

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Regular
Meeting Minutes
April 3, 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 7:08P.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 noted that there were not enough members present for a quorum on the Ag Advisory Committee to meet this evening.

Roll Call

Open Space Advisory Committee

Present

Sandra McNicol
Diana Haywood
Richard Dodds
Karen Hertzog
John Mathieu

Absent

Phil Lubitz
Lee Frank

2.

Agriculture Advisory Committee

Present

William Pandy
Cynthia Niciecki
Elaine Niemann (arrived at 7:13pm)

Absent

Ed Kralovich
Pete D'Costa

Approval of Minutes

Motion and Approval of March 6, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol suggested these minutes be tabled until the next meeting when more members are present to vote.

Correspondence

Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholder Mtg. April 17, 2012

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol read aloud a notice from the Board of Chosen Freeholders, which was a notice of public hearing to be on April 17, 2012. It stated that it is to discuss and receive public comment concerning the retroactive reallocation of funds from the Open Space Trust Tax Fund in the following categories and amounts: Farmland Preservation in the amount of \$1.1 million dollars; County Land Preservation in the amount of \$1.1 million dollars; and Cooperative Open Space Acquisition in the amount of \$1.1 million dollars to the category of Payment of Debt Service. This reallocation is being considered for the purpose of utilizing unspent funds in the above referenced categories in order to pay down existing debt service. Chairwoman Sandra McNicol would like the Committees this evening to discuss this issue. She feels that the Freeholders should provide an audit to the taxpayers of the County Open Space Trust Fund. She also feels that a review of the budget is in order, so that the public can see where the funds have been spent, and why they have an issue of paying down their debt of the open space funds. There was a brief discussion on the Township's C.F.O. breaking down the Open Space Committee's debt requirements that we have to pay on the bonds. She feels that the Freeholders should do the same. She asked the committees to give their comments. The committees had a very lengthy discussion on the issue. They expressed that they have several questions that they would like to ask the Freeholders regarding the concerns of the funds in the open space trust tax fund.

3.

Richard Dodds and Liz Schmid stated that they had attended the Freeholders meeting this evening, and they reviewed the details of it with the present Committees.

Elaine Niemann arrived at 7:13pm. The Agricultural Advisory Committee has a quorum at this time and will be able to conduct business.

Richard Dodds will be sending a message by e-mail from the Open Space and Ag Committees expressing their concerns, and a letter from the Open Space and Ag will be written to the County Freeholders expressing Kingwood Township's opinion.

Approval of Minutes

Motion and Approval of March 6, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by Diana Haywood and carried to approve the March 6, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Open Space and Agriculture Advisory Committee.

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

Reports

Farmland Preservation - Liz Schmid
(Report for April 3, 2012)

Liz Schmid reviewed the following report:

Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committee Report

April 3, 2012

4.

1. Maplewood Farm - The appraiser has been to the farm at least once, but we have not received anything yet. As soon as it comes back, we will send both appraisals to the State to get a certified value.
2. CADB has given preliminary approval to the Decker farm (Bl 24 Lot 8) on Rt. 519. They have postponed a decision on Mulligan (Bl 33 Lot 24) until they get further information about alternate access.
3. Helmer and Zander are waiting for Green Light approval from the State.
4. Gross is waiting for appraisals to be authorized by the County.
5. The State has decided to proceed on the Wydner farm on Rt. 29. The State has met with the family at least once to determine exactly what they want to do with the property.
6. Ecker (Bl 26, Lot 4) - A neighbor spoke with Elaine about possible family interest in preservation. I spoke with Mr. Ecker's sister, Teresa Gassante, who says that the family has no plans for the property as long as he has enough money to pay for the nursing home.
7. She said that HLTA did approach him a while ago but then did nothing, so they are not really impressed by that idea. I told her to contact HLTA or the Township if family plans change.
8. Goeckeler (Bl 30, Lot 6) - The application is still under review at the State.

Everyone thanked Liz for her report.

Old Business

Kugler Woods MOA

Richard Dodds stated that he met with Stephanie Fox, who is the State Naturalist. He stated that he met her at the Kugler Woods and they looked over the trail. He noted that she feels that this will not be a problem and that there is nothing endangered along that area. He stated that she did some background work for the Township, and explained that there is an MOA between the Township and the State and the Hunterdon Land Trust. She told him that the Township can go in and cleanout anything along the way of the trails.

5.

Richard Dodds explained that the Township is free to go ahead with that project. He stated that she will be meeting with Richard Dodds at the Horseshoe Bend Road tomorrow to look at the trails at the park, which will move the MOA process along.

Hunterdon Land Trust - Activity update

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol explained that the Hunterdon Land Trust is short after receiving funds from Green Acres and the Water Supply Authority. She noted that they are short \$5,590 for the Trstenski property, and would like to know if the Township would like to give additional funds to put towards this expense. She explained that they are looking at the timing for the closing to be in November, and that they are about to order a title search and a survey, which the Water Supply Authority said they will be paying for those items. Richard Dodds asked how it would affect the Township if we used our County fund, and would it impact the Township's financial statement by increasing the debt. Sandra McNicol responded. The Committees would like to wait for now and not use their funds at this time.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol stated that the Committees should continue to review a list of the properties from the HLT in the near future.

Horseshoe Bend Park Steering Committee - Progress Report

No report at this time.

