

SUSSEX COUNTY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MARCH 24, 2016

The meeting opened at 7:55 p.m. by Vice Chairman Schweizer in the Freeholder Meeting Room at the Sussex County Administrative Center, One Spring Street, Newton, New Jersey. The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 of 1975, as amended. Notice has been forwarded to the newspapers and posted on the bulletin board maintained at the Sussex County Administrative Center for public announcement.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Glenn Schweizer, Vice Chairman
Louis Caruso
Lisa Chammings
R. Michael Dolan
Donald Ploetner

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Cliff Lundin, Chairman

STAFF PRESENT: Autumn Sylvester, Program Coordinator
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Barbara Heskins Davis, The Land Conservancy of NJ

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Donald Ploetner to approve the Minutes of January 28, 2016, as presented. The motion was seconded by Louis Caruso and carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

Autumn reported that she received an email from Toni-Lu Martin today saying that she has to resign from the Open Space Committee. She has a prior commitment that she can no longer get out of.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE:

Barbara Davis said she asked that this meeting not be a presentation to the public because she felt it was time for the Committee to talk about what they are working on and they haven't had that opportunity to review everything. She sent links to all the maps to Autumn and she forwarded to the Committee members.

Ms. Davis said she has identified and drilled down to what the maps can show with respect to water quality. Nearly all of the maps have been created with respect to identifying those areas that could be in need of some kind of land management or stewardship opportunities. The maps can be layered to show what the priorities are. Ms. Davis said Nathaniel Sajdak's role is to ground proof what they are doing and to go out in the field. She provided the Committee with the dates and sites that Mr. Sajdak will visit. She encouraged the Committee to visit these sites with him.

Ms. Davis said this project is very collaborative. They've had a workgroup that has been meeting on a monthly basis since the fall. Cliff Lundin, Autumn Sylvester and Glenn Schweizer have been coming to almost all the meeting. Dan Van Abbs, from Rutgers, Nathaniel Sajdak, herself and other staff members from the Land Conservancy have been working on the maps.

Ms. Davis did a presentation on the maps for water quality showing three focal points: hydrology, stream and aquifer quality and aquatic ecosystem functions. Under hydrology, five things have been identified as important: stressed watersheds, riparian areas, forested lands, wetland areas and flood hazard and flood prone areas. For stream and aquifer quality, the five characteristics are forest cover, riparian areas, karst topography, public wellhead protection areas and source water areas. For aquatic ecosystem functions, the characteristics are the first and second order streams, unique and unusual aquatic habitats, threatened and endangered species and threatened and endangered species for wetland habitats. Ms. Davis said these are the base maps for Sussex County. She said 273,000 acres have a hydrologic value in Sussex County, and by overlaying the characteristics maps, 58 acres have all five characteristics.

For stream and aquifer quality, there are 294,000 acres in Sussex County that are identified as having a value for stream and aquifer quality. There were no properties

that had all five characteristics, only scores of one to four. There are 2,257 acres that have four of the characteristics.

The aquatic ecosystem functions have four characteristics. In Sussex County, those areas that provide a value in terms of the functioning of the aquatic ecosystem is 133,000 acres. There are 273 acres that have all four characteristics.

Ms. Davis then looked at Mr. Sajdak's handout. He identified six sites in Sussex County and they have been shown on a map to see where they fall in terms of priority. She reviewed the six sites which were located in Frankford (two sites,) Vernon, Green, Wantage and Hampton. He also thought that Mr. Lundin may want to recommend a site in Hopatcong and that the Committee should look at a private property. Ms. Davis displayed maps showing where these recommended sites fall in respect to priority. She also reviewed maps for stewardship.

Ms. Davis asked Mr. Schweizer or Ms. Sylvester if they wanted to add anything because they have been involved with the working meetings. Mr. Schweizer said that Ms. Davis covered a lot of subject matter in a short period of time. He said it is impressive to him and he has been somewhat involved. He also said that Nathaniel is trying to get a representative sample of different types of properties. The purpose is to check the validity of the mapping with the field. Ms. Davis said that was correct and it would also give a visual picture of what those recommendations are. He said the reason for keeping some of the maps separate and not overlapping each other is tied to grant opportunities.

The Committee was asked to suggest another four sites for Nathaniel to visit. Glenn said that Mr. Lundin will probably recommend a site in Hopatcong. Donald Ploetner suggested The Glen in Sparta. Glenn asked Ms. Davis for information on privately owned land. He also asked for information on the Hess's. Lisa Chammings suggested the Syberg farm in Stillwater. Mr. Schweizer also asked about the Rosenkranz Property in Walpack. There was a discussion on the six properties that are on Nathaniel's list. Ms. Davis said she will speak with Mr. Sajdak on Monday about the properties the Committee suggested.

Mr. Schweizer asked Ms. Davis for a timeframe for the plan update. She said she would like to have an internal draft to the Committee in April and a draft by mid-May. The grant runs to the end of July. This gives enough time to schedule a meeting with the public and the Freeholder Board. Ideally, the best time for the public meeting will be in May and the Freeholders in June. Ms. Sylvester reminded Ms. Davis the request to be on the Freeholder Agenda must be in three weeks prior. Glenn suggested that a Freeholder attend the May Open Space meeting.

Ms. Davis discussed the difficulty involved in providing maps to the individual towns. Ms. Chammings said that The Land Conservancy is representing the County and is

therefore providing County maps. If an individual town wants a more detailed map, then that individual municipality should pay The Land Conservancy for the work. Mr. Schweizer confirmed that the regional picture will not be misrepresented. Ms. Davis said if there are errors, they will show as something colored as public and it may be permanently preserved. It will come up in the database as something owned by the State or by the town and the town may have it permanently protected, and The Land Conservancy does not have it identified as permanently protected. Ms. Davis also said she has been talking to Ms. Sylvester about creating a way to make this a platform so that it's accessible and giving it to Sussex County so they can continue to update it. Ms. Sylvester questioned whether the The Land Conservancy was working with the most up-to-date parcel layer from the County. She said she will email it to them. There was a brief discussion about the possibility of changing the May Open Space meeting date.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Louis Caruso. The motion was seconded by Donald Ploetner and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.