

OPEN SPACE & AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2015
7:00PM

Call to Order

A Regular meeting of Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committees was called to order at 7:00P.M. Chairperson 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

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

Absent

Karen Hertzog

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Present

Richard Dodds
William Pandy
Susan Goeckeler

Absent

Cynthia Niciecki
Edward Kralovich

Also present at the meeting was Open Space Coordinator/CADB Liaison, Liz Schmid

3.

1. **Perrotti** - Block 7 Lot 14.10 - 52 acres on Oak Grove Road, adjacent on the south side to the preserved DeSapio farm. The owner is looking for the most profitable way to proceed with his investment property.

He has 4 approved lots ready to build on when the economy picks up. He is in no rush to do anything. He was really just doing research on how much he could get for preservation when he called the State. He would ideally like to get \$15,000/acre for the easement.

2. **Zander**- (Block 5, Lot 3) - SADC has given final approval and all issues have been resolved. Surveys are underway, but going slowly because of changes. **They are trying for a February closing. An issue with the new restrictions on the revised Federal program farms has cropped up with the State, but they hope to have it resolved by then.**

3. **Perrotti** - (Block 23 Lot 11) - The family approached SADC for the State Direct Easement Purchase program and the State is processing this application. The family has accepted the certified value offered by the State (despite issues with the solar company). The State has awarded title and survey contracts and expects to be able to close early next year **without the use of any Federal funding.** The Township Committee has passed a resolution in support of the preservation of this farm. Unfortunately, the PennEast pipeline runs through this farm.

4. **Dalrymple** - Block 6 lots 26 (33.4 acres) and 26.01(18.55 acres) - The landowners have completed an application for the Municipal PIG program as well as for Federal funding in conjunction with HLT. HLT has submitted the application for Federal funding. **CADB has given preliminary approval.** The Township Committee has passed a resolution requesting that the State add this farm to our targeted farm list.

5. **Tranquility Farms LP** - For financial reasons, this farm is not eligible for Federal funds so County and Municipal PIGs were not feasible. The owners have met with SADC staff and staff has toured the property. The State has sent the owners an option agreement package. **The State is waiting for a few more items from the owner before awarding the appraisal contracts. The State is questioning why we cannot contribute toward this project. We have again advised them of our position.**

6. **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) known as the family farm. The second area is Block 5, Lot 6 (69.54 acres and known as the Brown farm) that extends into Frenchtown for maybe 20 acres more. The property owner did not accept the value offered on the Brown farm. He wanted to amend the application by removing the Frenchtown portion to see if the value becomes acceptable. **The State felt that was a rejection of the State offer and will require a new application.**

4.

The owner has indicated that he will reapply in January. A lot line adjustment needs to be completed on the family farm (Bl 6, Lots 12 and 13.01).

The State is working on the title for the farm and is waiting for the owner to complete the lot line adjustment before awarding the contract for a survey. **The owner has put in an application for this with the Planning Board.**

7. **Mattison - (Block 21, Lots 1.01, 1.02, 1.03 and Block 21.01, lot 2) on Rt. 12 and Whiskey Lane - Owner is interested in selling into preservation but only NJCF has any interest and would need other money to complete a sale.**

8. **Kocsis Property** (Grossman) -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 survey has been completed and the package is being reviewed for closing. The family does not want to close until January, 2016.

9. **Felix II** - (Block 12 Lot 1) - A township resident has contacted me about the possibility of purchasing and preserving this farm. The purchase is dependent on the ability to preserve. In speaking with the interested purchaser, it became clear that possible preservation funding may not be sufficient to purchase the farm. We discussed the need to for them to discuss specifics with the owner. I spoke with SADC and HLT to see if they had any creative ideas as to how this could be worked out. No one has come up with any new ideas. I will continue to stay in touch.

