORDER - Chairman Scott Olson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. This meeting has been electronically sent to the newspapers and uploaded to Byram's website, www.byramtwp.org not less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting. In addition, a copy of this notice is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL - Ray Bonker, Scott Olson, Joe Sabatini, John Morytko (7:20 pm), Erik Duch (7:30 pm), Scott Yappen (7:15 pm), Earl Riley. Heather Gracie and Doris Flynn were also on the call.

OS FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

- a. Reserve for Open Space - \$367,386.71
- b. Reserve for Debt Service - \$215,734.32
- c. Debt Service P & I - \$329,925
- d. Planning Incentive Grant - \$400,000

NEW BUSINESS - Forester discussion -- Heather Gracie from Gracie & Harrigan - Scott O. introduced Heather to the Committee. Joe stated that this is the first opportunity the Open Space has had to work with Heather. The Council authorized a scope of work to be completed in 2020.

- **Plan of Action for Timber Harvest** - Heather stated that NJ is having a crisis with damage to Ash trees from the Emerald Ash Borer. Heather thought there was enough ash trees on the property to make it worthwhile to a logging company. When they do the inspection, they will have the number of trees that can be removed and be able to figure out the board feet, quality, and an approximate value. When they have this, they will request quotes from 3 companies. When Heather is out on inspection, it's possible they will find additional trees that have come down in the recent storm that can be included in the removal. Next week they will inspect, gather information, and prepare a harvesting plan to submit to the Forestry service. They will not start the harvest until after October 1. It will be based on the weather of when it will actually occur. If it is a wet fall, the timber harvest will occur in early winter. Heather thinks the timber harvest would take no more than 2 weeks. They don't typically work on weekends. G&H would post some signage. G&H will be on site every few days during the harvest for management of the project. In the timber industry, this will be a smaller job. Scott Olson talked about the ash trees located at COJohnson and asked if Heather could take a look at them and possibly include them in the timber harvest. Joe did point out that this would be a different block and lot and he is not sure if this could be included in the harvesting plan. Heather said she will take a look at it. The tops of trees get left on site, which break down very quickly and provides great habitat. G&H's fee is 20%, which is minimal. Ray stated that he was very happy with the timeline and what is going to

get accomplished. Ray stated that he has heard a lot about the rating of wood and trucking costs, but since the contractor has to bid a lump sum amount, this guarantees a set price for the Township. Ray stated that he noticed how Heather pointed out that we will be awarding a contract to a logger and not a tree service company. Trees companies are extremely busy right now. Heather said we want to deal with loggers and not tree companies because the tree companies would charge us to do the work. Scott Yappen questioned our forestry stewardship plan. He asked what is not acceptable in our existing plan. Heather stated that she spoke with Mike Hart, Regional Forester, and he stated that we can do invasive plant control, but as the plan stands now, it does not meet the standards for a harvest. There needs to be a lot more metrics, and also, we can't have one plan for multiple properties. He also told Heather that she could do an addendum to the Forest Stewardship plan and prepare a harvesting plan, which would take Heather 2-3 hours. Scott Y. asked if she has experience with other towns surrounding us and report what they are doing. They work with 950 private landowners and worked with the Boy Scouts and Fish and Wildlife, but they have not worked with other municipalities. Joe stated that he learned through the process interviewing Heather, that our Stewardship Plan did not meet State requirements. Joe stated that the minimum requirement to do a timber harvest requires G&H to prepare a harvesting plan. Joe stated that Ron's plan gives us a great baseline even though it doesn't meet State requirements. It is a valuable tool for what we need to do going forward. Heather will be able to work with the plan and add addendums when necessary. Scott Yappen also asked about the minimum legal requirements necessary to be in compliance overall with the State. Joe stated that we have used Green Acres funds in the past to purchase parcels and in doing so we are expected to maintain the land. Heather stated that if we can keep the invasives down, the native plants will be allowed to grow.

- **Review of quote for Invasive Removal** - Heather stated that she participated in a few discussions with staff including the EC secretary. EC received a grant for invasive training and there are 3 training days set up. A decision was made to postpone a volunteer day led by Heather Gracie for trail clean up concentrating on invasives to the spring 2021 because the invasives are more visible then. The grant timeline goes through July 2021. We will have time to get the word out and get additional people involved. Heather obtained a quote from Shultz Forest Management and Consulting who she works with frequently. The quote was for 2 people per day for two days work, including pesticide. She discovered many areas of invasives on her initial walk on Tamarack Trail. They saw areas that could be handled by volunteers and areas that were best handled by a professional group because of the density of the invasives. With invasive plants, timing is everything. The sooner we can be rid of the invasive plants, the better. The best time for Jacob to remove the invasives would be prior to September 15. Scott O, asked how much of an area would they be able to cover in two days. Heather thought they could cover to 4-5 acres. The volunteer group can concentrate 75-100 ft. off the trail in the spring. Heather has worked with high school groups who needed service hours, and they really enjoyed it. Joe stated that Heather is not going to get involved with the training sessions which will be led by Mike Van Clef, Program Director of New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team. The quote for 4-man days of labor is \$2400. Joe stated that if the Committee is in favor of moving forward, Joe will get the purchase order processed. Joe made a motion, second by Scott Olson, to authorize the invasive removal. All members were in favor.

