

# OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Regular Meeting Minutes May 1, 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 7:07P.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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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.

### Roll Call

#### Open Space Advisory Committee

##### Present

Sandra McNicol  
Richard Dodds  
Lee Frank  
Karen Hertzog  
John Mathieu

##### Absent

Phil Lubitz  
Diana Haywood

#### Agriculture Advisory Committee

##### Present

Cynthia Niciecki  
Edward Kralovich  
Elaine Niemann (arrived at 7:24pm)

##### Absent

Peter D'Costa  
William Pandy

### Approval of Minutes

Motion and Approval of April 3, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees

2.

Not enough members were present to approve the April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 meeting minutes. The April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 Meeting Minutes will be tabled until next month for approval.

### Correspondence

#### Copy of Letter to the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the letter, which she had prepared that was sent to the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders regarding the open space tax levy. She explained that they want to change the open space tax levy from three percent to two percent, to pay off a 3.3 million dollar bond. She explained that this was in regard to a meeting that was held on April 17th. She noted that they decided not to change the levy and kept it at 3 cents. She explained that there was an on line petition, which several hundred people signed through the Land Trust. Sandra McNicol explained that she contacted Kevin Richardson, from the County Planning Board to set up a date to talk about open space and preservation in Kingwood. She noted that she has not heard back from Mr. Richardson, but hopes to speak to him in the near future.

There was a brief discussion on the Freeholder's meeting of April 17th. Sandra McNicol noted that there are at least 23 families that would like to preserve their property in Kingwood Township.

#### Copy of Letter to the HLT April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed a letter that she prepared and sent to the Hunterdon Land Trust, which was a request from the Open Space and Ag Committees, requesting that they would like to name the remaining Trstensky property, "Muddy Run Preserve". She noted that the Committees will wait to hear from the Hunterdon Land Trust.

### Reports

#### Farmland Preservation - Liz Schmid (Report for May 1, 2012)

3.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol stated that Liz is not present this evening. She read aloud Liz's Report for May.

#### Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committee Report

May 1, 2012

I am writing this on the morning of 4/26, and will be gone until 5/9. The information is as of 4/26.

1. Maplewood Farm - Both appraisals have been completed, with a rethink on the second appraisal. Hopefully, by the time of the meeting the updated second appraisal will be on its way to Trenton to join the first and we can have a certified value soon.
2. CADB did not address Mulligan Farm (Bl 33 Lot 24) at the April meeting. It should be on the May agenda. They have postponed a decision on Mulligan until they get further information about alternate access
3. Helmer and Zander are waiting for Green Light approval from the State.
4. 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. The family is still mulling the options..
5. Goeckeler (Bl 30, Lot 6) - The application is still under review at the State.
6. Gross appraisal orders should be going out soon..
7. 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
8. The owner of the Decker Farm, (Bl 24/Lot 8) which had been approved for preservation last month at CADB, has now decided that she wants to sell the property outright to the HLT. HLT is considering this but will need money from Kingwood to make it work. This was a non-profit application to the County.

#### Old Business

##### Kugler Woods MOA

Richard Dodds reported that on April 28, 2012 there was a gathering of the Farmers Sportsman Association of Holland Twp.

4.

He explained that there were about five guys who came well equip with tools to remove all the downed trees from the trails and falls area of the Kugler Woods. He noted that there is still money to do additional trail work, but just waiting to hear from the State. He noted that there is one section that is very steep and the State put green tape around the area. Sandra McNicol thanked Richard Dodds for keeping up with this and taking care of the property.

#### Hunterdon Land Trust - Activity update

Sandra McNicol gave a brief review.

#### Horseshoe Bend Park Steering Committee - Progress Report

Richard Dodds reviewed the following update of the Horseshoe Bend Park.

