

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Reorganization and Regular
Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2011
7:00PM

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Agriculture Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:12P.M. Secretary Keller called the Reorganization meeting to order and read the following notice requirements.

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News on December 9, 2010, and by telefaxing a copy of the notice to the Star Ledger, and the Express Times on December 6, 2010. A copy of the notice was also posted in the Kingwood Township Municipal Building and Post Office on December 6, 2010.

In order to ensure full public participation in this meeting, all members of these Committees, and also members of the public are requested to speak only when recognized by the Chair, so that there is no simultaneous discussion or over-talk, and all persons are requested to utilize the microphones which are provided for your use by the Township. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Roll Call

Open Space Advisory Committee

Present

James Burke
Phil Lubitz
Sandra McNicol
Richard Dodds
Karen Hertzog
Lee Frank

Absent

John Mathieu

Agriculture Advisory Committee

Present

Elaine Niemann
William Pandy
Cynthia Niciecki
Edward Kralovich

Absent

Pete D'Costa

2.

Reorganize

Nomination for Chairperson for Open Space Advisory

It was moved by James Burke, seconded by Phillip Lubitz and carried to nominate Sandra McNicol Chairwoman to the Open Space Advisory Committee for the year 2011.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-P. Lubitz, J. Burke, R. Dodds, L. Frank, K. Hertzog
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-S. McNicol
	Absent	-J. Mathieu

Nomination for Vice Chairperson for Open Space Advisory

It was moved by Sandra McNicol, seconded by Phillip Lubitz and carried to nominate Richard Dodds as Vice Chairman to the Open Space Advisory Committee for the year 2011.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-P. Lubitz, J. Burke, S. McNicol, L. Frank, K. Hertzog
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-R. Dodds
	Absent	-J. Mathieu

Nomination for Chairperson for Agriculture Advisory

It was moved by Cynthia Niciecki, seconded by Elaine Niemann and carried to nominate William Pandy Chairman to the Agriculture Advisory Committee for the year 2011.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-E. Niemann, C. Niciecki, E. Kralovich
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-W. Pandy
	Absent	-P. D'Costa

3.

Nomination for Vice Chairperson for Agriculture Advisory

It was moved by Elaine Niemann, seconded by William Pandy and carried to nominate Cynthia Niciecki Vice Chairwoman to the Agriculture Advisory Committee for the year 2011.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-E. Niemann, W. Pandy, E. Kralovich
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-C. Niciecki
	Absent	-P. D'Costa

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol of the Open Space Advisory Committee continued the meeting.

Motion and approval of scheduled meeting dates for 2011
Meeting Time to be at 7:00PM

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by James Burke and carried to approve the scheduled meeting dates and time for 2011.

The Committee decided no meeting in August 2011.

The following meeting dates for 2011 were approved.

January 4, 2011	July 5, 2011
February 1, 2011	No Meeting in August
March 1, 2011	September 6, 2011
April 5, 2011	October 4, 2011
May 3, 2011	November 1, 2011
June 7, 2011	December 6, 2011

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-P. Lubitz, J. Burke, S. McNicol, R. Dodds, L. Frank, K. Hertzog, E. Niemann, W. Pandy, C. Niciecki, E. Kralovich
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-None
	Absent	-J. Mathieu, P. D'Costa

4.

Motion and approval of local newspapers (Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News) for advertisements

It was moved by James Burke, seconded by Richard Dodds and carried to approve the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News to be the Townships news papers for advertisements for the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-P. Lubitz, J. Burke, S. McNicol, R. Dodds, L. Frank, K. Hertzog, E. Niemann, W. Pandy, C. Niciecki, E. Kralovich
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-None
	Absent	-J. Mathieu, P. D'Costa

Comments from the Newly Nominated Chairpersons

William Pandy feels that the Committees have a good projection for preservation and preservation signs.

Sandy McNicol noted that the Committees did a great job last year and that it is a great group to work with and hopes that it will be another year of hard work.

Approval of Minutes

Motion and approval of December 2, 2010 Meeting Minutes of the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by Lee Frank and carried to approve the December 2, 2010 Meeting Minutes for the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees.

