

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2014
7:00PM

Call to Order

A Regular meeting of the Joint Open Space and Agriculture Advisory Committees was called to order at 7:00P.M. Chairwoman of the Open Space Advisory Committee Sandra McNicol called the meeting to order and read the following notice requirements.

Notice Requirements

Notification of the time, date and place of this meeting has been published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and Courier News, and has been posted in the Kingwood Township Municipal Building at least 48 hours prior to this meeting and has been filed with the Municipal Clerk.

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

<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Phil Lubitz	None
Heather Haberle	
Diana Haywood	
Sandra McNicol	
John Mathieu	
Lee Frank	
Karen Hertzog	

Agriculture Advisory Committee

<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Richard Dodds	Susan Goeckeler
William Pandy	
Cynthia Niciecki	
Edward Kralovich	

2.

Approval of Minutes

Motion and Approval of the September 2, 2014 Meeting Minutes of the Joint Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees

It was moved by Diana Haywood, seconded by Richard Dodds and carried to approve the September 2, 2014 minutes for the Open Space/Agriculture Advisory Committees meeting.

Comments/Corrections: No corrections or comments.

Roll Call Vote:	Aye	- Lubitz, Haywood, McNicol, Hertzog, Dodds, Pandy, Niciecki, Kralovich
	Nay	- None
	Abstain	- Frank, Mathieu
	Absent	- Haberle, Goeckeler

Correspondence

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol read aloud the reminder for next month:

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS - THE NOVEMBER MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH - IN PLACE OF NOVEMBER 4TH ELECTION DAY

(News Article) Use of Preserved Farmland Discussed

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol briefly reviewed.

Heather Haberle arrived at 7:15pm.

Reports

Liz Schmid was not present this evening, but provided a report.

Sandra McNicol reviewed the following updated report from Liz Schmid:

Farmland Preservation - Liz Schmid (Report for October 2014)

Open Space/Agriculture Committee
October, 2014

3.

I am still away and will be until the middle of the month, so this is a abbreviated report.

Almost all of the properties are in the same position as they were last month. The noteworthy changes are below:

1. Aljam 1 and 2 - Aljam 1- (Bl 18, lot 5) 133= acres, Aljam 2 - (Block 22, Lots 1, 2 and 2.08) a total of 49.78 acres. Across the street from each other on the corner of Fitzer Rd and Barbertown-Point Breeze Rds. The farm did not rank high enough to qualify for Direct Easement Purchase funding. The owners have to decide if they want to apply through the Township or County and also apply for Federal funding. We have not heard if they have made that decision yet.
2. Guy DeSapio has put in Direct Easement Purchase applications for two areas along Ridge Rd. The first area is Bl 6, Lots 12 and 13.01 (@ 70 acres total). The second area is Block 5, Lot 6 (69.54 acres) that extends into Frenchtown for maybe 20 acres more. Block 6, Lots 12 and 13.01 did not score highly enough to qualify for Direct Easement Purchase funding for this round. The owner has been advised that he could apply through the County PIG or the Township and also apply for Federal funds. We have not heard anything on this. Block 5, Lot 6 is still up in the air. SADC and the owner are trying to agree on a configuration. The owner has not accepted the appraisal number at this time. This may also have to apply for Federal money as it is not ranking high.
3. Grossman Property - Block 6, Lots 18 and 23.01 on Rt. 12, totaling about 150 acres. The contract purchasers of this farm have applied to the State for the Direct Easement purchase program. The farm has scored well and the process is continuing.

Farmland Assessment: Understanding the Changes for 2015 -
September 29, 2014 (News Article - NJ Farm Bureau Hosts
Seminar on September 29, 2014

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol explained there was a meeting on September 29, 2014, which the Farm Bureau provided. She noted that Ed Kralovich was unable to attend, but did provide everyone with a brochure from the meeting.

4.

Willam Pandy stated that several members of his family attended the meeting. He reviewed the meeting and noted that the changes will affect the tax assessor the most, as he will need additional training by the year 2018. He noted that if a building sits on preserved ground it must be inspected and made sure there is nothing inside other than farm equipment. He reviewed several changes that will take place in the future.

There was a lengthy discussion how the changes will also affect the farmers and the changes for everyone who has property that is farmland assessed by 2015.

