

MINUTES  
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE  
Hopatcong Borough Hall, Hopatcong, NJ  
October 1, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairman Cliff Lundin called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT: The Chairman stated that this meeting is held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act 10:4-1 et seq., annual notice having been forwarded to the Jersey Herald and the Sunday Herald and posted on the bulletin board maintained in the Municipal Building for public announcements.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG: The Members joined in a salute to the Flag.

ROLL CALL PRESENT: Cliff Lundin, Mike Francis, Mike Rahill, Elizabeth Mauro, Malcolm Piester, Elide Young, Cathy Bowen, Chairwoman Joan Reilly arrived at 7:54

ABSENT: Mayor Sylvia Petillo

MOTION: Cliff Lundin asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 4, 2009

MINUTES:

A motion to approve the minutes of June 4, 2009 was made by Mike Rahill and, seconded by Elizabeth Mauro

All in favor and the motion was carried to approve the minutes of June 4, 2009

CORRESPONDENCE Megan Haidet stated that she has been working with a landowner, Mr. Thompson who owns a 40 x 100 foot lot that is in the Natural Areas Preserve. Mr. Thompson would like to donate this land to the Borough. There is a process involved and Megan has written a letter and prepared two maps to send to Councilman Bunce the Chairman of the Real Estate Committee. Mr. Thompson pays one hundred and thirty two dollars in taxes. Mr. Thompson would like to close by the end of the year. Cliff Lundin said that the council must pass a resolution and authorize a title search. Cliff asked for a motion to send a copy of the letter to the Council urging that they accept the property.

MOTION: A motion was made by Elide Young and seconded by Cathy Bowen to send a letter to the Council recommending they accept the donation.

ALL IN FAVOR The board was in favor and no one opposed

Cliff Lundin abstained and the motion was carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **Status Marx acquisition-2007 grant-Land Conservancy of NJ**

Megan stated that throughout the summer we were dealing with six encroaching landowners. We discovered this during the survey process: fences, sheds, walls, lawns that are over the property lines. Megan wrote a letter to each owner asking them to remove their encroachments. Mr. Marx's attorney also wrote a letter that accompanied Megan's that said if the landowners do not wish to remove their encroachments he would be dealing with them next. Megan said that five out of the six complied, one never got back to Megan. Megan forwarded the information over to Mr. Marx's attorney. Megan got word this week that all of the encroachments should now have been removed. We have authorized the surveyor to go out to the site and verify and then send the report to Green Acres. The purchase should be finalized by the end of the year.

#### **Status Patel Acquisition-2008 grant Land Conservancy of NJ**

Megan stated that we have a signed contract with Mr. Patel. She has forwarded proposals for a survey; Environmental assessment and title work to the Borough. These were approved at the Mayor and Council meeting in August. Borough Attorney John Ursin will be handling the title and TLC will coordinate the survey and the assessment. Everything is authorized and we are getting started.

#### **Status Francomacaro Application 2008 grant Land Conservancy of NJ**

Megan stated that Francomacaro is in its final stages and the goal is to close by the end of October. All due diligence is complete. Last month Megan and Liz Madasat from Green Acres walked the property and there was a question about some old roofing materials. It is Megan's understanding that the DPW went out and cleaned it up to Green Acres' satisfaction. Sussex County is officially the buyer and they will assign the rights of the property to the Borough of Hopatcong at closing. Once all of the forms are signed and submitted to Green Acres it's done.

### **STATUS OF THE TRAILS COMMITTEE EFFORT**

Malcolm Piester apologized for not being at the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, he was out of town. He reported that he met with Adam Rosenberg who is involved with the NY and NJ Trails Conference. Adam demonstrated how to use GPS to map the trails. Malcolm also joined Adam at a training session on building trails. After the session they went up to the southwest side of Lake Mohawk and started building the trail.

- a) Civic Center Trail: Malcolm reported that he has hiked above the Civic Center a few times and cleaned some brush. He will have to repaint some of the glazing. He would like to GPS the trail. He would also like to consider perhaps a spur trail to end by the Ridge Restaurant. From there, you can link to the Morris Canal Trail

- and travel as far as the Pathmark in Landing. We would have to get permission to cross the property of the Ridge Restaurant and to traverse their driveway. At the bottom of the trail, towards the middle school, you can make a left hand turn over to the power lines. This will take you up to Veterans Field, to the trail. Someone has been cleaning the trails up there. The trail on Brooklyn Mountain Road has quite a bit of beer cans there. Cliff Lundin asked if there was anything the trail committee needs from us. Mr. Piester said that he feels everything will be discussed at the meeting on October 7, 2009.
- b) Tri-Municipal Trail Committee: ANJEC has approved a grant to the three municipalities: Stanhope, Byram and Hopatcong. The kickoff meeting is next Wednesday at the Byram Municipal Building at 7:30.