- **Deer Management Program** - The Council passed a resolution in July that allows hunting on 5 open space parcels through a permitting process. Joe suggests moving forward with the deer management plan as planned for this year. Heather stated that it is an important requirement to have hunters submit a deer harvest report. It is the only way we can monitor it. Heather said it's great to work with groups and this may be something we want to look at in the future. Heather said we are only 1 month away from bow season, so she would agree to keep the program the way it is right now. Heather doesn't think it is a good idea to require hunters to take the stands down each day. Joe explained the reason why it is carry in and carry out which is because of liability. Heather thinks we should prohibit hunting during the timber harvest. Scott Olson asked Heather to check out the property when she is on the timber harvest inspection to see if it was significantly browsed by deer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 8, 2020 Regular & Closed Meeting Minutes – Motion by Joe, second by Ray to approve the minutes as presented. All members in favor.

OLD BUSINESS - Review of Marketing Materials - Scott Olson stated that Ben is on vacation today and wasn't able to make the call. Erik presented the sample logos to the EC for feedback. On the Byram logo, they liked the lower left and the one to the right. The EC liked the trails logos and they favored the 2 on the right. John's concern was scalability and use on letterhead without color. He has concerns on how it would translate without color. He questioned how are we going to use them. Earl Riley like the bottom left and center one for the Byram logo. He feels we can use this on letterhead. The trails logo Earl liked was the upper right-hand corner. Joe agreed with Earl but felt the wood color should be lighter. Scott liked the bottom center, combining it with the bottom left lettering, and having a lighter wood. Scott also would like to see the trails sign be similar to the Byram logo, in shape. Joe said he liked what John said and we should think of the layering. Joe suggested that for shirts you would only use the lettering and water and mountains and not the shape of the logo.

Joe suggested sending the comments on the Trail/Byram logos to Doris. Ben still has a lot of deliverables which Joe quickly summarized. Ben needs to provide us with a timeline on the remaining deliveries. Ben will not get the final payment until we receive all the deliverables and accept them. Joe said that we have trails that connect to neighboring communities--maybe Ben can work on a slogan that reflects that. Earl said Byram connecting to communities. Erik said how about "connecting people". Scott O. stated that "Open Year Round" is signifying that they are 4 season trails - Ben can work on that more. Earl suggested "hub of north jersey trails". Scott O. told the committee to get ideas to Doris by the end of the week.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE COMMITTEE DEEMS NECESSARY

Ray Bonker stated that we had a conversation at the Council level about future capital improvements. The Council has scheduled a special meeting on September 8 at 7:00 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Council, Rec, and OS committee to discuss and prioritize the 11 different capital projects. Ray is hoping that everyone will walk into the meeting with their list in priority order. He is hoping that we can talk about our top three and why they are most important. Hopefully we can come to some type of consensus. Joe said that he would like everyone to look beyond individual projects. About 6 of the projects are located at COJohnson. Joe stated that

the skatepark is not a heavily utilized amenity. He questioned whether it would be better using this area for another project. Joe stated that there was supposed to be a Phase III of COJ that never happened. The bathrooms at COJ were closed by the town at the request of the sporting organizations because football/baseball did not want to maintain them. Joe said that there are portajohns placed in several places through COJ because the sport groups do not want the kids to have to walk to the other side of the complex to use the facilities. Joe stated that at the Council meeting on August 11, we will be discussing 2021 goals and objectives. Joe stated that presently the OS tax is 1.1 cents and there is the ability to go up to 2 cents/\$100 per the ordinance.

Scott Y. asked if the 11 capital projects came from the survey. Joe said that it was a culmination from the survey, the outreach to the stakeholders, Township committees and sporting organizations. Ray stated that the Open Space Committee has a lot of ownership in the projects because this committee approved the plan. Scott Y. asked where do we separate open space from recreation. Ray sees the OS committee as a committee of committees. He feels it has always been collaborative and not intended to have a line drawn between the two. Scott O. stated that years ago the Environmental Commission took charge of the Trails. Scott Y. talked about the purpose of the Recreation Committee which is outlined in the ordinance. He asked what is the Open Space's purpose. John Morytko explained that this committee oversees the trust fund, acquisitions of property, and looks at recreation facilities and improvements. Joe said that we have to as a group define our priorities and work together to realistically get things done. For many years the Recreation Committee said they needed more fields. The Open Space was listening. It took 10 years from the start of acquisition, but property was acquired using several funding sources with only a small amount coming from Byram's Open Space Fund and new fields were built. The expansion of COJ became a reality through Green Acre funds obtained by the Open Space Committee. The Recreation Committee told the Council that their priority is upgrading the COJ fieldhouse and a dog park. It was decided to have a joint meeting to discuss the priority of the 11 projects so that all groups can be involved and participate. John hopes that after the meeting the Council makes the decision on how to forward and then takes action.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – No comments were made.

CLOSED SESSION – Potential Acquisitions

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Erik Duch stated that the first training day for invasives is on Saturday, August 22. There will be a training session, followed by a trail walk on Tamarack Trail. It is already posted on the Salt Shaker's website. There will be a formal announcement coming out from the town.

Motion by Scott Y., second by Earl to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 pm. All members in favor.

Meeting minutes prepared by: Doris Flynn