Comments: Cynthia Niciecki announced a few corrections she would like made on Page 8 of the minutes.

Correction: Page#8 - Second line from top - Last word to correct spelling of City of Passiac.

5.

Correction: Page#8 - Sentence starting on the fourth and fifth lines from the top - Correct sentence: She also noted that they are running a machine loader that was way too loud.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	-P. Lubitz, J. Burke, S. McNicol, R. Dodds, L. Frank, K. Hertzog, E. Niemann, W. Pandy, C. Niciecki, E. Kralovich
	Nay	-None
	Abstain	-None
	Absent	-J. Mathieu, P. D'Costa

Correspondence

County Breakfast Talk - Solar Farms Follow-up

Sandra McNicol reviewed.

Copy of Letter to Open Space Coordinator Kevin Richardson

Sandra McNicol reviewed letter.

Copy of Resolution No. 2010-123 OS Municipal Grant Allocation Adopted by the Twp. Committee on December 7, 2010

Sandra McNicol reviewed the Resolution that was prepared and adopted by the Township Committee, and then sent to Kevin Richardson at the Hunterdon County Planning Board.

Reports

Farmland Preservation - Liz Schmid
(Report for January 4, 2011)

SADC Coordinator Liz Schmid read aloud the following:

6.

Agriculture Committee Report

January 4, 2011

Hunterdon Land Trust has submitted Block 23/Lot 17, the Gordeuk estate piece, consisting of about 25 acres to SADC and FRPP for preservation funding. Kate Buttolph from the Hunterdon Land Trust is waiting for Mary Moody to come in and sign needed papers.

They hope to hear from SADC by the end of January, so that they can move ahead on appraisals. This project would use up the last of their Kingwood Township grant money.

The Land Trust is also talking to the Fadil family about their farmland at Block 15, Lot 1 on Slacktown Rd. It is 39 acres of flat, open prime soils with no buildings. HLTA would like to know if we could participate in funding this effort. It came in late in the year to be included in the SADC Application.

CADB staff presented preliminary rankings for the 15 farms that applied through the County or Municipal PIGs last fall. The Gross farm which ranked 4th with 63.85 pts. was the Township's highest ranked farm. The Search (Makatura) farm ranked 6th with 60.33pts. It was negatively impacted by the requested severable exception. The Zander farm ranked 7th, but is being questioned because of size. CADB is making a farm visit this week. The Helmer farm ranked 11th with 51.5 pts. Our municipal PIG farm, Tozzi, ranked 13th, with 41.68 pts., and is being visited this week also. The rankings may well change after the visits, and some farms may be eliminated, because of the different ranking results between the County and Kingwood ranking systems, and because of our own questions about how our ranking came out this year Kingwood might want to review our system.

There was a brief discussion from the members from both Committees regarding the properties in the report. Everyone thanked Liz Schmid for her report.

Attendees for Farmland Status Meetings/December 15, 2010

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed.

Old Business

Kugler Woods MOA - Trails Grant with Hunterdon County Land Trust Alliance

Richard Dodds gave an update on the grant for the trails on the properties along Rt. 29, which are known as the Kugler Woods.

7.

He explained that the MOA was reviewed by the Attorney Generals office. He stated that the trails grant with the HLTA was due in December. He explained that the grant is funding to do a trail along the properties of the Kugler Woods, which is located on the old Trap Rock property. He explained that the Boy Scouts are partnering with the Hunterdon County Land Trust to do some work on the trails. Also between Christmas and New Years the land trust and Scout Troop 251 put up several no hunting signs. He explained that there are a lot of interesting things for the Scouts to get involved in with this project. He noted that the trail is marked now. He described where it is located along the river. Everyone thanked Richard Dodds for the update.

Preservation Signs

James Burke brought the sign which he ordered for the Gergar Property and showed all the members. It was discussed where it would be located on the property. There were suggestions to possibly mount it on a large rock. James Burke stated he will speak to the Public Works Department regarding putting the sign up.