Ed Kralovich handed out brochures "Understanding Farmland Assessment" to all the members.

New Business

Types of Exception Area for Preserved Farms

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the different types of exceptions, which are two types.

The first one being a non-severable exception, which is an exception from the easement restrictions, but remains tied to the farm and cannot be subdivided, transferred or conveyed separately from the farm.

The second one is a severable exception, which is an area that can be subdivided and sold separately from the farm provided it meets local subdivision requirements. It is not necessary to sever a severable exception prior to preservation.

It was noted that landowners will not be paid for areas designated as a severable or non-severable exception because the deed or easement restrictions will not apply to the areas.

USDA Aerial Seeding Winter Cover Crops in Kingwood (News Article and Discussion)

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the article regarding USDA Aerial Seeding Winter Cover Crops. She explained that during the weeks of September 15 - 17th there was a bright yellow plane flying low over approximately 1,141 acres of farm fields in Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties.

5.

She explained that the aircraft will be seeding winter cover crops for area farmers who are participating in USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Health Initiative. She noted that one flew over her home and very low during that time.

PennEast Pipeline - Meeting Kingwood Township October 29, 2014
Firehouse Route 519

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that she wanted everyone to be aware that the Kingwood Township Committee has scheduled a special meeting on Wednesday, October 29, 2014 at 7:00pm at the Kingwood Township Volunteer Firehouse on Route 519.

Phil Lubitz noted that the township hopes to have Penn East attend the meeting, but he noted, at this time they are not expected to come. The Township Committee would like to talk to the residents of the township and listen to their concerns and suggestions.

William Pandy commented on what he knew about the pipeline. Phil Lubitz suggested a spokesperson from the Agriculture Advisory Committee come and speak at the meeting scheduled on October 29th. William Pandy offered to be that spokesperson for the meeting.

Richard Dodds reviewed a map of the projected site plan of the pipeline, and where it is expected to go through the township over the overhead projector for all the members. It was noted that it will cover approximately seven miles through Kingwood Township.

Phil Lubitz noted that he attended several meetings in the nearby neighboring municipalities regarding the pipeline.

Old Business

Hunterdon Land Trust - Activity Update

Richard Dodds gave an update on the "Farm" which is known as the Church property. He reviewed the tests of the lead, which he stated was a very low reading. He noted that it is a work in progress.

Donation Letter - Follow up from the Township Committee Meeting
Discussion

6.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol briefly reviewed what was discussed at the last meeting. She noted that the township has decided to wait to discuss the 2015 budget and then at that time they will plan an amount to donate to the Hunterdon Land Trust.

Thank you Letter from the Hunterdon Land Trust

Phil Lubitz reviewed the thank you letter from the Hunterdon Land Trust and briefly reviewed what was discussed at the Township Committee meeting.

Horseshoe Bend Park - Update

Richard Dodds gave an update of what is going on at Horseshoe Bend Park. He noted there will be a fox hunt scheduled at the park tomorrow, Wednesday, October 8, 2014.

Phil Lubitz reviewed the most recent ordinance that was introduced at the township committee meeting. He noted that it is an ordinance creating a safety zone within 450 feet of township parks, playgrounds and schools.

He explained that there were concerns about firearms and firewalls being too close to parks, playgrounds and schools. He noted for the safety and welfare of the public, the township needed to adopt an ordinance to regulate not only for the public, but for the park police and the State Police.

There was a question regarding the hunting in the parks.

Phil Lubitz and Richard Dodds explained that hunting in the parks are regulated by a having a safety course and by each hunter obtaining a permit to hunt in the parks. Richard Dodds noted that there are other parks that are preserved, which do not have trails and a lot of access to those parks.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that the state is looking for volunteers to plant shrubs at Bulls Island State Park if anyone is interested.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

Heather Haberle explained that she travels quite a bit and would love to be able to be a part of the meetings when she is out of town.

7.

She asked the Committee Members what they thought about setting up a "Go to Meeting", which would bring in the voice of remote participants and allow all participants to view the same documents on the screens. She noted that if there was a phone available in the room, she could set up a dial in number as a second option that way she could technically be present and have input at the meetings.

The Committees were very interested and said they would look into this option.

Adjournment

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by Phil Lubitz and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:10PM. **All Voted Aye on Roll Call Vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Cynthia L. Keller,
Secretary**