10. **Helmer Farm (Bl 2, lot 5)** - Mr. Helmer decided to decrease the size of the exception area from 5 acres to two, which slowed the process. Then title issues arose. These issues have not been resolved and there seems to be no way to subordinate the reverse mortgage. Owner may try to subdivide and sell off some lots to get out of debt. If he does this he will have to reapply. HLT has gotten a six month extension on the approved federal funds

11. **Maritan** (Bl 33 Lot 25), 104.71 acres - **No Change** - Richard has had discussions with Jackie Middleton at HLT about possible use of new Green Acres money for this property. Jackie will be working to get the asking price down.

12. **Milford** (Block 15, Lot 1) - 39 acres - **No Change** - The replacement application for Federal money was approved. SADC has granted Green Light approval. The County is waiting for the return of appraisals that will then have to be submitted to the State.

5.

13. **Goeckeler** (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.

14. **No Change**. I had spoken to Patti at 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.

Everyone thanked Liz Schmid for her monthly report.

Liz Schmid noted that she attended the Freeholder meeting earlier this evening before the Open Space and Agricultural Committees meeting. He gave a brief update of what happened at the meeting. She explained that a resolution to adopt the new County Open Space Trust Fund Plan was introduced and was to be adopted. She reported that many individuals and groups expressed concerns that the plan gave the Freeholders unlimited power to do whatever they wished within the constraints imposed by the ballot question that was approved by voters. All speakers present wanted more specificity in the resolution. Many speakers also complained that there had been no or insufficient communication with the many partners who actively preserve land in the County. The Freeholders voted to withdraw the resolution, and said that the Planning Department would work on rewording some of the segments to make it more acceptable to the various groups. The Freeholders stated many times that they had every intention to continue the various land preservation programs that they have supported all along. The overriding problem is that the Freeholders cannot put greater restrictions on the funds than those imposed by the ballot question, whether they want to or not.

Everyone thanked Liz Schmid for attending the Freeholder meeting this evening and for coming to this meeting afterwards to report on the outcome.

New Business

Approval for Budget Request amount for 2016

7.

He feels that the township should be prepared as there is no idea of what they will have in the plan. The township will be have public input when the plan is proposed.

Old Business

Horseshoe Bend Park - Update

Richard Dodds reported that the township received word that there is a closing scheduled for the Church Property on December 16th, 2015 at 8:30A.M. He stated that the amount of \$594,018.50 will be coming from the State Green Acres Program, \$500,000.00 from the Hunterdon County and the Township will only be putting \$150.00 towards the purchase of this property. He stated that this is a total of 106 acres. He explained that it has taken four years to get to this point.

Conference Call-In to Participate in Meetings

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol noted that Heather Haberle has brought this up for people like herself that does not get to come to the meetings due to traveling. Richard Dodds explained that this was brought up at the last month's Township Committee Meeting. He noted that the Township Attorney will be looking into this and what the township should be doing to make it legitimate. He stated they will be discussing this at their meeting in December and he will have an answer for the Committees next month.

Sandra McNicol stated that the Environmental Commission is working on a memo to the Township Committee regarding the Sustainable Aquaculture Systems Inc., which will be using a lot of water at their fish farm. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the concerns of using a huge amounts of ground water at this location. Richard Dodds reviewed over the projector a map of where this is located.

There was also a brief discussion regarding MEL and the ground water issues.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol mentioned that Anthony Hauck also researched the wells on Wagon Wheel Drive and reported that they have dropped significantly.

PennEast Pipeline - Update

8.

William Pandy explained that the PennEast Pipeline is using drone to view properties sited in Delaware Township. He noted that the name of the company is called "Western Land" and told everyone to look it up and read about it. He noted that PennEast is just the custodian for the company. He stated that he knows friends in Ohio that are familiar with this company "Western Land" and that they had to shut down their wells.

Richard Dodds encouraged everyone to contact our State legislatures regarding their concerns and comments regarding the Pipeline.

Public Comment - Privilege of the Floor

No public comments.

Chairwoman Sandra McNicol wished everyone a very happy holiday.

Adjournment

It was moved by Richard Dodds, seconded by Lee Frank and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:30P.M. **All voted Aye on Roll Call Vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia L. Keller,
Secretary

