

SUSSEX COUNTY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MAY 26, 2016

The meeting opened at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Lundin 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: Cliff Lundin, Chairman
Louis Caruso
Lisa Chammings
R. Michael Dolan

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Glenn Schweizer, Vice Chairman
Donald Ploetner

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

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

Minutes were not available.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Autumn Sylvester reported that the Highlands Council announced that an Open Space Preservation Grant is available for towns that are located in the Highlands. She was unsure about how much total funding is available. Applications are due September 16, 2016.

Chairman Lundin asked if Autumn has heard about any new Open Space applications for this year. Autumn said she recently attended a meeting in Vernon regarding parking problems they are having along the County Route 517 access to the Appalachian Trail. The residents who live along the area are complaining and the police are ticketing vehicles. The township is interested in purchasing an adjacent property that is in foreclosure. They would tear down the house and build a surface parking lot.

Cliff said he received a telephone call from the Mayor of Vernon about another tract. He asked Autumn if the Mayor called her about it. Autumn said he did not call her but he did discuss it during the meeting. Cliff said the tract was owned by Sally Rinker. It is between two sections of municipally owned property and is adjacent to a horse farm. The property has multiple acres and a bike path runs through it. Several years ago, the township had an agreement with the property owner to pay twice the assessed value. They applied for Open Space funds for the assessed value and they wanted to use their municipal funds for the other half of the agreed price. The Open Space Committee denied the application because of the price. They township wants to come back to the Open Space Committee with that parcel because it is a missing piece of their bike path. The Mayor assured Cliff that it will be a reasonable price. Cliff recommended that they come in with an application.

Autumn said she received a telephone call from Sandy Urgo who is Vernon Township's Consultant through the Land Conservancy. She was trying to get an idea of what the township wanted to do.

Cliff also discussed two tracts in Hopatcong that were part of an overall green belt that buffers the town center under the State Plan. There was a 200-acre tract that was supposed to be a 1,000 unit Senior Citizen Complex. That was purchased two years ago by the State with funds from the Forest Legacy Program. Adjacent to that was a 150-acre tract that was owned by the Sussex and Warren Holding Company. That 150-acre tract has now also been purchase by Forest Legacy Program. The Hopatcong green belt is now complete. The back woods on Sparta Stanhope Road are completely covered.

There was some discussion about the shooting range. Cliff said it is in previously owned municipal property that was dedicated by Ordinance in 1995 as a natural area preserve. The shooting range showed up without any approvals.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE:

Autumn provided the Committee with the proposals from the Land Conservancy for the GIS mapping and part of the Open Space Plan and also the proposal from Vertices for the same services. She reviewed them and they do not seem to be the same. She also

looked at the State contracting information for these types of services. The County has a contract with Civil Solutions for this type of service. Each task is about 30 hours or more of work. Autumn said she reached out to two similar companies to see if that seemed appropriate. They said it seemed like it was a lot of time for the \$65.00 per hour State contracting rate. Autumn also said she asked for an hourly rate, but it was not included. She is not sure, but does not believe if we need to use Civil Solutions. She just received the contract today and only briefly looked it over. Autumn said she sent Dave the report that she expects from this tool, which is similar to the Highlands performance mapping. He said he will get her a price.

There was some discussion on the prices. Cliff said typically when you do one of these projects; the data is yours at the end of it. The Land Conservancy has represented half the towns in the County. He does not want to see them coming back to us with data that we worked on an application that is before us. Their towns would have an advantage because they contracted with the Land Conservancy. Since the Freeholders have not adopted the Open Space Plan update, it is probably premature to discuss this expense.

Autumn provided the Committee with the 2015 Open Space Application Form. The Committee said the form did not need to be changed. Autumn will make changes to the "year" and remove the deadline.

Mike Dolan said a real estate client of his had been contacted by Freeholder Rich Vohden a few years ago about preserving 44 acres for in Frankford Township for farmland preservation. He asked if he was permitted to give him an application or should he tell him to download it from the County's website. Autumn said the application is not on the County's website yet. The Planning section of the website is being worked on. She is meeting with Thor next week to get it online. Autumn said she will email Mike a pdf version of the application.

Cliff said that Toni Lu Martin resigned from the Open Space Committee because of a regular conflict. He asked if anyone knew of someone from the Montague area. Mike suggested Gene Crawford. Cliff mentioned Robert Muir. He suggested that they send in a request to the Freeholders.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mike Dolan. The motion was seconded by Lou Caruso and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.