

SUSSEX COUNTY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MAY 24, 2012

The meeting opened at 7:30 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
Wolfgang Gstattenbauer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Cliff Lundin, Chairman
Keith Utter

STAFF PRESENT: Donna Traylor, CADB Coordinator
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: None

Vice Chairman Schweizer confirmed that the members present were aware that Ailish Hambel resigned from the Open Space Committee effective today. Donna said that the Committee needs to start thinking about a replacement for Ailish. She advised them that there is a geographic distribution; there cannot be two members from one town. Anyone interested in serving on the Committee should send a letter of interest to the Freeholders.

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Wolfgang Gstattenbauer to approve the minutes of April 26, 2012 as presented. The motion was seconded by Louis Caruso and carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A. ARTICLE ON MONTAGUE OPEN SPACE, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY PRESS EVENT:

Donna said there was an event in Montague to recognize two parcels of land that the Nature Conservancy purchased for Open Space, one of which the County helped with. One of the parcels was an old quarry that is being reclaimed. Multiple partners donated huge amounts of time, money and plant material to return native species to the area.

B. UPDATE ON LAWLER PRESERVATION PROJECT, LAFAYETTE TWP.:

Donna said she reached out to Lafayette Township for the status of the Lawler project. The State anticipates completing the survey work in the next month. The other remaining issue is the remediation of the arsenic contamination. Trace amounts of arsenic were found on the property from the agricultural operation that existed there. Since the site may be used for active recreation, the soil has to be removed in accordance with Green Acres standards. Additional testing was recently done to determine the extent of the contamination. They are now determining how best to approach remediation---soil removal vs. blending. There is a proposal to get this work completed and the parties are in negotiation regarding the cost. They anticipate that the remediation is going to be scheduled in the next few weeks. Also, the diesel tank was removed and the experts hired to handle the tank removal did not detect any contamination related to the tank. They anticipate a closing within the next several months.

Donna added that the Vernon application was withdrawn and the Schuller project has closed. This wraps up the 2010 funding round.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. SC RAIL TRAIL POCKET GUIDE:

Donna distributed Sussex County Rail Trail Pocket Guides to the Committee. The small guide is meant to be carried in your pocket and used with the brochure which was handed out last month. The Chamber of Commerce is working on a mobile application. The County has been doing research on trail brochures and may be able to do something on its own later this year, perhaps on the County website. This Guide

is a pre-publication version. The guides that will be mass produced will be a heavier stock paper and may be waterproof.

Donna said that National Trails Day is June 2 and that there is going to be a special event hosted by the Sussex County Trails Partnership to highlight the opening of the Lehigh/New England trail segment. This segment creates a 13.5 loop between the Paulins Kill Valley Trail, the Sussex Branch Trail and the new Lehigh/New England trail segment.

B. UPDATES/CHANGES FOR RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Donna said she made the updates on the Open Space Application and that last week it was sent out to all the towns, The Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Lisa Chamings and Glenn Schweizer asked for a copy of the application. Donna said she would e-mail it to them.

Donna advised the Committee that she was not able to find any electronic record of the Rules and Regulations. The last update was in 2004 and with changes in computers and programs, the file could not be found. Donna said she will redo the document. In addition to the changes that were discussed, Donna found other changes that needed to be made in order to be consistent. When she is finished she will have County Counsel look at it and then e-mail it to the Open Space Committee for their final review.

Donna reported that she redid the entire first section, giving the history of the first dedicated tax and adding the second one. In the allocation of funds, she made it reflect what it is now, which is that it is allocated by the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders in whatever manner they deem appropriate each year.

The original application said one alternate project can be included to be considered at a later time if another project withdraws. Donna said by the time an application is withdrawn, it is into the next funding cycle. She questioned whether that line needs to be on the application. Glenn said if a town had an alternate project, they would submit two projects. After a brief discussion it was decided to leave that line in.

Donna said at the last meeting there was a question about the ability to use Planning Incentive Grant Funds to update the Open Space Plan. She talked to her contact at Green Acres, who said they could not. She also said the County did get \$900,000 of additional Planning Incentive Grant money, but because the County is collecting a lot less than ½ of a cent per hundred, the grant money can only be used on a 25% reimbursement basis, not 50%. She said that is new money, it is not the money that still remains from the initial three Planning Incentive Grants, which will expire this year, the first week of November. She said there is no conceivable way to use these funds by that time. Glenn asked what the timeframe for the new funds was. Donna said that she thought it was around three years but was not certain.

C. DISCUSSION ON OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE:

Committee members were asked to look over the first three chapters of the Open Space Plan prior to tonight's meeting. Many members felt that many sections of the Open Space Plan cannot be updated until information is received from the towns regarding their open space lands. Glenn suggested that the statistical information be added to the plan as an appendix or addendum. He felt they do not have the capability to bring every chapter of the plan up-to-date. He asked if we met the goals that were laid out in 2003 and to what extent. How many projects were implemented? How much money was spent? How many acres were preserved over which towns? Do we have the ability to identify projects by goal?

Donna said the County has an endorsed Strategic Growth Plan and now the State Plan is changing. The County has been working under its Strategic Growth Plan since it was adopted and it is still in effect. The goals of that plan have to be reflected. Wolfgang said there are many changes that have taken place since the plan was written, such as solar farms, and asked if they should be addressed in the Plan. After a brief discussion on solar and other alternative energy, Donna said she was sure Green Acres would not allow any kind of alternative energy on preserved open space. Glenn said that fact should be confirmed. Donna asked the members to think of other such things that can be examined for potential inclusion in the plan update. Glenn suggested contacting those federal and state representatives that gave input to the original plan to see if they have performed any analysis or had thoughts about expanding their interests in Sussex County. Donna talked about the Common Waters effort and said they have done a lot of analysis in the northern quadrant. Lisa said that she has dealt with Kevin Koslowski, of Green Acres, regarding stewardship matters and that he had always been very helpful. Donna asked Lisa for contact information for Mr. Koslowski. Glenn suggested that the members look at the survey to see if they still agree with the ranking of criteria. He also asked for updated maps for ag. and open space.

Donna asked the members to look at the "Goals and Objectives" from Page 83 to 86 and to jot down ideas for changes or new or changed goals. She advised them that she will be away in June. Since it will be two months before they meet again, she suggested that they look at the following chapter, "Needs," also. Lisa suggested that they also look at the "Trails" section.

D. UPDATE ON MUNICIPAL OUTREACH MEETING:

In the discussion at the last meeting it was apparent that the Board felt it was not appropriate to ask the towns to have their professionals do research on their Class 15s. Donna said the County will generate the list for each town. The County will also generate its current information and ask the towns to provide more information on some of the subcategories. It was also recognized that this will be an ongoing project and we will not be able to meet with the towns until the fall at the earliest. Donna will continue to work with the County GIS Department. The Planning Division may be

getting an intern this summer and he or she may be able to do the outreach to the towns.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Wolfgang Gstatenbauer. The motion was seconded by Lou Caruso and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.