

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular

Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2012

7:00PM

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Agriculture Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:03P.M. Chairwoman Sandra McNicol called the meeting to order and read the following notice requirements.

Notice 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 January 19th, 2012, and by telefaxing a copy of the notice to the Star Ledger, and the Express Times on January 11, 2012. A copy of the notice was also posted in the Kingwood Township Municipal Building and Post Office on January 11, 2012.

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.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol introduced Diana Haywood to the Open Space Committee. She explained that James Burke resigned as Township Committeeman as he has moved out of the Township. Everyone welcomed Diana Haywood to the committee and also thanked her for serving on the Township Committee.

Roll Call

Open Space Advisory Committee

Present

Phil Lubitz
Richard Dodds
Sandra McNicol
Lee Frank
John Mathieu
James Burke

Absent

Karen Hertzog

2.

Agriculture Advisory Committee

Present

Elaine Niemann
William Pandy
Edward Kralovich
Cynthia Niciecki
Pete D'Costa

Absent

None

Approval of Minutes

Motion and Approval of January 10, 2012 Reorganization and Regular Meeting Minutes of the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees

It was moved by Phil Lubitz, seconded by Richard Dodds and carried to approve the January 10, 2012 Reorganization and Regular Meeting Minutes of the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees.

Roll Call Vote:

Aye	-Lubitz, McNicol, Dodds, Frank, Niemann, Pandy, Kralovich
Nay	-None
Abstain	-Mathieu, Niciecki, D'Costa
Absent	-Hertzog

Correspondence

Letter from the New Jersey Land Conservation Rally - One Day Conference, Saturday, March 10th at Brookdale Comm. College

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the details of the conference. She stated to the members that if they are interested to please let her know so she can sign them up for the one day conference.

Reports

Farmland Preservation - Liz Schmid
(Report for February 7, 2012)

Liz Schmid reviewed the following report:

3.

Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committee Report
February 7, 2012

1. Maplewood Farm -The family has signed the option agreement. The paper work for the second appraisal has been sent. Unfortunately, the family has come back with another problem with the wording that we are working out. It should not be a problem.
2. Block 30, Lot 6 has filed an application with Green Acres. We will not hear anything on that for a while.
3. Both Helmer (Bl 2 Lot 5) and Gross (Bl 5 Lot 4.03) have signed County option agreements. They have been sent to the State for green light approval before appraisals will be done. The County has not yet gotten an option agreement from Zander (Bl 5 Lot3) as they are still trying to figure out very convoluted ownership on the two parcels.
4. CADB continues to be very negative about farmland in Kingwood. The majority feel that only the best farmland in the County should be preserved, even if there is money available to preserve OK farmland. I will try to push the idea of needing to preserve as much farmland as possible in order to help preserve farmers and farming in the County. Also the need to keep farming local.
5. HLT is applying for farmland preservation for Decker (Bl 24 Lot 8) and Mulligan (Bl 33 Lot 24) and is on the CADB list. The ADA will have to be amended to include these farms if they are to be preserved through the County program. Do you want me to do the paper work to do this. They would come I after Maplewood, Gross, Helmer and Zander. At \$7,000/acre, there would be a total cost of @\$174,200. If HLT asks the Township for the usual 20% participation, we would need \$348,400. If they need more, it could be twice that. We do not really know if State funds will be available for these projects. HLT has applied for Federal funds for them.
6. SADC staff questioned the possibility of the Township submitting Block14, Lot 20 (90 acres) as a municipal PIG farm. It has been down at the State as a State Direct Easement purchase application for years. Its score has not been high enough to get it preserved in that program yet. The problem with either the Township or County PIG for this farm is that it is just under 50% tillable and the County will not participate in preservation under 50%.

4.