There was a discussion regarding the Gergar home and all the work that needs to be done to bring it up to code. James Burke explained that it did not sell for a large amount of money. He stated that this is due to the economy and the work needed to update the home. The property was sold for \$145,000.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol presented a preservation sign for the Ukarish property, which she ordered months ago through Deptcor. She noted that the cost was a total of \$101.00. Everyone thanked Sandra McNicol for her work in ordering the sign and expressed that it looked very nice. She stated that she will design a sign for the Melnyk Property.

Hunterdon Land Trust - Activity update

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol stated that Liz Schmid already gave an update on the activities of the Hunterdon Land Trust earlier in the meeting. It was noted that the Hunterdon Land Trust has moved from Main Street in Flemington to an office on the Dvoor Farm.

8.

Mr. Burke stated that he spoke to Mr. Palopoli the owner of the large property on Horseshoe Bend Road, and that he is willing to take an offer from the Township for an amount to be purchased for the property. James Burke will keep everyone posted and informed.

Gergar Farm - Auction Outcome

There was a discussion on the sale of the property. The property sold in December 2010 for \$145,000. The Committees discussed how it was the best thing to do for the Township since the Township would have been responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the home and property. The home on the property needs a lot of work and upgrades.

New Business

Discussion on Federal Programs for Land Owners

Lee Frank explained what wetland banking trails are all about and how it works. He stated that Hunterdon and Kingwood Township are considered Zone #11. He explained that in order for a land owner to be considered a wetlands bank, the first thing that is considered is a project that needs to be mapped out for a natural wetlands habitat. It then needs to be reviewed by an engineering firm and presented to the D.E.P. to be approved. If then approved, the project can be constructed and completed. The land is then ready to be purchased as a wetland bank. He noted that 3 acres is worth one point. He explained that when all the points are sold, the land is then given to a non profit organization and that the original owner cannot be the owner of that property any longer. This land will then be undeveloped open space property. He explained that large businesses or as an example, the State D.O.T. needs to purchase points in order to work on roads and ditches in wetland areas. Lee Frank explained that he met with an engineer from Ringoes N.J. to learn more about the wetland banks and points. He explained how builders can now build on wetlands if they buy the points from the banks. Sandra McNicol thanked Lee Frank for his review on the wetland banks. He stated that this will be further discussed next month.

9.

Discussion: OS/Ag Goals for 2011

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked if anyone had any ideas or would like to do anything different this year, as far as projects or goals.

She noted that Readington Township lists all of their preserve farms. She read aloud a list of farms that have been preserved in Readington Township. She explained that there is a total of 240 acres of farmland preservation and, discussed what is available to the public. She suggested that Kingwood Township could do a similar listing on the web site. Sandra McNicol stated that she is open for any suggestions.

There were several suggestions from Richard Dodds who would like to see property near the Locatong, and also near Route 29 preserved, that way it will prevent properties from being developed. There were suggestions recommended for several properties in the Township to possibly be preserved.

Elaine Niemann had an idea for a landowner workshop. This would be educational programs for landowners and discussions on preservation for when the economy gets better. It was noted that there be a discussion at the next meeting as to when to schedule a landowner workshop, possibly in the fall of 2011.

Readington Township web page listing of preserved farms and open space

LINK:

www.readingtontwp.org/farm_land_farms_preserves.html#kannach

Sandra McNicol reviewed all the properties that have been preserved in Readington Township.

Additional suggestions

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that a resident of the Township named Tama Matsuoka who is on the Board at the Bowmans Hill Wildflower Preserve put together a book on creating a New Jersey Native Wildflower Meadow, which Bowman's Hill is presently selling.

10.

She also explained another resident named Mr. William Rawlyk had an article in this winters D & R Greenway Land Trust on what he is doing to his property on Hampton Road. He is creating a wetlands area and moving soils around. The property is open to the public to experience the wetlands.

Jim Burke explained that William Rawlyk was a very devoted member of the Environmental Commission for many years for Kingwood Township.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

Adjournment

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by James Burke and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:33PM. **All** voted **Aye** on **Roll Call Vote**.

Respectfully submitted,

**Cynthia L. Keller,
Secretary**