Additional Preserved Farm Sign for Ukarish Property - Update

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that there is nothing new to report at this time.

Old Business Continued

Copy of letters to Twp. Committee - March 7th, 2012 Request from Open Space and Ag Committees

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed. Elaine Niemann explained what the Township Committee had decided regarding the logging bill.

6.

She noted that the Township supported by adopting a resolution to support it and also approved the application for the Township to obtain free services from the Hunterdon County Soil Conservation. Sandra McNicol will be filling out the application to the Soil Conservation.

New Business

Horseshoe Bend Park General Management Plan Open Public Meeting - Public Meeting April 19, 2012 at Kingwood School - Flyer

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed. Richard Dodds explained that he sent an e-mail to the Superintendent at the Kingwood Township School for his ideas for how the Township could encourage young families to get involved and to participate with the Horseshoe Bend Park. Richard Dodds stated that he is hoping the flyer is sent home with the children. John Mathieu suggested that this be announced over WDVR Radio. He stated that he will take care of giving it to the radio station to read over the air.

Review of March 9 Open Public Meeting

Richard Dodds reviewed the open public meeting of March 9, 2012 at the Horseshoe Bend Park. He noted that there were about 30 people that attended. He stated that there were a lot of good ideas suggested for the park. He noted that at this time there is no decision making, but just gatherings to get some ideas, and once they get enough ideas they will review them all. He noted that he is hoping to get more people at the school open public meeting on April 19th. He would like to find a way to control the deer that needs to be discussed sooner than later. He is looking forward to going into the woods with the State Naturalist to find out what the Township can do. Bill Pandey suggested getting local gun clubs to give the Township some ideas. Jack MacConnell commented that the Township should go through the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. He explained how it works. Richard Dodds explained that this is the purpose of the MOA. Cynthia Niciecki noted that there is a resident in the Township who would be able to talk to us about how we would manage the deer. She stated that his name is Larry Herrighty, who is the Assistant Director at the Fish and Game for the State.

7.

Naming Hunterdon Land Trust Preserve for Trstensky Farm Block 24, Lot 14.01

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol stated that this property is going to need a name. She asked everyone to give their suggestions for a name for the preserve. There was a brief discussion and there was a suggestion for the name of Muddy Run Preserve. Everyone agreed that this would be a great name for the property.

Preserved Farm Map - Revised for 2012

The committees decided to table this until next month.

Spring Hike - Open Space or Preserved Farm/date/time

There was a brief discussion on what property would chosen for a spring hike. Richard Dodds stated that he will work on a proposal for a hike location for next month's meeting.

Farm Programs - NRCS, Farm Service, Hunterdon County Soil Conservation - Update

Sandra McNicol briefly reviewed the farm programs, and how it has to do with the local farmers. She had a few questions regarding farmers and the requirement of changing the fields. Cynthia Niciecki explained that the farmers have to change their fields every year, because they cannot enroll the same fields every year. She suggested that whoever does farm the Horseshoe Bend Park property should enroll in that program, so that the field life is preserved. There was a brief discussion on who would be taking care of the fields at the Horseshoe Bend Park, and who do we talk to do the right thing. John Mathieu stated that he feels that we should get the public's opinion on what to do. There was a suggestion to cut the dog leash free field into the trails. Cynthia Niciecki suggested that the Township may want to get bids for farming the fields. He noted that this is an odd category to take on. Elaine Niemann suggested that this be brought up to the Parks and Recreation Committee. She feels until the Township has made some decisions, the Township Committee will take charge of the Horseshoe Bend Park for now. There was a lengthy discussion on parklands by ordinance. Richard Dodds stated they need to work on a plan and then take it to the Parks and Recreation Committee. It was decided that at this time any decisions will go to the Township Committee.

8.

It was suggested that a recommendation be brought to the Township Committee that the name for Horseshoe Bend Park be changed.

Richard Dodds asked everyone to please come to the open public meeting on April 19th, at the Kingwood School at 7:00PM to give their input for the development of a general management plan for Horseshoe Bend Park.

Discussion: OS/Ag Goals for 2012

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that the Committees discussed their goals earlier in the meeting.

Sandra McNicol noted that the Hunterdon Land Trust and the N.J. Conservation went out and walked the property on Horseshoe Bend Road where the Methodist United Reformed Church had been located. She stated that she, Richard Dodds and Kevin Richardson went out and walked the property. She stated that it connects to several preserved properties. She noted that at this time it is a very nice piece of property. She showed everyone a map of the properties that meet up with this property. Sandra McNicol stated that they are not sure if the owners are interested in preserving. She did note that the State is not interested in purchasing this property at this time. Sandra McNicol stated that they need a breakdown of the funds for the bonds. Kate Buttolph, of the Hunterdon Land Trust suggested that the Township work on a priority list for this year. Sandra McNicol made some suggestions of how we could work on this list. She noted that the Township could use the Land Trust's list or the Open Space and Ag Committees could make our own list. Sandra McNicol will send everyone the list from the Land Trust. Richard Dodds suggested that everyone rank the properties on their own. She would like the financial breakdown for next month to review, and then the Open Space and Ag Committees will be able to work on a priority list.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

N/A

Adjournment

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by John Mathieu and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:54p.m. **All** voted **Aye** on **Roll Call Vote**.

Respectfully submitted, Cynthia Keller Secretary