### **Horseshoe Bend Park - Update May 1, 2012**

Work to date:

April 14 - Fence Removal

- 300 Feet of fence was removed and the fence and associated posts stored in the large Morton building.
- Many thanks to Jack MacConnell and his John Deere tractor as well as the Nieman, Bernhard, and Rose Families, Kingwood Township School Principal - Rick Falkenstein

April 19 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Public meeting on Horseshoe Bend Park - Management Plan

- Held at Kingwood Township School
- Approximately 10 people attended
- Article on meeting in Express Times

April 21 - Northern Red Oak Tree Planting:

- 90 trees planted along the northern entrance drive.
- 40 to 50 people attended, including, Girl Scouts, the Kingwood School Rock Band, members of the Kingwood Township Rescue and Fire Departments (they helped water the trees and more), Kingwood Township School Principal and a teacher, Kingwood Township Residents of all ages.
- Donations from the groups listed below helped to make the day a real success - we were done by noon:

5.

- o Shoprite (snacks)
- o Home Depot (chicken wire)
- o Frenchtown Hardware (chicken wire)
- o Printech of Flemington (flyers)
- o Hunterdon County Polytech (made the wire cages)
- o Chuck Kocsis (a truck load of mulch)

April 25 - Clearing the pathway along the fence line at the end of the Leash Free Dog Area

- Removal of multi flora rose and Osage Orange branches along a 120 foot section of fence to easily allow the orange trail to cross the Oak's flag stem.
- Many thanks to Russ Oaks and his Kabota tractor who also put chips down on the path.
  - o Russ also opened the fence line directly across from the path to allow access back into the field.
  - o In addition, Russ mowed a trail around the edge of the field.

April 26 - Holes filled in from April 14 activity.

- Many thanks to Jack MacConnell and his John Deere tractor
- April 27 - Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) Removal from southern fields of the park.
- 4 acres of land Russian olive and multi flora rose were cleared
- Many thanks to the Pandy Family and Jack MacConnell with their John Deere tractors

Upcoming Activities:

- May 19 and 20 - Lehigh Valley Coursing Club Meet - Leash Free Dog Area closed to the Public.

Ongoing:

- Meeting with NJ DEP Parks and Forestry - Bulls Island - to plan for hunting in the fall - 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week in May
- Memorandum Of Agreement - Being Reviewed by NJ Attorney General's Office

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at the Horseshoe Bend Park, where several residents gathered to be a part of the planting of 100 seedling trees, which were donated by the County. Sandra McNicol wanted everyone to realize that the family that began this project planned the entire day. She explained that they provided fencing to protect the trees. Holes were dug by local volunteers, some delivered mulch and everyone helped to make it a great day.

6.

Everyone present volunteered at the park. Sandra McNicol explained that it was a lot of fun.

Additional Preserved Farm Sign for Ukarish Property - Update

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that it has been ordered and is on its way.

**New Business**

Review of Open Public Meeting of April 19, 2012 at Kingwood School

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol briefly reviewed the meeting of April 19<sup>th</sup>. She explained that there were several people who attended the meeting and gave their ideas for the Horseshoe Bend Park.

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

The committees discussed this earlier in the meeting.

Preserved Farm Map - Revised for 2012

Committees reviewed Richard Dodds newly updated Map of Public Open Space and Preserved Farms for 2012. He stated that we need to keep updating the map.

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

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol asked the Committees if it would be best to postpone a spring hike until the fall. Everyone on the committees agreed it would be best to wait until the fall to plan a hike.

Richard Dodds expressed how he would like to schedule another day next year to plant trees at the Horseshoe Bend Park around the same time of year.

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

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed an update on the farm programs.

7.

