

OPEN SPACE MEETING – APRIL 8, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Ray Bonker, Joe Sabatini, Scott Olson, John Morytko, Scott Yappen, Andy Kimm, Eric Duch. Also present: Doris Flynn, Ben Spinelli and Ron Farr – Mayor Alex Rubenstein arrived at 7:35 p.m.

Ray introduced Recreation Committee Representative Scott Yappen to all the committee members. Ray spent a few minutes talking about the committee and how it works.

Ron Farr

Forest Management Report

Ron stated that he will be adding the 2 new parcels, Johnson and Forest South, to the stewardship plan. Joe Sabatini asked Ron to check to see if Gamski was on the stewardship plan – if not add it. Ron submitted the Threatened and Endangered to the State and is waiting to hear back, and then he can move forward on the plan.

Update on Hunting Ordinance

- Ron emailed 10 hunters – 2 didn't have emails
- One of the hunters sent email back. Hunted for 60 days, saw 300 deer but 0.
- Another hunter said he hunted for 6 days, saw 10 deer, shot 0.
- Ben asked if he thought of using a log book. Eric suggested asking them where they park. We could put kiosk with a log book. We could make a sign in mandatory.
- Andy said there is a tree stand on the Arnell property – Joe said we need to know location and the DPW can take it down.

Removal of Ash Trees

- Ray Bonker asked about the removal of the white ash by logger
- Ron will be preparing a RFP – he will need to get a contractor out in the field to give a rough estimate what the cost would be. Ron thought it would be more than \$17,500.
- Joe explained the process of concession – if it is over the bid threshold, it must go to public bid.
- Eric stated that he received a letter from True Green advertising that they offer treatment of ash trees with an injection. Ron said that it can be treated by injection, but it is very expensive and has to be done yearly or every other year, depending on the type of injection.
- Andy Kimm said you can also cut them and leave them and there are advantages to that also.
- Ray stated that we were looking at having them taken away because that is where the value is. We are hoping to do this for little or no cost.

Miscellaneous

Discussion took place regarding Ron Farr's 2019 activity list. Ben will give access to all the members of the Forest Stewardship Plan developed.

We received a notice about the Hudson Farm burn. Ray asked Ron if any our properties are good candidates for a natural burn. Ron said that Tamarack could be a good candidate. Eric asked what happens after the burn. It kills red maple, black birch and barberry. Andy said there is a State bill out there trying to encourage more open burns.

Scott Yappen asked if the open burn would have an affect on ticks. Ron said it would be effective in killing the ticks.

- **Approval of Regular/Closed Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2019** – Motion by Scott Olson, second by John Morytko to approve the minutes. Scott Yappen abstained. All remaining members voted yes to approve.
- **OS Financial Status Report**
 - Open Space Trust Fund Balance: \$433,034
 - Reserve For Debt Service Balance: \$226,923
 - Outstanding Debt Service Balance: \$402,900 (\$360,000, \$42,000 is interest)
 - PIG Balance: approximately \$400,000
- **Activities Since Last OS Meeting**
 - Appointment by Council of Recreation Committee member to OS
 - Kickoff Public Meeting for Parks and Rec Plan – Ray attended with Scott and Joe. There were about 15 additional people. Ray felt it was a good kick-off session.
- **Historic Preservation Projects**
 - Lockwood Cemetery Update** – Scott will provide update during closed session
 - Historic Markers** – Scott reported that the County is willing to install the signs that have been made. Hamlet of Lockwood at the Plaza at Lackawanna Drive and the Sussex Turnpike Toll booth at the corner of Birch Road and Route 206N. The Historical Society is also looking to add additional markers in town.

Scott stated that Frank Gonzalez is interested in attending Open Space meetings. Scott suggested changing the ordinance to allow a representative from the Historic Society. Scott thinks it is appropriate since the name of the committee established by ordinance in 2000 is Open Space, Recreation, Farmland Preservation and Historic Preservation Committee.

Ray asked if the air/heat unit has been installed in Roseville School yet. Joe wasn't sure, but he would follow up with Mike Orgera.

- **Parks Projects**
 - C.O. Johnson** - Joe walked COJ with Mike Orgera:
 - Tennis Courts – Large crack that goes through the 3 courts – need to be fixed before it becomes a hazard. Preliminary cost estimate is \$50,000 – also requesting lining one of the courts to be used as a pickleball court.

Cory looked at the steps that lead down to the 2 soccer fields as well as the steps by the fieldhouse and is recommending to rehab/replace steps. Cory will be putting together a cost estimate.

Joe said that we may want to look at a bond ordinance in the near future for rec improvements.

Tamarack - - Tamarack has been completed. As part of an exercise Joe did for Ben, a spreadsheet was created showing that \$613,440 was spent from the OS trust fund for development of the park. These numbers don't include the reforestation of Tamarack Park which came out of the no net loss grant.

Neil Gylling

Mohawk View - We have reached out to PSE&G to see if we can repurpose the money that was earmarked for Mountain Heights Park to pave the parking lot at Mohawk View. We went out to bid twice.

