

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2015
7:00PM

Call to Order

A Regular meeting of Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committees was called to order at 7:09P.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

Present

Sandra McNicol
Phil Lubitz
Diana Haywood
Lee Frank
John Mathieu
Heather Haberle

Absent

Karen Hertzog

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Present

William Pandy
Richard Dodds
Cynthia Niciecki
Susan Goeckeler
Edward Kralovich

Absent

3.

I will then list the farms that are still on the radar, but have not moved along significantly since last month. Changes from March are in bold face type. New information this month is in italics.

1. **DeSapio** properties on Ridge Road - Direct Easement Purchase applications were made 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 He has not yet done so. **The owner has finally signed the agreement with the State and survey and title work are going out for Block 5 Lot 6.**
2. **Zander-** (Block 5, Lot 3)- - SADC has given final approval and contracts **have been mailed out to the owner. Questions about impervious coverage allowances under Federal regulations seem to have been resolved.**
3. **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 and Barbertown-Point Breeze Rds. the farm did not rank high enough to qualify for Direct Easement Purchase funding. **The County has sent the owners an application for the County PIG, but has not gotten it back at this time. I have e-mailed the owners offering assistance in filling out the application. They still have to apply for Federal funding with HLT and have not yet done so. According to the Democrat this farm has been sold to the Groms who live on the adjoining farm. Do we have any interest in approaching the Groms about preserving this property?**
4. **Perrotti -** (Block 23 Lot 11) - **The family approached SADC for the State Direct Easement Purchase program, and the State is about to select it for this program .** HLT has submitted an application for Federal funds to cover the municipal contribution. The Township Committee has passed a resolution in support of the preservation of this farm. Unfortunately, the PennEast pipeline runs through this farm.

4.

While the Township had decided to take this farm into the Municipal PIG program to use some of our money at the State, the preservation would go faster if it goes State Direct, and it would not be dependent on getting Federal money to complete. Would the committee be interested in using another farm in the Municipal program instead and letting this farm go State Direct if it indeed is selected for the program?

5. Dalrymple - Block 6 lots 26 (33.4 acres) and 26.01 (18.55 acres) - The landowner has expressed interest in preserving these two adjoining lots. I explained the three available programs to him and referred him to the County for a County PIG application. I also advised him about the need for Federal funding to complete a project and the eventual need to apply for that money. I explained that State money would be more constrained than in the past because of the new funding source. He understood this. I will keep in touch with him.
6. Helmer Farm (Bl 2, lot 5) - Mr. Helmer decided to decrease the size of the exception from 5 acres to two, which slowed the process. Then title issues arose. **He says that the title issues have been resolved.** This is being reviewed by counsel at both county and State levels. They will make the final call on what is to be done as far as the title is concerned. The survey has been completed. **There is increasing doubt that this project will be completed. He has been advised to retain an attorney and keep him/her.**
7. Felix II - (Block 12 Lot 1) - **No Change** - The owners had applied for farmland preservation a number of years ago and then withdrew the farm. They have recently expressed an interest in doing something with the farm. They had been given the contact information for a Green Acres project. When I spoke to one of the owners she said that they really want to sell the farm into preservation. I checked with the SADC and they have no money left to purchase farmland in fee. I believe that the same is true at DEP. The owner has already tried to communicate with Dirt Capital Partners, but felt that they only wanted to rent. I am trying to find a farmer who would want to do sustainable farming in order to apply for funds to purchase through Dirt Capital Partners.

5.

I have spoken to our County Agent who reports that Dirt Capital Partners is looking for well-established farmers with really solid plans for profitable farming to get a return for their investors in the project to then invest in another farm. HLT is working on trying to find a farmer.

Kocsis Property (Grossman) - No Change -Block 6, Lots 18 and 23.01 on Rt. 12 totaling about 150 acres. The new owners of this farm have applied to the State for the Direct Easement purchase program. The farm has scored well and the process is continuing.

