

OPEN SPACE MEETING – August 9, 2021

Members Present: Joseph Sabatini, Ray Bonker, Russel Raffay, John Morytko.

Members Absent: Eric Duch and Scott Yappen

Also present: Alex Rubenstein and Caitlin Phillips

John Morytko called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

OS Financial Status Report:

Open Space Trust Fund Balance: \$414,754.31

Reserve for Debt Service Balance: \$172,527.46

Outstanding Debt Service Balance: \$259,200.00

Mr. Bonker said he thinks they should keep the PIG money in mind to use it if needed.

Approval of Minutes – June 14, 2021

Mr. Bonker motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Sabatini. All in favor. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Forest Stewardship / Trails

Stand 20 Review

Ms. Gracie was unable to attend this meeting but provided an update earlier on the Stand 20 progress. She's gone out for proposals for Stand improvement for 95 low-grade trees between 4-10 inches to thin them out for more sunlight. Mr. Morytko said Ms. Gracie and her team mark the trees, and most of them could be girdled. He noted next steps for this would be to hear back about the proposals for this project.

Trails

Cranberry Overlook Trail Extension / Sussex County Open Space Grant Update

Mr. Morytko said there is an upcoming trails grant program that will be approved in a couple weeks, accepting applications until the end of September, and would have a \$5,000 cap for matching grants. Mr. Morytko asked Mr. Spinelli to put together drafts for projects. He noted the 3 trails at CO Johnson would be around \$10,000 when put together. Mr. Morytko is interested in the wayfinding and marking for these trails, including colors, trailheads, markers, etc. He'd like to see all of Byram's trails have a consistent design. Mr. Bonker said he'd like to put in as many applications as possible, since there's a lot of money available. He'd mark the trails red, white, and blue to show the distances of each. Mr. Morytko said the trail colors could connect with the colors of existing trails as well. Mr. Sabatini said his concern is if they put in multiple applications, some get approved and others don't; he'd rather put an application in with multiple components than multiple applications. Mr. Bonker said having multiple applications would help expand their range of receiving the grants. Mr. Sabatini noted the trails are already marked with white diamonds, and asked what would be changed with the application. Mr. Bonker said he'd like to see clear indications of the entrances and exits for each trail, and have

the length indicated. Mr. Morytko said he's like Mr. Spinelli to determine what could be improved to give them direction on these applications.

Mayor Rubenstein asked what the main focus is. Mr. Sabatini said he's focusing on navigation and wayfinding. Mayor Rubenstein asked if there is an issue with the current wayfinding, or if anything needs to be changed. Mr. Raffay said nothing major seems to be an issue, perhaps a few more wayfinding markers. Mr. Morytko said it might be useful to go through each trail and evaluate what works and what's missing. Mayor Rubenstein said it makes more sense to focus resources on trails that are being used more frequently. Mr. Raffay thought it may be useful to have kiosks. Mayor Rubenstein noted that having an online presence for trails would also be helpful—he recommended having trails listed on the AllTrails site. He noted it'd be better to integrate with a trail company rather than duplicating this information on our own website. They could have a kiosk with a QR code for the trail site as well. Mr. Morytko said the other priority is the connection for the COJ trails and Cranberry Overlook extension. Mr. Sabatini said the first step would be to obtain an estimate of the projects from Mr. Spinelli or Ms. Gracie. There was further discussion about what to do for the trails; Mr. Sabatini asked who would maintain a kiosk and update the information in it. There was a discussion about the markers and blazing and how to set them up and the cost of doing so. Mr. Morytko expects that Mr. Spinelli would be able to get quotes for this quickly. He will reach out to Mr. Spinelli with what was discussed and have him get started. The council would need to approve the application after Mr. Spinelli assembles it. Mr. Bonker noted that the funding is \$15,000 if it is a joint project with another town or third-party group.

Parks

Dog Park Design / Green Acres Loan Application Update / Riverside Park Grant Application Update

Mr. Morytko said there is a meeting tomorrow to get more detail on the dog park. He added that they haven't heard anything about the grant and loan applications; Mr. Sabatini added they won't hear anything unless they've been awarded.

Byram Outdoors

Brochure Updates / Website updates: further content (links, photos, etc.)

Mr. Morytko said he spoke with Mr. Spinelli and has found that it's taking awhile to get content moved over to the site. Mr. Sabatini said there needs to be more discussion with Mr. Spinelli; the information that was submitted for the website doesn't look complete. On the town site there should be links, photos, maps, and further information about the trails and other outdoor features.

Mr. Sabatini said the brochure was developed to promote Byram Outdoors; it can't be sent out until the website information is filled in. Mayor Rubenstein said it'd be good to have trail mapping links for each listed. He doesn't think they should have a brochure; it'd be more effective to advertise online to make it more accessible. He doesn't think people that live in town would need a brochure, since it's likely they already know about the trails. Mr. Sabatini noted that the mailing cost would also make the brochure an issue. Mr. Bonker said there may be people in town that don't use technology, so advertising online may not reach everyone. Mayor Rubenstein said it'd be effective to have the printed brochures at the municipal building and other in-person locations that people visit. He said the priority is to find the audience and the content for this advertising. Mr.

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Morytko said this would be a good thing to have at real estate offices, because the outdoors features are a selling point to live here. Mayor Rubenstein reiterated that the brochure can't be sent until the website is done. There was discussion about using a grant to help with marketing.

Riverside Park Kayak Launch

Discussion of Site

Mr. Bonker said the launch should be where the two streams intersect. Mr. Sabatini said it's too long of a walk to get from parking to the launch, especially if you need multiple trips for equipment. He noted it'd be worth exploring other spots; he noted a kayak launch at Waterloo Village. Mayor Rubenstein said he doesn't think Riverside Park is a feasible location. Mr. Sabatini said there's nothing stopping people now from using this as a launch, and no one seems to be using it. Mr. Bonker said a group looking to kayak could do this. He said the value of this is people using the Sussex Branch Trail, and this would encourage use. Mayor Rubenstein suggested having parking on Continental Drive to help access the area. Mr. Sabatini said he's okay putting a sign at Riverside Park, but the distance is his concern for the launch. He also thinks that since this trail isn't easily accessible, it indicates that not many people use it. Mr. Sabatini added that Riverside Park should be added on the website as a fishing/boating area.

Historic Preservation

Historic Markers / Brookwood Cemetery

Mr. Morytko said he'd follow up with the Historical Society to see if there's a funding need for the markers. The society has put in applications to the County for this. He will also see if there's anything to do at the Brookwood Cemetery. Mayor Rubenstein asked how they'd handle graves that have collapsed; Mr. Morytko reached out to the head of the cemetery association of New Jersey to ask this. Mr. Sabatini said the projects include assembling a list of the people buried there, restoring the gravestones, and clean-up of the cemetery because there is minimal maintenance. Mayor Rubenstein said it'd be helpful to have Frank Gonzalez lay out what's needed of the Open Space Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Open Space Parcel Recommendations for Bow Hunting

Mr. Morytko said they're making the same recommendations as previous years to allow deer hunting.

Mr. Bonker motioned to approve this recommendation, seconded by Mr. Sabatini, all were in favor.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Morytko opened to the public. No one from the public came forward. Mr. Morytko closed to the public.

ADJOURN – Motion by Mr. Raffay, second by Mr. Sabatini, to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m. All members in favor.