East Brookwood

River Road

Ray stated that these parks will appear on every agenda – reports will be provided when applicable.

- **Project Management:**

- **Parks and Recreation Plan – Ben Spinelli**

Scott stated that at the last Council meeting the Park and Rec plan developed for Randolph was brought up stating that it was done at a cost of \$19,000, compared to the \$80,000 cost for Byram. Scott asked Ben to explain what the difference was done in Randolph to what GbD is doing for Byram.

Ben explained that Randolph hired them for a trails plan only, not the full open space and recreation plan. Randolph had an existing trails plan that they updated. Their work was a follow up to their recently completed open space and recreation plan that cost in excess of \$150,000. The work done by GBD for Randolph was far less involved and was also split into two sections, the trails plan and the wayfinding system. The total for both phases was about \$27,000. Their work for Byram is a full open space and recreation plan that includes trails planning as a component. Additionally, GbD is doing a long-term asset management plan and an economic development plan focused on eco-tourism. The detailed costs were over \$100,000 but Byram is saving over \$20,000 of costs by combining the work into a single project. If you look at the detailed budget, you can see that the work in Byram that is roughly equivalent to what was done in Randolph on trails comprises about \$23,000 of that total--a little less than what it cost Randolph.

Ben stated:

- Survey response is 600 completed survey which has been a great response.
- Even distribution throughout the Township
- Ray asked what a realistic amount is for responding. Ben said about 10% and right now we have exceeded the typical response.
- Let's do one more push in early summer – Consolidated School sign, police trailer, QR codes, panther lake campground
- Ben met with EC, Rec, Saltshakers – Will meet with the other sports organization by our next meeting. Eric asked if they will be talking to the cross-country program at the high school.
- Ben will be meeting with Byram Schools and Lenape – will see what is provided by the schools, can there be any shared service agreements, or do we need our own.
- Field inventory will begin on Friday.
- Cost estimating tool will be created and incorporated in the plan. Enable Byram to make good long-term budgeting decisions.

Highlands Trail – Raise the awareness of the trail. NY/NJ Trails conference responded to the RFP.

Ben talked with NJ/NY Trails – gave him suggestions to add to the RFP - Ben asked NJ/NY Trails to name Byram as a Target community – host town. It is ½ way point on the Highlands Trail. People need places to eat, camp, pick up supplies, etc.

Eric suggested rerouting the Highlands Trail to make it more contiguous – Ben thought his suggestion was good.

Scott Yappen asked why the survey was asking different questions at different parks. Ben said that he will be getting data from the sporting groups as to the needs of the parks.

- **Committee Updates**

Environmental Commission Update - NJDEP looking to increase waterway protection on Lubbers Run to C-1. Submitted the ANJEC grant \$1500 – educational aspect as well working with Ron Farr to remove the barberry after Ron cuts it. The EC would like to have the Forester accompany them on the trail clean up, and they would like the Forester to be paid out of OS funds. Joe stated that EC has a budget of \$2,600 and in the past has on average used about \$1500/year. Ray asked why OS funds would be used if they have their own budget, and it doesn't get totally used. Joe asked Eric to ask the EC to outline how they will be spending their budget this year.

Andy said it sounds like everyone is trying to poach the open space funds. People are looking at the \$430,000 as an open pot to use for recreation. He said that the forest stewardship proposal almost didn't get approved. Andy doesn't feel that the people who voted for open space years ago would approve of this way of thinking.

Recreation Committee Update – Scott Yappen stated that the Rec Committee didn't know that the Open Space Funds could be used for recreation. Scott asked what the Rec. budget is. Joe stated it is \$9000. Joe explained the evolution of the Recreation Committee from before we had a full time Recreation Director up to the present.

Alex reported that the Rec meetings have been changed to Mondays. There are 2 people who attended the last meeting and are interested in becoming members—Donna Griff and Mary Schneider.

Planning Board Update – Reviewed the C-1 stream upgrade – Planning Board does not feel it will affect Byram because we are in the Preservation Area.

Council Update - Joe learned that Indian Field is available to sporting organizations, except Lacrosse. They would need to fill out an application in Netcong.

Closed Session – Entered into closed session at 9:21 p.m. Returned to open session at 9:38 pm.

- **Other Business** – Scott Olson attended the first Annual Northwest NJ Rivers Conference at Centenary University. Great conference. Attended 3 seminars: Eco-tourism, benefits on conforming with the Highlands using highlights from Byram and Solving Stormwater Management Problems. Byram was talked about as a good example for environmental policy and programs. At the meeting, Scott met someone from Princeton Hydro. Because of the recent nomination by the NJDEP of Lubbers Run as a C-1 stream, they were interested in speaking to about the EPA 319 Water Quality Grants. Scott will try to set a discussion with LLIC to discuss

this further. A national group will be setting up website for the Appalachian Trail and surrounding areas supporting geo tourism.

- **Open to the Public**
- **Adjourn** – Motion by Scott Olson, second by Eric Duch, to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Doris Flynn