7. As it is along the Rt. 29 corridor and has significant Copper Creek frontage, I contacted Green Acres to see if they would have any interest, and they said not at this time. We can explore the possibility of getting some Federal money to make up the difference, but the landowner would have to be willing to accept additional restrictions on the property. At \$7,000/acre, this would cost a total of \$616,000 with the Township cost of \$123,200 if we paid the usual 20%.
8. The County has given everyone in the County Planning Department pink slips. It is not known if they plan to keep anyone at all, but they had to give out the notifications in order to lay people off in mid March. If the County does this the continuation of any preservation projects now and in the future would seem to be at risk. Would the separate Committees be interested in sending a letter of support for the County staff and its importance in pursuing voter supported preservation? Would any members be interested in sending letters to the editor of the Democrat to raise the general awareness of the consequences of such an action?

In regard to the County and possible layoffs, the Committees feel it may be beneficial to write letters to the Hunterdon Democrat in support of the County staff.

William Pandy noted that he received a call regarding environmental impact studies being done on the Trstenski property.

Sandra McNicol noted that there is no money left in the budget for the master plan. She stated that any expenses will need to come out of the Planning Boards budget and just wanted to alert everyone, because the Open Space Committee had asked the Planning Board to review an addendum to the open space and recreation plan. She explained that this will have to be put on hold for now.

Old Business

Kugler Woods MOA

5.

Richard Dodds stated that he met with representatives from the Land Trust and also representatives from the State who are in charge of Bulls Island. There was a discussion as to what scouts will be working on at the Kugler Woods. He noted they will be doing a fair amount of work along the trails. He noted that they looked into improving the trails and also the trails that the Township has worked on at Horseshoe Bend Park.

Horseshoe Bend Park Steering Committee - Progress Report

Richard Dodds explained that the committee is working with the State regarding a memorandum of agreement on management of the Horseshoe Bend Park in its entirety. He explained that Kingwood Township has approximately 106 acres of a 400 acre park. He stated that if you count the Flag property and the Kirkland property along with the area that was purchased from Horseshoe Bend LLC, it is about 400 acres. He would like to the Township's portion along with the State's portion managed as one piece instead of it being separate. He noted that he is still waiting for the details of the MOA. He explained that every year there is a New Jersey Trails Grant Process. He stated that this is the grant that is funding the Kugler Woods trail. He then went to the State and asked if Kingwood Township would be able to apply for a grant to improve the existing trails at Horseshoe Bend Park, that way it will allow Kingwood to work on the State's side of the property until the MOA is completed.

New Jersey Trails Grant Process

He noted that the Steering Committee has applied for a grant for \$21,000.00 to take care of the erosion of the trails, which will require that we commit to several hundreds of hours of trail work and volunteer time. He explained that a resolution has been adopted by the Township Committee to apply for the grant. Sandra McNicol reviewed details of what Richard Dodds had sent to the State. Richard Dodds thanked Jack MacConnell for the idea he suggested of putting in mile markers along the trails in case of an emergency so that someone can easily tell the responders where they are located. The positive note about the grant is that we can apply next year for another grant. He stated that this Saturday the Steering Committee and other volunteers will be pulling paper out of the large building up at the Horseshoe Bend Park at 9:00a.m. Frenchtown River Dogs a group from Frenchtown are interested in working on the leash free field area.

6.

He also explained that representatives from the Frenchtown Garden Club would like to expand their community garden at the Horseshoe Bend Park.

Phil Lubitz thanked Jack MacConnell, the Pandy family and all of those who have been helping to look over the park grounds.

Additional Preserved Farm Sign for Ukarish Property

Sandra McNicol stated that she has not had the time to work on this yet, but she will be soon.

New Business

Hunterdon Land Trust - Activity update

Richard Dodds reviewed a map of interest of from the Hunterdon Land Trust of properties they would like to preserve in Kingwood Township.

Approval of NJDEP Green Acres Renewal Letter (Elaine Niemann)

Elaine Niemann explained that because we have been so active in green acres, a letter needs to be written. She reviewed a report of our Open Space and Trust Fund balance from the Township's C.F.O. Diane Laudenbach. She noted that this could be the last opportunity to apply for green acres, and feels the Township should apply. She also stated that the 50% match does not have to come out of the green acres trust fund for Kingwood. She reviewed several properties in Kingwood with the committees and asked them which properties would be most important that are on the list. She stated that the Township has to estimate the amount of funds needed for the land trust to help participate.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked Richard Dodds to review on the overhead screen maps of the following properties:

Haring property, Block 12, Lot 33.01 - 59 acres, and all the properties joining. Richard Dodds discussed the wetland areas. William Pandy noted that these wetland areas are streambeds. He explained that the only access to this property is to go through someone else's property.