Copy of Resolution No. 2012 - 39 Adopted by the Twp. Committee  
Opposition to S1085 Forest Harvest on State Lands

Sandra McNicol reviewed the following resolution that was adopted by the Township Committee.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2012 - 39**

**OPPOSITION TO S1085 FOREST HARVEST ON STATE LANDS**

**WHEREAS**, State Legislators are considering a bill that would open New Jersey's prized State owned lands to commercial logging, (S1085, Forest Harvest on State Lands); and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey's State lands, including its parks, wildlife management areas and forested Green Acres Lands have been set aside for conservation and recreation purposes; and

**Whereas**, these forested State lands were paid for and preserved with the support of a trusting public, which assumed they would be protected from commercial exploitation; and

**Whereas**, the towering hardwood trees growing in our State parks and forests contribute a far greater ecological and recreational value to the citizens of the State than they would if they were to be cut and sold as commercial lumber; and

**Whereas**, according to information provided by the NJDEP, at the end of the five year contract for the proposed Forest Harvest Program, a 2.7 million net operating deficit is projected due to the high cost of oversight; and

**Whereas**, commercial logging is likely to cause damage to roads, streams and drainage swales in State lands that will cost money to restore, and cause soil compaction and disturbance of the fragile ecosystem on the forest floor that will be impossible to restore; and

**Whereas**, 37 PhD biologists, forest scientists and ecologists from across the State have signed a letter in opposition to this bill, agreeing that commercial timber harvesting would be detrimental to the public forests; and

8.

**Whereas**, this bill does not properly address the most serious threat to today's forests, which is that common hardwood species such as oaks, hickory poplar and birch, among others, are not regenerating due to high deer densities; and

**Whereas**, because of high deer densities, openings in the forest canopy, occurring as a result of timber harvesting, are colonized not by young hardwood trees but by noxious weeds, typically vines, briars and invasive plants from Asia; and

**Whereas**, opening State lands to commercial logging would be detrimental to the flora and fauna, including the threatened and endangered species that presently inhabit these lands;

**Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved** that the Township Committee of the Township of Kingwood, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey hereby finds and declares that the commercial exploitation of public lands that have been set aside for conservation and recreation purposes is a betrayal of the public trust; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that the Kingwood Township Committee urges the legislators of the State of New Jersey to vote NO to S1085 Forest Harvest on State Lands.

Sandra McNicol noted that there was a meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup> with a revised bill, but she has not heard of any update on this meeting.

#### Leasing the Township Land for Farming

There was a discussion on the right way to go about leasing the land at the Horseshoe Bend Park. Richard Dodds suggested speaking to a professional, such as Larry Herrighty, regarding hunting and other areas for wildlife. It was suggested that there needs to be stewardship for all the preserved and owned properties in Kingwood. John Mathieu noted that it is our responsibility as members to work on stewardship. It was noted that there needs to be long time planning for the parks to make it pre-uniformed. He stated that Kingwood needs to come up with a plan, and who will work on this plan. He feels that Township Committee should make the decisions on who will be in charge of the parks. Richard Dodds explained that they are trying to keep the Parks and Recreation Committee informed about everything that is going on and to keep them involved.



9.

Cynthia Niciecki noted that the Environmental Commission has joined the Invasive Species Strike Team and plans to get very involved.

Sandra McNicol noted that we need to preserve as much land as we can, and take care of the land. Karen Hertzog volunteered to assisted in marking the invasive species at Horseshoe Bend Park with the Environmental Commission members.

Sandra McNicol noted that the DEP is planning on cutting trees on Bulls Island. There was a brief discussion.

#### Clean Communities

Richard Dodds talked about areas that need to be cleaned up at Horseshoe Bend Park, and the Kugler woods. It was suggested to look into the high schools project graduation and other groups to clean up the parks. Elaine Niemann noted that Lynn Porter, the township's Recycling Coordinator will look into this more. John Mathieu suggested adopt a road clean up.

#### Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

Everyone thanked Richard Dodds for doing a great job on the preserved parks in Kingwood.

#### Adjournment

It was moved Lee Frank, seconded by Karen Hertzog and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. **All** voted **Aye** on **Roll Call Vote**.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia L. Keller,  
Secretary