8. **Tranquility Farms LP - (Block 5 Lot 1.01, 105+ acres) - No Change** - This farm has filed an application for the County PIG program. The owners are willing to file an application for Federal funding to cover municipal and County shares of preservation costs but have not yet done so. This farm has to be added to our list of target farms, and it would be good to have a resolution from the Township that we would support this preservation project.

9. **Milford** (Block 15, Lot 1) - **No Change** - 39 acres. The replacement application for Federal money was approved. The farm is at SADC for Green Light approval. The County has ordered appraisals and the preservation process will continue.

10. **Goekeler** (Bl 30, Lot 6) - **No Change**. Green Acres staff visited the property and told the owners that while they are still interested, there is no money for preservation at this time. They will continue to hold the application.

11. **Maritan** (Bl 33 Lot 25), 104.71 acres - **No Change** - The owner of the property is trying to get the property eligible for the County PIG program again. Toward that end she has gotten an affidavit from the farmer as to the amount of land farmed and the yield from that land. I am not sure that this will address all of the issues that led the CADB to reject the farm two years ago.- Sharon Gonen, the lead heir in the estate situation, had submitted an application to Green Acres for direct purchase of this property. It adjoins the Clark property and has Lockatong frontage. HLT still has an open application for County Non-profit Open Space funding. The County Open Space Committee did not like the estimated value and felt that the property is not easily developable. They also felt that HLT did not have a sufficiently detailed plan as to how they would use the property.

6.

12. HLT will be putting something together. In any case, this funding will not be adequate to preserve the property and HLT will be looking for additional funds. The Township Committee has passed a resolution supporting the concept of preservation for this property.

13. **No Change.** I had spoken to Patti from HLT about the possibility of having a dedicated fund at HLT for Kingwood residents to contribute extra funds for preservation projects in Kingwood. She says that they are still thinking about this, but have not been able to come up with a suitable mechanism to do it.

Richard Dodds arrived at the meeting at 7:25PM.

Everyone thanked Liz Schmid for her report.

New Business

Letter from Hunterdon Land Trust - Seeking Financial Support

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the letter from the Hunterdon Land Trust. She noted that the notice has been sent to the Township Committee to consider supporting the Hunterdon Land Trust.

Flyer from the Water Authority regarding planting at Kingwood Park.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed the flyer for the upcoming Kingwood Township Stream Bank Clean-Up and Native Species Planting at the Kingwood Park. She noted that it will take place on Saturday, April 11th, from 10:00am - 1:00pm. She invited everyone to come and help plant if they are interested.

Kingwood Township Public Open Space and Preserved Farms

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed a list of the open space and preserved farms in the township.

Old Business

Horseshoe Bend Park - Update

Richard Dodds stated that the Church property continues to test for the sale of the property.

7.

PennEast Pipeline - Update

- FERC Meeting Summary

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol gave a brief overview of the FERC Meeting at the Mountain View Chalet in February.

- Mayor Dodd's Letter to FERC

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed.

- EC Chairwoman D. Kratzer Letter to FERC

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed.

- EMC, J. MacConnell Letter to FERC

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol reviewed.

- Letter from PennEast - Landowner Open House April 13th

The Committees reviewed the letter and the meetings that PennEast has scheduled for the landowners in the township.

Heather Haberle commented on the positive input from the residents in the township and the county. She noted that six informational meetings are planned for New Jersey landowners along the new preferred alternate route. There will be a mid-day meeting and an evening meeting at each of the following locations: April 13, 2015 Frenchtown Borough (Kingwood, W. Amwell, and Delaware Twp.). April 14, 2015 Holland Township (Holland and Alexandria Twp.) and April 21, 2015 Hopewell Township (Hopewell Twp.)

Everyone thanked Heather Haberle for this information.

Sandra McNicol noted that if anyone is interested in sending in their comments, to please do so and that there is still plenty of time.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by Lee Frank and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:45PM. **All Voted Aye on Roll Call Vote.**

**Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia L. Keller,
Secretary**