### **2008-2009 Trails Grant-Modick Park walkway-Ruschke**

Cliff Lundin said Mayor Sylvia Petillo e-mailed him today and the grant was not funded. This is the second year in a row and there was no reason provided by the State.

### **Eves Sanctuary Expansion and the Eves Sanctuary access way**

Cliff Lundin said that he and Megan both walked it together; we do not have a solution at this point. Cathy Eves has not been around to talk to and the landowner on the other side is not willing to engage in any discussion at this time. Megan said the landowner was very private and does not want to talk, this does not mean we should stop trying. We should continue to contact him, perhaps every three months. Megan will look into maps as far as where the property lines are. Cliff Lundin asked Megan if we could at least get a proposal from a surveyor to find out where the property line is before our next meeting. What we need to know is where the property line between the borough and his land is. Cliff will send another letter to the property owner. The last resort is to move the trail.

### **2009 Municipal Tax Rate**

Mike Francis said that he would find out what the number is and get back to us. Joan Reilly said that she thinks we should get the 2010 rate at 1%. Mike Francis told Joan Reilly to call Kelley McGann, the Boroughs CFO and she will tell you the number.

MOTION: A motion was made by Cliff Lundin to recommend to the Council that they fully fund the Open Space Tax for 2010 at \$0.01 on the rate.  
Seconded by Elide Young

ROLL CALL: Joan Reilly-yes, Cliff Lundin-yes, Mike Francis-yes, Mike Rahill-yes, Elizabeth Mauro-yes, Malcolm Piester-yes, Elide Young-yes, Cathy Bowen-yes

Joan Reilly feels that this is part of Hopatcong's future and there is a lot more to do. Mr. Piester said if you do not have a place to go and listen to the birds you have lost something.

Future Acquisitions: Mike Francis said do not forget that under the Highlands Act, 1/3 of our town will be forever preserved. Cliff Lundin said only two major land tracts are left in

the Borough. These are Kellogg and Gallo. Mike Francis said the Highlands Act protects Gallo. It is in the Highlands Planning Region but is classified as protected. The Gallo tract is 200 acres. Mike Francis said Gallo has no water. The Committee directed Megan to write a letter to the landowner to determine if there is any interest in a sale or other arrangement to the Borough. This tract is important, particularly as a link for the tri-municipal trail.

Megan suggested that we consider another letter writing campaign for other landowners in the natural area preserve. Cliff said this was done in 1997. Can we do the letter on Borough paper? Cliff was directed to seek the authorization of the Borough Council to send a letter to the remaining private landowners in the Preserve.

Other business: Megan said she passed out a model resolution that your town could adopt in support of the ballot measure that's on the November 3 election ballot. It's a four hundred million dollar bond.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Elizabeth Mauro and seconded by Cathy Bowen to endorse a four hundred million dollar bond that will be on the Ballot in November and to send a letter to the Mayor and Council to recommend that they also support the bond issue.

**ROLL CALL:** Joan Reilly-yes, Cliff Lundin-yes, Mike Francis-yes, Mike Rahill-yes, Elizabeth Mauro-yes, Malcolm Piester-no, Elide Young-yes, Cathy Bowen-yes

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mike Rahill said that he was approached by someone who wanted to know where the open space was. The board suggested that we put it on the web site. Malcolm Piester informed us that, Sharon Gruber put all the trail information on a disc and this disc was given to the secretary at the borough. Mike Francis told Mr. Piester to find the disc and he will make sure that it gets posted on the web site.

Cliff Lundin stated that Mayor Sylvia Petillo e-mailed him today and said she is having a hard time making the first Thursday and she suggested moving to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday. Maybe we will consider this for next year. We will leave the December meeting alone and in 2010 we will look into the second Thursday of every other month.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** There being no one from the public the meeting went back to the board.

Chairman: Joan Reilly stated that our next meeting will be December 3, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Elide Young and seconded by Cathy Bowen

ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

---

RoseMarie Winfield, Secretary