

Open Space Meeting - December 10, 2018

Members present: Ray Bonker, Joe Sabatini, Eric Duch, Andy Kimm, John Morytko. Also present Mayor Alex Rubenstein, Ron Farr, Ben Spinelli, Vicky Proskey.

Project Management: Forest management

Ron Farr contacted a logger that would be willing to take the Ash trees from the CO Johnson area, with no cost for his labor, harvesting for the value of the wood taken. The approximate estimate value for the Ash trees is under \$17,500. Brush would be cut as low to the ground as possible. The tree tops will be left for the wildlife, providing cover, and natural cover for new tree shoots. It was recommended that an RFP be done. Question how the Highlands would react to this situation. We already know that the Ash trees are being targeted due to bores. When there is forest clearing and soil disturbance, there are regulations which need to be followed and will be looked into. Ninety-eight percent of the town, including Roseville is in the preservation area and Route 206 is not included.

The Stewardship plan does not include the CO Johnson ball fields; however, the trails are included. Harvesting needs to be consistent with the Stewardship Plan. Tamarack Park is included in the current Stewardship plan. We need to get some guidance from the State on removing living Ash trees due to the bores. The argument would be do we need timber harvesting? This would be a winter project, when the ground is frozen. The Loggers skidder requires a 10' wide trail, for the estimated 50 trees in question. There was discussion on the barberry removal getting done at the same time.

The objective is to do as much as possible and to do both sides of the street. Let's keep this project small, focused, moving forward, and learn from the experience. We are being proactive and are taking the correct path.

Cranberry Overlook has a one-acre piece marked to cut Black Birch leaving the Oaks. This area is far away from the trail and should be completed before year end. It was pointed out that attention needs to be paid not to cross onto the NJ State easement.

A Forestry Plan was presented, estimated cost was submitted for 2019, including Briar Ridge North, Briar Ridge South, Cranberry Overlook, Glenside and Tamarack Park. Suggested that Forest South should also be added. The PSA needs to be proposed to the Mayor and Council early part of the year. Stewardship requires a plan that needs to be documented and monitored and managed based on the plan that is in effect, according to State standards. We still have the \$400,000 Planning and Incentive Grant money. This money can be used for the 50% match for the Green Acres for any acquisitions made. The Committee discussed a future Stewardship over a 10-year period and obtaining grant money.

A motion was made by Eric to propose to the Mayor and Council, the plan as presented and not to exceed \$29,500.00. No additional discussion. Bonker, Duch, Morytko, Kimm, yes. Opposed none. Joe Sabatini abstained.

Additional material will also be presented showing the connection between mice, deer and ticks and the importance of removing the barberry. As well as the RFP for the Ash removal.

Approval of October 9, 2018 minutes:

Motion to approve by John, 2nd by Andy. No additional comment on minutes. Bonker, Duch, Morytko, Kimm, yes. Joe Sabatini abstained. Minutes were approved.

OS Financial Status Report:

- Open Space Trust Fund Balance: \$313,165.00

- Reserve for Debt Service Balance: \$233,973.00
- Outstanding Debt Service Balance: \$409,950.00
- PIG approximate Balance: \$425,000.00

Activities Since last OS Meeting:

Our prior discussion of the scope of work by Greener by Design was presented by Frank and Ben to the Mayor, Council, and public. The 5-aspect plan would cost \$80,000. There was no action taken by the Council.

Historic Preservation Projects:

Discussed the \$5000 donation for the Roseville School House for the heating cooling system. The second project would be the Lockwood Cemetery on Route 206. Requested access work, parking and restoration work to grave stones be done. A plan has yet to be submitted.

Parks Projects:

Discussion of a gazebo or pavilion being added to our parks for sun shelter.

Frank asked the Highlands Council if there were any funds available at the end, that we could request. It was recommended that the Township submit a scope of services for consideration. The Highlands Council was presented with a letter written by Joe Sabatini on November 27, 2018 requesting \$80,000.00 for the Greener by Design Plan. On December 6th, the Highlands Council approved not to exceed \$80,000.00 grant monies. The entire project will be funded by the Highlands spread over 2 years. There was additional discussion on accepting the Grant, and the necessity of a press release.

Project Management: Trails

Discussion of future Trail system connections, including Hudson Farms property for public access, and the NJ Conservation Foundation using existing roads. Trails Master Plan will include trails that we do not own but are linked.

Environmental Commission update:

Eric will share with Ben an email he received which could be added as a future source. Additional clarification markers need to be added to our trails.

Other Business:

Discussion took place on whose term is coming to an end. Letters of interest and resume need to be submitted for the reorg meeting in January.

Meeting of all committee chairs was rescheduled for Monday, January 7, 2019 at 7pm but there was discussion of moving it again—possibly to January 22, 2019.

Open to the Public:

None present

Request to adjourn at 9:11 pm

Andy made a motion to adjourn and 2nd by Eric. All in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Victoria Proskey