7.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked for a vote from the Committees to work on an application for green acres for the Haring property. All Ayes on a Vote from everyone on all Committees.

Covaleski property, Block 12, Lot 26 - 61 acres. Sandra McNicol noted that this is land locked with no frontage and access to this property. Richard Dodds noted that this property is contiguous with the Lockatong Creek. **All Voted Nay on this Property**

Block 19, Lot 11 - 36 acres (on park side)
Block 20, Lot 5 - 59 acres (proximity to the Kingwood Park, a potential to expand playing fields)

Ecker property, Block 26, Lot 24 - 61 Acres (resolution adopted October, 2010 in support of the Hunterdon Land Trust acquisition) Located between two other preserved farms. The parcel connects preserved lands along the Wichecheoke and Lockatong streams.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked for a vote from the Committees to work on an application for green acres for the Ecker property. All Ayes on a Vote from everyone on all committees, except for four Nays. Ayes took the vote.

Steinbeiser property, Block 23, Lot 15, Lot 15.05, 14 & 12 acres. This property backs up close to where the conservation easement will be at the Perrotti property, where a solar development has been approved.

Sommo property, Block 24, Lot 9.0 - 56.9 acres (Lockatong corridor protection, proximity to conservation easement to be in place at neighboring property fronting on Barbertown-Point Breeze Rd. and Muddy Run. (Required conservation easement in connection with a solar development.) Also across the stream from this property is a piece of vacant land about to be preserved by the Hunterdon Land Trust (Trstensky).

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked for a vote from the Committees to work on an application for green acres for the Sommo property. All Ayes on a Vote from everyone on all committees, except for one Nay.

8.

Decker property, Block 24, Lot 8, which is 59 acres. The lockatong stream protection (assuming owner-occupied exception area)

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked for a vote from the Committees to work on an application for green acres for the Decker property. All Ayes from everyone on all committees.

The Erickson property was discussed. Phil Lubitz noted that this property may be a consideration to preserve. There were several properties considered and discussed that are located along Rt. 12.

Elaine Niemann noted that she will finalize the letter and send it out as soon as possible.

Identify Future Preservation Goals - Committee Discussion
(Refer to Maps Below):

Kingwood Township Public Open Space, 2011

There was a very lengthy discussion on the targeted properties to be preserved.

Figure 4. Preserved and Targeted Farmland

Liz Schmid reviewed the projected farms to possibly be preserved.

Figure 2. Open Space and Recreation System Map

The Committees reviewed the open space and recreation system map. Richard Dodds explained that there are grants to help fix the existing fields at the park.

HLT Kingwood Parcels Project List 2-17-2012

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the list of properties. She noted that these are the properties that the Land Trust has interest in purchasing in the future. Liz Schmid reviewed a few of the properties that were eligible for farmland preservation.

Budget for the Kingwood Twp. Open Space Trust Fund - Current Debits and Credits

9.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed a memo from C.F.O. Diane Laudenbach regarding the Township's debts and credits for the open space account to see where the Township is financially.

KT Open Space Finances 2-7-2012

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the assets and liabilities of Open Space Funds as of February 7, 2012.

Discussion: OS/Ag Goals for 2012

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol stated that the Township has to wait to see where things go first.

New Jersey Trails Grant - February Application Due

She noted that this application has been submitted.

Phil Lubitz explained that there was a very nice picture of the National Hotel in the Star Ledger this week.

Richard Dodds asked the members if anyone had an idea of how properties are affected by being surrounded by preserved property. He explained that they are very much affected, and in a positive perspective.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

Adjournment

It was moved by Phil Lubitz, seconded by Lee Frank and carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:10PM. **All** voted **Aye** on **Roll Call Vote**.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia L. Keller
Secretary